

First Session - Thirty-Ninth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
Official Report
(Hansard)

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The Honourable George Hickes
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Ninth Legislature

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, October 9, 2007

The House met at 10 a.m.

PRAYER

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 205—The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the MLA for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), that Bill 205, The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Hydro-Manitoba, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, this bill provides that before an appointment is made to the board of Manitoba Hydro, the individual to be appointed appear before a Legislative committee and be ready to answer questions, questions about the qualifications of the person and questions about the view of the individual with respect to Manitoba Hydro, the future of Manitoba Hydro, what the person who's being appointed to the board of Manitoba Hydro sees needs to be done in terms of moving Manitoba Hydro forward, and in terms of ensuring that Manitoba Hydro is working for all Manitobans.

This bill is a bill which is long overdue in terms of changing the governance of Manitoba Hydro. It is reflective of the fact that Manitoba Hydro is the most important Crown corporation in Manitoba. Manitoba Hydro's revenues and expenditures in this last year were over \$2 billion. There are major decisions being made day to day at Manitoba Hydro with respect to an east- or west-side power grid, with respect to new dams, with respect to hydro-electric power rates, with respect to issues surrounding environmental licensing, issues surrounding First Nations and Métis issues. Clearly, it is vital that we have people on the board of Manitoba Hydro who have varied and significant expertise and, I should add, important issues of marketing power internationally and understanding the situation internationally, as well as with other provinces like Ontario, or perhaps

Saskatchewan and Alberta may be asking for power at some point in the future.

I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that this bill is important for a variety of reasons. It is important that we get, as Manitobans, the very, very best possible situation for Manitoba Hydro. It is important for Manitobans because wise decisions being made by Manitoba Hydro will have an impact on all of us, and if decisions are made which are suboptimal, that will have an impact on all of us because it will result in increases in hydro rates, in inadequate results for people in the north or the south in terms of what happens with Manitoba Hydro.

I think that we all know that a year or two ago there was a CBC story about problems in the way Manitoba Hydro dollars were being spent in northern Manitoba. This led to some serious questions and ongoing audits, we understand, perhaps even an investigation by the Auditor General which was requested. Clearly, we want to make sure that things are being done well and appropriately in Manitoba Hydro. It is time to end this behind-closed-doors type of government that the NDP are engaged in where decisions are made in secret, where there is not public access to the views of individuals on Manitoba Hydro, and there is not a public process for looking at the qualifications of individuals.

I would certainly hope that the MLA for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen), for example, would stand up on this bill and describe to members in this Chamber his views, because he's on the board, of the future of Manitoba Hydro. We've never had a chance to question him in committee on his views because of the nature of the behind-closed-doors appointment process. The NDP have decided to continue the politicization of the most important Crown corporation in our province. I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that it's time now, in the year 2007, to open up this process to make things more open and transparent and to improve things for all of Manitoba.

* (10:10)

Let me talk for a moment about some of the varied expertise that really should be on the board. There is very important engineering that is being

done in terms of relationships to the building of the dams, the transmission corridors. There are technical aspects to the transmission of power and what is happening in the way that power is transmitted long distances and new options for approaching the transmission of power and of energy. Environmental assessment has changed dramatically in the years since the first hydro-electric power dam was built, and certainly now it is imperative that environmental assessments be done well. As I've pointed out many times in this Chamber and elsewhere, the limits to growth are very often environmental limits, and we need to make sure we are taking care of the environment well in whatever we do. This is clearly particularly important with respect to Manitoba Hydro.

We have seen, Mr. Speaker, that the discussions, consultations and interaction with First Nation and Métis communities is very important with respect to Manitoba Hydro. And clearly we should have board members who are knowledgeable in these areas as we should have a board member or members who are knowledgeable in the marketing of power and international markets. It's my experience that the time has passed when board members are just there to show up, that it is very important that we have board members who are full participants.

We saw this in the case of the Crocus Investment Fund where board members were not always adequately looking after the interests of people, Crocus investment shareholders. There have been issues, as we all know, with regard to the actions of the board in the Crocus Investment Fund, and this was a subject of an Auditor General's report so I won't go into it in more detail. But it highlights the need to have people of varied expertise, of considerable competence who are ready to serve on the board of Manitoba Hydro on behalf of all Manitobans and make sure that we get the best possible situation.

I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that this is a win-win. It is a win for Manitoba Hydro to have the best possible expertise. It is a win for Manitobans to have the best-run corporation in Manitoba Hydro and it, in fact, would be a win for the government if they supported this bill because it would ensure that Manitoba Hydro and Manitobans were being served as well as they possibly can be. So I would urge all members to support this legislation, and hopefully we can move forward and make some important changes in the governance of Manitoba Hydro and

ensuring that we have the best possible board and board members that we could have. Thank you.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I am very pleased to be able to speak at any time about Manitoba Hydro because I've always felt, Mr. Speaker, that this is our great asset. We haven't even begun to see the tremendous potential that we have in this province; because of our publicly owned hydro utility that is now again on the move, continuing the pattern that when you have New Democrats in government you see development in Manitoba Hydro, something that we have not seen from the Conservatives. I always like to ask people, by the way, how many dams the Conservatives built since 1969 in this province? Of course, it's a trick question. The answer is zero.

But I find it interesting the Liberals contributing to the Hydro debate because, you know, Mr. Speaker, I'm very disappointed in the Member for River Heights. He's brought in this bill and bills are worthy of consideration on their merit. But to then to impugn the motives of the Manitoba Hydro board, and particularly the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen) and by extension in his comments, all members, I thought it was a bit much; because particularly coming from someone who's been active in the Liberal Party, the patronage machine of Canada, I don't think there was a living, breathing Liberal that had run for office that wasn't appointed to a federal board at some point in time, and particularly when the member opposite was in power, they perfected the art of appointing Liberals to, whether it would be, any of the Crown corporations.

I just found it amazing that in this case the MLA that the Member for River Heights is referencing is appointed, and it's just not for Manitoba Hydro. We've had a consistent practice in this province of having MLAs appointed to give the Legislature's perspective, and I think that's something that is positive.

The Member for Flin Flon is currently on the Hydro board. I was on the Hydro board a number of years ago. We have MLAs who are on MPI, for example, and that's one appointment. Look at the other appointments, Mr. Speaker. I am very proud of our Manitoba Hydro board. I know a number of the people on it personally; the mayor of Churchill, for example, Michael Spence. I am very pleased to say, this is my first opportunity to say how glad I am to see the reinvestment in the Port of Churchill. I am

sure Michael Spence had a good weekend, because that was a historic reinvestment in the Port of Churchill.

I look at the fact that we have northern representation, not just from Churchill, but Philip Dorian, Ken Paupanekis and the Member for Flin Flon. I think that's really important because much of the hydro development that takes place currently is in northern Manitoba. Many of the issues that impact hydro are in northern Manitoba and many of the future dams that are there in terms of the potential and the partnerships are in northern Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, what struck me about the Liberal member's narrow perspective here is that he is forgetting one thing, that many of the issues he referenced have a couple of key elements that go far beyond the Manitoba Hydro board. Yes, the Manitoba Hydro board is responsible for the utility itself, but the Public Utilities Board, which I am the minister responsible for, which is a board that looks at the Hydro rates, plays a key role. So does the Clean Environment Commission, and I am surprised that the member opposite wouldn't put on the record that, when we brought forward the Wuskwatim proposal, that was the first time a hydro dam had gone through full environmental hearings in the history of this province. That is something I am very proud of. The member didn't even bother to talk about the partnership of the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation in Nelson House. That was the subject of a great deal of discussion and supported by the community. I am very proud to represent NCN in the Manitoba Legislature.

He didn't mention the fact that at this point in time, today, there are 300 people working at Wuskwatim and record numbers of northern and Aboriginal people, particularly from NCN itself. No reference to that, Mr. Speaker. But, you know, I understand the Liberal leader has a bit of a narrow perspective on these things, particularly when it comes to northern Manitoba.

I must acknowledge that the Liberal leader has started to travel to northern Manitoba in between elections. I still remember some time ago when I did admonish the member for criticizing me for not being able to get out to a meeting in southwest Manitoba, which I did get to shortly thereafter—but, you know, what I was struck by this time is, again, the Liberal leader didn't bother to come to northern Manitoba. What I found interesting, by the way, is I'm a great believer in Kyoto, but he actually said he

wasn't going to fly because of Kyoto and because of leaving a carbon-neutral footprint.

Well, there are 23 communities that don't have roads, so he just wiped them off the Liberal map, Mr. Speaker. Didn't even appear. He must have one of those old highways maps that didn't include most of northern Manitoba still hung up in his office. But it struck me we need to understand that there are many communities in this province don't have all-weather road access. That's why, by the way, we are extending the road into Bloodvein, and we also brought in route selection on the east side of Manitoba. We have a route selection process that is going to be underway this fall which is very critical to people in those communities: the communities of Oxford House, God's Lake Narrows, God's River and the Island Lake communities.

But, you know, I want to say that what I also found interesting was that he tried to bring in Crocus, he tried to bring in various issues. I will never forget that probably the main contribution the Liberal Party has ever made to hydro debates in this province the last number of years is when in the '80s they said that Limestone would be "lemonstone." The former Member for River Heights, Sharon Carstairs, Senator Sharon Carstairs, she said it would never make money. It would be a boondoggle; it would be "lemonstone."

Now, let's reflect the fact that the Tory position, by the way, was that they wanted to buy power. The former Member for Lakeside, Harry Enns, is on the record buying power from the United States. Now, can you imagine, if we had listened to the Tories, we'd be buying power, not selling it, or listened to the Liberals, we would have not built Limestone. Instead, we built Limestone, we built it under budget, about a billion dollars under budget, and it has produced hundreds of millions of dollars of revenue for this province ever since.

So I don't know why the member opposite didn't get up. I know she's got a bill on the Order Paper, too, The Apology Bill. Well, I would suggest the Liberals may want to apologize for being short-sighted in terms of Manitoba Hydro right from day one. But no, they want to know what the board members' perspective on hydro development is. You know, I want to know what their perspective is.

* (10:20)

It's amazing. I listen to the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), and our position has been

very clear in terms of hydro development, and yes, in terms of the transmission line. I think it's a clear reflection. I notice today, by the way, that Grand Chief Ron Evans has admonished the Conservative leader for saying one thing in the election and doing another thing afterwards, the Conservative leader who said, on the east-side process, that there were 16 select people that would have a say.

Actually there are selected people, as in elected by the First Nations on the east side. Actually, I thought it was quite ironic that Grand Chief Evans actually ran for the Conservatives in 1999, ran for the Conservatives. But, you know, that's the Conservatives.

But, Mr. Speaker, what I found with the Liberals is they either have no position on issues or they have two completely different positions, two completely different positions, and I'm not sure where the Member for River Heights stands or maybe he's just impaled on the fence. On the east side, on the issues of hydro development, believe you me, it's pretty difficult. But that's why I think they've brought this bill forward. It's kind of an attack on the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen), some attempt to grab some profile in Manitoba Hydro.

Well, I would say that if you look at the board, you've got everyone from the former president of Manitoba Telephone System sitting on the board, all the way through to people—it's a fine group of Manitobans, and to bring in a bill like this I think really misses the point here. We have a very good board with Manitoba Hydro. We have the best-run hydro utility in North America. We've got the cheapest rates. We have the best development plans. I'm convinced, with the combination of work we're doing with Conawapa, the partnerships with First Nations, and yes, a courageous position on the east side, protecting the boreal forest, recognizing the wishes of the 16 First Nations and part of the WNO process.

Once again, 10 or 20 or 30 years from now they'll be looking back and they'll say, why, here was the Conservative position; they were wrong on the east side. Here's the Conservative position on hydro development at Wuskwatim; they were wrong in criticizing the partnership. They'll probably say, what was the Liberal position? And they'll read the debate on this bill, and they'll say, while the NDP was putting forward a broad vision for the province and to Manitoba Hydro, they were worried about having hearings over who would be on the Hydro board.

Mr. Speaker, one bit of advice to the Liberal leader that I would make: This province likes vision. Since the 1969 election we've brought forward a vision in terms of hydro development, in terms of working in partnership with First Nations and in terms of the environment. We have a clear vision for hydro. This bill has no vision, and that is why I'm looking forward to the debate because I think it misses the mark considerably.

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Turtle Mountain): Mr. Speaker, indeed it is a pleasure to talk about Manitoba Hydro this morning and certainly appreciate the bill brought forward by the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard). This bill really talks about accountability. I think that's what all Manitobans are looking for in terms of a government and in terms of a Crown corporation. As we know, we're having a big debate now about the east side, the west side going forward. We know that particular project, whether it's east side or west side, is going to cost us at least \$1.5 billion, maybe more than \$2 billion. So, quite clearly, it's important that proper economic decisions are made going forward and that decisions that we make as a province, as a corporation are in the best interests of all Manitobans. And that's something that we on this side of the House believe in: that decisions that are made going forward should be in the best interests and the long-term interests of all Manitobans.

Now, the Member for River Heights brings forward an interesting proposal, that any members that are appointed to the Crown corporation be reviewed by members of the Legislative Assembly. Unfortunately, what we see now, this particular government has the will to appoint the board of directors, and what we see is that from time to time the executive, the people that manage Manitoba Hydro, put forward one type of project for the benefit of Manitobans. In this particular case, the management committee would prefer to run a line down the east side of Lake Winnipeg, but apparently the Premier (Mr. Doer) has a veto over that particular decision. So the Premier has come forward and said no to the management of Manitoba Hydro, we're going to run a line, a longer line through the west side of the province, the extreme west side of the province.

So this particular decision that the Premier has made will end up, in essence, costing Manitoba taxpayers more money. We're talking about an extra debt of probably somewhere in the neighbourhood of about \$2,000 per family, Mr. Speaker. All that extra

investment, we'll call it—is actually added to the debt of the Province and to Manitoba Hydro. So we think it's very clear that any legislation brought forward should reflect accountability.

But, unfortunately, what we see with this particular government is the top-down approach to business in Manitoba whereby the Premier and his Cabinet have full control over our Crown corporation. And not only our Crown corporation. The member opposite alluded to the Clean Environment Commission, who, I guess, eventually will look at the proposal on the west side, and they will review that particular project, come forward with the recommendation to the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Struthers). Now, it's important to know that that Clean Environment Commission is also appointed by the Premier and the Cabinet, so it's pretty safe to say, Mr. Speaker, that there is considerable influence by the Premier and his Cabinet on that particular commission.

We talk about accountability, Mr. Speaker. What we should be doing is give two options to the public in Manitoba, give two options to the Clean Environment Commission and say, why don't you fellows pick out the best option for Manitobans for the long term? That's what we think should happen.

Mr. Speaker, we know we reflect back on Manitoba Hydro and what's happened over the last few years, and one striking example of government interference in Manitoba Hydro happened a few years ago when the provincial government was running a little short of funds. So what they did to cover up some of their fiscal mismanagement was to go to Manitoba Hydro and raid them to the tune of \$230 million.

At the same time, we've seen the water rates go up. They are the rates that the Province is charging Manitoba Hydro to use our water. We've seen the Province increase those rates on a regular basis. Actually, the Province is taxing, if you will, our Crown corporation even more on an ongoing basis, Mr. Speaker.

The other thing that Manitobans I don't think are aware of in terms of our very precious Crown corporation is the fact that the debt of Manitoba Hydro is just about \$7 billion. Mr. Speaker, \$7 billion of debt carried by our precious Crown corporation. The unfortunate thing is Manitoba Hydro has not built anything in several years, and yet our debt continues to increase.

Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair.

What we're going to see in the future under these future proposals, I guess, we'll step back and say, currently the Manitoba Hydro is building an office building downtown. Now, we're not exactly sure what the final bill is going to be, but it's probably going to be \$300 million. We know, Madam Deputy Speaker, that that particular \$300 million or whatever that figure ends up being is going to be added to the debt of Manitoba Hydro. So we, as Manitoba Hydro users and as taxpayers in Manitoba, are going to be forced to carry that extra burden of debt.

Those are decisions that are made by this Premier (Mr. Doer) and this Cabinet going forward, and we've seen the management philosophy of the NDP in Manitoba: let's spend money. We keep spending money.

We're in an economy where things are rolling along fairly well. We should be starting to put money away and maybe service and pay off some of our debt as our federal counterparts are doing in Ottawa. They realize that good times are here; it's time to pay down some debt and get things back in reality, but not this government. This government continues to tax and spend in a way which we haven't seen for decades before, Madam Deputy Speaker. But that's the philosophy of this government. It's tax and spend.

* (10:30)

Now, we know the economy's not going to roll along as it is forever. There's going to be a downturn in the economy. There may even be a turnaround in terms of the money that we get from the federal government, which, as we know, in the last few years has been unprecedented. So when those economic factors come into play, the Province isn't going to be in such a rosy situation. So, those debts that we currently carry are going to be even a bigger commitment that we have to make as Manitobans, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Now, this government always talks about consulting. It talks about talking to Manitobans, Madam Deputy Speaker. But that's all it is; it's all talk. We're interested in actually going out and talking to Manitobans, understanding what they have to say and really what they want to do in the long term.

This east-west debate is a classic example of the NDP not really consulting with Manitobans. Now,

just to quote here, Marcel Balfour, for example, who is the vice-chair of the MKO—he represents 30 First Nations governments—issued a statement not too long ago saying that the Doer government did not consult First Nations groups before making the decision public. So, it's pretty clear, Madam Deputy Speaker, this Premier (Mr. Doer) is on a mission of his own. It doesn't matter what the costs are going to be, associated with the extra line. It doesn't seem to matter what the environmental concerns are, that he's going to have to chop down more trees on the west side of Manitoba to get where he wants to go, and he doesn't seem to care about the added costs that we're going to face as Manitobans.

Also, Madam Deputy Speaker, it's pretty clear that he doesn't want to listen to what Manitobans have to say. Elijah Harper, another gentleman, very well known to this NDP government, obviously he was very devastated in terms of potential economic development that could have been gained through a transmission line running through the east side of Manitoba. He and his group are very disappointed in terms of the government's decision going forward. So, again, it's a matter of this particular government not paying attention and listening to Manitobans.

Madam Deputy Speaker, that really talks about accountability, and that's where the Member for River East is really going on this particular bill: How do we make Manitoba Hydro and—really, in reality, how do we make this government more accountable to Manitobans over the long term? So I certainly commend him on bringing forward this particular legislation. I'm sure there will be a lot more spoken in terms of this particular project, Manitoba's role in our future. I think we do have tremendous potential with Manitoba Hydro and tremendous potential in lots of energy development in Manitoba. Thank you for the time.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): It's a pleasure to speak on Bill 205, The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act. I would have to say that this is a very idealistic bill in that, by implication, I think the Liberal Leader would like to abolish patronage appointments to boards or maybe, more politely, appointments by the government of the day to boards.

Now, those of us who have been here for a while will remember the last Liberal Leader who introduced a private member's bill that was very similar except it applied to all boards, commissions

and agencies of government, and what was her name? Well, just by coincidence, in the *Canadian Parliamentary Review*, Volume 30, No. 3, the autumn of 2007, there's a very interesting interview with two senators. The title of the article is "Interview: Two Senators Look at Life in the Upper House," and who did they interview? Senator Keon and Senator Sharon Carstairs.

I remember Mrs. Carstairs introducing this bill and debating on it. She had a lot of passion, a lot of conviction. She thought this was the right thing to do, and she was going to get rid of patronage. No more patronage if this bill passed in the Manitoba Legislature. Presumably, she would have believed in the same thing for the federal Liberal Party, who have become, I think, experts at patronage from judges, all the way down. In fact, the current Conservative government in Ottawa is very concerned that all those people that were appointed by the Liberals are still there, and they're trying to get rid of them, but they can't get rid of them fast enough.

So, what happened to Mrs. Carstairs? Well, I would say it would be about one year, maybe two years, after her private member's bill to abolish patronage, she was appointed to the biggest patronage plum in Canada—the Senate of Canada; a lifetime patronage appointment till the age of 75. The media remembered that she had this private member's bill. Fortunately, the media had a little bit of collective memory. It's pretty short here, but it did last a year or two in this case, and they said to Mrs. Carstairs, well, didn't you have a private member's bill to abolish all patronage appointments? How come you accepted a patronage appointment? And as I recall, and maybe this is paraphrasing, she said, yes, but this is a good appointment.

I think we need the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) to speak in this debate and give us the exact quote from the *Free Press* of what the member said, but I think she changed her mind and decided that if it was a good appointment, she could accept it.

It's good to be idealistic. In fact, my wife says that I'm still idealistic after being here 17 years. She says I still want to change the world, but, you know what? There's a reality of being on the government side. The reality is that in government people do not want to change things because they see the practical implications of them in the day-to-day governing. So, for example, the government of the day needs to be more or less in sync with the boards and

commissions that operate very important agencies; for example, Manitoba Hydro. I don't think it would make much sense to have a board of a large corporation on one page and the government on another page. I think there needs to be at least some overlap and some agreement on what the major issues of the day are.

Of course, we know that the Liberals don't have a very good record on Manitoba Hydro because they would have done some things that were quite opposite to what we as an NDP government did. So, for example, the MLAs for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) and Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) have been critical of building hydro-electricity. They were against Limestone. In fact, they had a nickname for it. This was probably mentioned by the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) in his remarks. They called it lemonstone. They were opposed to it, and what happened? We built it. It came in under budget and on schedule. It has been a terrific economic generator for providing jobs in the north, and we continue to reap the benefits from some of the lowest rates in North America.

I'm reading a very interesting book about the life of Tommy Douglas. It's a series of interviews with Tommy Douglas. One of the things that his CCF government did in Saskatchewan was they set up a Crown corporation for hydro-electricity. They were one of the first provinces with a large rural population to bring electrification to rural Saskatchewan, and to do it they basically took over all of the small hydro-electric companies in Saskatchewan, Madam Deputy Speaker. They even had an expropriation clause which was very controversial but, as he points out, many pieces of legislation in many provinces have expropriation legislation. They never used it. I think they bought out all the companies on a willing-buyer/willing-seller basis. But the interesting thing about his remarks, and the reason I'm including this in my remarks is that the private companies were selling electricity at 25 cents a kilowatt hour, 25 cents.

What happened when SaskPower was set up? I think they were selling hydro-electricity for something like four or five cents a kilowatt hour, which is a similar experience to Winnipeg when the City of Winnipeg bought out the private companies in Winnipeg. I'm just going by memory, but if somebody wants to do the research, they could. I think they were selling electricity at something like 14 cents a kilowatt hour. When it became a public

utility, that was greatly reduced, substantially reduced.

When you hear members opposite, like members of the Conservative Party, musing about offering the private sector the opportunity to invest in Manitoba Hydro and have it partly owned by the private sector, you have to wonder what would happen to rates if that actually happened.

Hydro is the biggest single company in Manitoba at 6,000 employees. In 2005 and '06 it had gross revenues of \$2 billion, including \$881 million in export revenues. A high quality hydro board is integral to the successful functioning of such a large and important company for Manitoba, which is what we have. I know one of the former Hydro board members, while I certainly know the current one from Flin Flon, or one of the current members, but, also Reverend Stan McKay, a former moderator of the United Church, a United Church minister, was on the board of Hydro for a while, appointed by our government.

*(10:40)

Manitoba Hydro exports electricity to over 30 electric utilities in Canada and in the mid-western United States. Manitoba Hydro maintains its position of being the lowest cost provider of domestic electricity in Canada, the lowest cost provider of domestic electricity in Canada. I think that's a pretty good reason for keeping it as a Crown corporation.

The Crown corporation offers a wide range of energy services and programs to its customers such as Power Smart rebates on energy-efficient appliances and thermostats and loans for commercial or residential energy conserving renovations.

You know, one of the things that MLAs have done—and I think probably opposition as well as government MLAs—is to have public meetings for constituents and have Power Smart staff from Manitoba Hydro present. You know, it's interesting trying to be accountable and accessible to our constituents. I, from time to time, have town hall meetings. I began by doing it on my own and then I invited our federal member of Parliament, Judy Wasylycia-Leis to join me. Then I invited our city councillor, Mike Pagtakhan, to join me and we advertised it jointly.

Well, I think the largest attendance I've ever had at a town hall meeting, and I've probably sponsored half a dozen, is maybe 20, 25 people. In fact, the first one that I offered was in a restaurant which I had for

free. I put notices in mailboxes in four polls, so about 1,000 houses at that time and one person came to my town hall. But the largest public gathering I've ever had that I advertised was a Power Smart meeting to which probably 40 or 50 constituents came and it was very successful. I know that other MLAs have done the same.

An Honourable Member: You gotta buy doughnuts, Doug.

Mr. Martindale: Yes, I would always buy the doughnuts, of course.

I see that my time is expiring but I'm pleased to put those few remarks on the record. Thank you.

Mr. David Faurshou (Portage la Prairie): Madam Deputy Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise on a bill that is focussed on Hydro and making that jewel of a Crown corporation more accountable and autonomous and able to create their own destiny through sound financial management.

You know, this government, it really is hypocritical. I look to the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) who says he hasn't built any dam since '69 and it was the Conservatives, and then we're responsible because we haven't added to the debt. That's what this government does; they build things, all right, but they just add to the debt, add to the debt.

Hydro management said to the former Conservative administration that they did not want to undertake any major capital expenditure—I hope the honourable members are listening over there—until they achieved the level of debt to equity at 0.75. In other words, we would have as taxpayers, as shareholders of Manitoba Hydro being a Crown corporation, we would effectively own 25 percent of the corporation.

So, essentially, what has taken place though under this administration, and I know that perhaps this is far and above some of the financial expertise of members opposite, but this government has continued to add debt to Manitoba Hydro, and the ownership of Manitoba Hydro has continued to go down. Each and every year of this administration we have seen, except for one blip in the last eight years, they have taken the equity that we all share in Manitoba Hydro and reduced it.

I hope the honourable Member for Thompson listens to this one fact, this one fact that even the New Democratic Party are getting more skittish about Manitoba Hydro debt. The Member for

Thompson wants to extol how good and prudent managers they are but what comes to be is in fact the bottom line. This own government's financial department thinks that Hydro is now a bad risk. Why do you think that? Because the department of Finance, the New Democratic Party Finance Minister (Mr. Selinger), decided that they were now going to double, double the amount that the government charges Hydro to guarantee its debt. That tells us all that even the New Democratic Party, the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) who's a member of the inner circle, the Cabinet, the Executive Council, he is scared of Hydro debt because it was Executive Council that had to authorize its additional charge to Hydro.

Man, I can't believe that these guys from the government side of the House can stand up and say how well they are managing Hydro. Then they come back and say, now, Manitoba Hydro has so much debt that we have to charge more because we're afraid. We are the New Democratic Party, and we're afraid that now Hydro is not as good a risk as it used to be because they owe so much money.

You know, the honourable members over there, they cackle away and say, not true, but it is true. The New Democratic Party is afraid of Manitoba Hydro's debt because they have to now charge more money to guarantee that debt. That is a fact.

They are not listening to Manitoba Hydro, Madam Deputy Speaker, and that's probably the greatest travesty any government could undertake is not to listen to the experts. To believe, just because I as an individual attained membership to this Legislative Assembly by standing for election, that I am now smarter than everybody else. That's what these New Democrats believe, that they are smarter than everybody else. They are smarter than the experts that have given them the opinion that they need to wait before further dam construction until we get to 25 percent. Now, they are laughing. It's so far above them. It's so far above them that they can only chuckle. Just a chuckle. Because they are MLAs now, they are smarter than those that are in the business of operating Manitoba Hydro.

Manitoba Hydro indeed is something to be proud of and a Crown corporation that could in fact lead the way to a very prosperous future as we as shareholders of that Crown corporation could then benefit, but under the continuous leadership of this government that wants to interfere with the experts

because they feel they know better is truly a travesty. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Madam Deputy Speaker, I'm very pleased to speak to Bill 205 today to follow the Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Faurichou), the Member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Cullen) and the Member for Thompson. I have to admit that the Member for Thompson summed it up very well when he gave us a history lesson on the record of the Liberal and Conservative parties in this province as it relates to Hydro and Hydro issues. As a matter of fact, we just went through an election a few months ago. I don't recall the Liberal candidate in my constituency in Elmwood at any point talking about this particular bill and the appointment of board members for Hydro or anyplace else for that matter. As a matter of fact, all he talked about was all these thousands of seven-foot-tall signs that he kept seeing on lawns and up and down both sides of his street surrounding his house. So maybe he was distracted by that. But, you know, if this was such an important issue now for the Liberal Party, then why was it not an integral part of their election campaign?

In terms of hydro projects and hydro development, I toured the hydro projects a couple of years ago with the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen) and you know that ever since 1969, the Member for Thompson is right. The Conservative record on hydro development is zero. They built no projects at all. As a matter of fact, they mothballed Limestone, they killed Conawapa, and their record just basically does not stand as being a positive force in hydro development. As a matter of fact, just prior to the provincial election, the new Conservative leader announced their policy on hydro and that is, guess what, private-public partnerships, you know.

* (10:50)

We pointed out to the electorate during the election that if they were to elect the Conservatives, they would get what they got with the telephone system where they sold it to their friends at \$13 a share, subsidized half of that and then within months those shares were worth double, \$25-plus a share.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the same scenario was about to unfold with hydro development under a Conservative government with the private buddies, the private friends being added into the equation here, and they would have done what they did in Ontario. The Conservative leader used to work for the Ontario government, the Ontario Premier, where they privatized the hydro system in Ontario and the

cost to the public went up astronomically. That is what you see when you deal with a Conservative government in power when it deals with these hydro issues.

So the public were smart enough to figure this out and they re-elected the NDP with even a bigger majority than before. They have the confidence that the NDP will move forward to develop the Wuskwatim project and that, in fact, if anybody could put Conawapa back on track, it will be an NDP government, not a Conservative government.

The deal with the Member for Portage la Prairie's (Mr. Faurichou) comments about the debt-to-equity ratio and the Member for Turtle Mountain's (Mr. Cullen) comments about the debt-to-equity ratio, the fact of the matter is that our debt-to-equity ratio is better today than it was at any time during their 12 years in power. So I don't know what he's talking about. We are making moves to reduce the debt of the corporation in a systematic way, and the equity of the corporation is increasing as the economy expands and the markets and the conditions in Manitoba improve. So, Madam Deputy Speaker, the Conservatives have really nothing to crow about in terms of their hydro development strategy, but let's take a look at the Liberals.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) summed it up very well when he spoke about Senator Carstairs and her position on patronage appointments. Governments are elected to develop their programs and institute reforms upon election, and it stands to reason that you have to put people in place that reflect the government's policies. You cannot have an NDP government and what, the Conservatives are going to appoint the Hydro board? And they're going to be privatizing Hydro while we're trying to build new dams? So, that isn't going to work, but the difference is that Senator Carstairs takes political patronage to its ultimate because the Senate of Canada is the ultimate patronage appointment. It is an appointment where it's traditionally been given to bagmen and bag ladies for the Conservative and Liberal parties, fundraisers for these parties. It is supposed to be a house of sober second thought, and these appointments are made for the lifetime of people with no standing for election.

Of course, the current government is trying to change that and we applaud them for that. We would like to abolish the Senate but the reality is that I think most people in our party would like to see at least an

elected Senate, as opposed to the current system we have right now.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, what you have is the legacy of the Liberal Party here, the former leader proposing a bill such as this a number of years ago, and then within a couple of years taking an appointment to the Senate. So, we have no lessons to learn from the Liberals on depoliticizing the government boards and commissions and so on when, in fact, they have done the opposite of what this bill is proposing for many years whenever they are in power.

There are some reasons why governments have to appoint people that agree with their philosophy in certain positions because these things are an extension of the public policy and the policy of the governments that get elected. That's not to say that there shouldn't be a good balance on these boards and we have done that. All governments, I think, of any stripe—when the Conservatives were in, I don't know their appointments to the board, but I'm sure that, you know, on top of being good Tories and Tory supporters, they probably had a good sense of what the government wanted to accomplish on the Hydro file. And as long as they were to appoint a broad variety of people from all parts of the province, and a balance between men and women on the board and visible minorities and other representative groups in the province, then they were doing what they're supposed to do.

But for us to turn around and say, well, we're not happy with the reports that Hydro comes out with, we're not happy with their presentation, the fact that we as MLAs have the right to question the board before the Legislature, we're not happy with that. That somehow we want to tie ourselves in hours and hours and hours of hearings interviewing 15 people, well, we'd be interviewing probably lots because they'd be rejecting them all. We'd be proposing somebody; they'd be rejecting them.

So the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) wants to sit here and spend, you know, the better part of his next four years interviewing these 15 people, I mean, this group in here can't agree on anything. You know, they can't agree on one person, for one job, and you expect them to interview for 15 people for a Hydro board. And then what are you going to end up with? You're not going to end up with much difference than what you have right now. As a matter of fact, you might have a worse situation, a worse board.

So we do have a decent system here in this province, and I think that the member is, you know, it's his role and his job to make suggestions such as this, Madam Deputy Speaker. This is not a terribly bad suggestion, but the point is it's really unnecessary, given the environment. There's probably better things that he could be doing with his time than introducing a bill such as this.

So, thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I would be pleased to let someone else take the floor. Thank you.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Deputy Speaker, right from the get-go what I'd like to indicate to the government party Whip, that if there's any point in time in which he feels that this bill would be eligible to be voted on if I sat down, I'd be more than happy to sit down so that we could actually have a vote on the bill.

Having said that, Madam Deputy Speaker, I think that the Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) and the Member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) and the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) are a little bit off-base in their logic, and they're off-base on a couple of points.

No. 1, Madam Deputy Speaker, the opposition of having a process that would better enhance the whole appointments to Manitoba Hydro, and any opposition to that I think is unfortunate. I believe that this is no reflection on current members of the board. Members of the board should not be perceived as a personal attack by bringing forward this legislation.

Madam Deputy Speaker, what this bill is about is the future and the where we're moving towards. Recognizing the importance of Manitoba Hydro and allowing for the public to be able to see their politicians at work in committee, being able to question future board appointments, how does that harm the system? It doesn't paralyze the system. The government at the end of the day is still going to be able to get what it wants, but most importantly we're going to see some sort of accountability with those board appointments. So I don't quite follow why it is that they would oppose that. So that's the primary thing.

The second issue is that this government and these members tended to want to reflect on history and say that that Liberal Party has not done very much with Manitoba Hydro electricity. Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, I am not a historian but I would very much like to set the record straight. That it was

Liberal premiers, whether it was Garson or Campbell that, in fact, brought in electricity to rural Manitoba. It was Liberal premiers that enabled Manitobans in rural areas to have the electricity that they have today.

Who can blame Sharon Carstairs back in the late eighties, early nineties, having fear that this particular government would turn Limestone into lemonstone? Look what they've done with the floodway expansion, the overspending of this government, their inability to be able to manage anything. I don't blame the current senator, Sharon Carstairs, of being somewhat fearful that this government would turn something that has the potential to be good into a lemon. If there would have been a Liberal administration, you would have seen a very aggressive approach to dealing with Hydro—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member's time has expired. The Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) will have seven minutes remaining.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable Member for Inkster will have seven minutes remaining.

* (11:00)

RESOLUTIONS

Res. 5—Public vs. Private Health Care

Madam Deputy Speaker: The time being 11, we will now proceed to resolutions.

Ms. Jennifer Howard (Fort Rouge): I move, seconded by the Member for Kirkfield Park (Ms. Blady), that,

WHEREAS the increasing costs of health care are largely the result of soaring drug prices, shortages of health-care professionals and the cost of services such as Pharmacare, not covered by the Canada Health Act; and

WHEREAS in public facilities, no funding is siphoned off as profit, less is spent on administration including bill collection and virtually no money is squandered on marketing; and

WHEREAS in a private health-care system, tax money must cover the costs of goods and services involved in health care as well as a substantial profit for shareholders; and

WHEREAS for-profit services have been consistently shown to be more costly than our public system and to boost their profits by poaching the lowest-risk patients, the young and the healthy, for themselves, leaving the poor, the elderly and chronically ill to the public system; and

WHEREAS researchers at McMaster University examined the performance of 26,000 hospitals in the U.S. over 15 years and found that for-profit hospitals have a 2 percent higher death rate than not-for-profits because they cut corners by hiring less qualified staff in order to give the shareholders the needed 10 percent to 15 percent return on their investments, which translated into Canadian terms would mean the deaths of 2,200 more Canadians each year; and

WHEREAS private facilities lure health professionals who would otherwise be at work in public facilities, compounding shortages rather than easing them; and

WHEREAS study after study around the world has shown that allowing for-profit corporations to deliver health-care services increases costs, lengthens waiting lists in the public system, and decreases the quality of care; and

WHEREAS savings from public clinics and hospitals are re-invested rather than going to shareholders; and

WHEREAS in New Zealand, where for-profit clinics have been introduced, wait times for some vital surgeries have tripled; and

WHEREAS when private clinics are introduced, there are significantly fewer doctors able to serve the public system; and

WHEREAS an independent study by the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy found that when the previous government required patients to pay for some cataract surgeries, the wait lists for cataract surgeries without user fees were two and a half times longer; and

WHEREAS an independent auditor's report released in December 2002 found that Ontario's plan for bringing in privately built for-profit hospitals would cost taxpayers more in the long run than public facilities; and

WHEREAS a compilation of data from eight large studies, each of which included an average of 324 hospitals, showed that the costs of care in for-profit hospitals were 19 percent higher, and if

Canada's hospitals became profit-driven businesses, we would be paying a further \$7.2 billion each year.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba recognizes that parallel private health care would fundamentally undermine Manitoba's health-care system by causing it to be less accessible, less efficient and more expensive.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Resolution moved by the Member for Fort Rouge (Ms. Howard), seconded by the Member for Kirkfield Park (Ms. Blady), that,

WHEREAS the increasing costs of health care are largely—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Dispense.

Ms. Howard: I want to speak about this resolution today and I want to talk very much about the weight of evidence that should make it clear to all of us by now that moving to a for-profit system in health care is not going to contribute to a better health-care system.

I want to talk about the evidence because often in this debate there are accusations of ideology, and really those allegations more firmly, I think, apply to those who despite an overwhelming weight of international evidence continue to cling to the idea that somehow introducing profit into health care is going to make the system better.

We know that moving to for-profit health care will actually create a system that's more expensive, and we only have to look south to see how that plays out. In the American system, which is the most expensive health-care system in the world, they spend 15 percent of their GDP, according to the OECD, on health care and they leave almost 50 million people uninsured. That's the most expensive system in the world and it is almost entirely driven by for-profit hospitals.

I just want to, at this time—and I will be happy to table this—read from a letter to the *Winnipeg Free Press* on the 24th of September by an American, a former Canadian now living in the States, because I think it's most instructive to hear from people that have actually lived the experience. It's a letter from Maryann Krouse and she reads: . . . that I lived in Canada for 50 years taking for granted what I had. Since I've been in the U.S., I've been unable to secure health care. I'm not unhealthy but I've been rejected because I haven't seen a doctor in the U.S.

for two years. Once you have a rejection on your file, no one will sell you health care but you can qualify for the high-risk pool and pay about \$700 a month. Our daughter was rejected by the insurance companies because she wears a hearing aid. I am not poor as my husband is a self-employed physician. Yes, you read that right. I'm married to a doctor and can't get health care. Do not vote for any kind of two-tiered system. Don't erode what you have. Don't be foolish. You have no idea what it's like living without the health care you now take for granted and depend on.

Now, there's recently been done an analysis of about 38 research studies done by the former editors of the *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, and they looked at all these studies and they came to, I think, probably the best conclusion about what moving to for-profit health care could do in Canada. The Canadian system is lower death rates, provides equal or better care and costs Canadian taxpayers half as much as the system in the States.

But we don't only have to talk about the United States, Madam Deputy Speaker. We can talk about Europe. I know European examples are a favourite of my friends across the way. Often they like to talk about France, so let's talk about France for a minute. France actually spends a higher proportion of its gross domestic product on health care than Canada, but what's very interesting is that almost all European countries spend more publicly on health care than privately. In Canada about 70 percent of our health-care spending is public spending. In France it's 80 percent. So it is not by spending more on private health care that these systems may have some better outcomes than Canada which is debatable, but it's actually by spending a greater proportion on public health care than Canada does.

So why do for-profit hospitals cost more? Well, we only have to look to I think the pharmaceutical industry which is an entirely private industry in Canada to see some of the reasons. For-profit entities have to pay for marketing. They have to make sure that there are profits for shareholders and they have to spend a great deal more on administration. The United States spends 31 percent of its health-care dollars on administration. That should be very interesting to members across the way who are constantly critical of any funding going to health-care administration, 31 percent, Madam Deputy Speaker, and that's according to Canadian doctors for medicare. That's not my own number. That is a number that is put forward by doctors.

We know and we've heard that medicare is a corporate advantage in this country. Health insurance in the United States can run companies upwards of \$10,000 per employee. I think we've heard often from CEOs of large companies that they prefer to locate in Canada because they don't have to pay that premium on each employee to ensure they get health care.

* (11:10)

It would be maybe justifiable to spend more on health care if we thought we would get better results, but the reality is that for-profit hospitals and for-profit health care may result in worse results for patients; at best, produces the same results, but may actually result in worse outcomes. This, I think, is probably because introducing profit into health care makes it difficult for health-care professionals to abide by the core principle of providing good medical care that first they should do no harm. When the emphasis is on maximizing profit, we see perversions of health care happen. I only need to reference the video that many members will have seen in Los Angeles of patients being taken from the ER by a hospital van and dumped on skid row because they were homeless or they couldn't pay for the care that they received. This is being done in the States by a health-care company that has a budget in excess of \$31 billion a year.

The same analysis I was speaking of earlier of multiple studies shows some preliminary evidence that the death rate could be as much as 5 percent lower in Canadian hospitals than American hospitals, higher than previously thought, Madam Deputy Speaker. That is the equivalent of 6,000 more people dying in Canada if we move to a for-profit system. That's as many Canadians as die every year in car accidents.

We also know that for-private health care leads to longer waiting lists. It doesn't even address the very problem that the champions of private for-profit health care advocated for. We know that the Canadian Health Services Research Foundation has found that moving to this kind of system would actually lengthen wait lists. Why would it do that? Because the people who reduce wait lists are the people who work in the system. They are doctors and nurses and technologists and they can't provide more service and faster access if they are working in two places at the same time. We know we have a home-grown example in the '90s when cataract surgeries were allowed in the private for-profit realm, we saw

longer wait times in the not-for-profit system. It destroyed the myth that if you have people pay for faster access, you'll decrease wait times for those who can't afford it. It's simply not true. It's been found over and over again. We should put that myth to rest.

So why then, if the overwhelming weight of evidence tells us that for-profit health care is not going to solve our problems, is going to be more expensive, is going to be worse for patients, and is going to create longer waiting lists, why do the champions of for-profit health care cling to it? I don't have that answer. Hopefully, the opposition will enlighten us in a few moments. But I do know that the Members both for Fort Whyte (Mr. McFadyen) and Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson) have justified and defended the notion that in Manitoba, we should allow people to purchase health-care services. We should allow people to be able to pay for quicker access. We should allow for private insurance schemes.

Manitobans know what's at stake. It was very clear to me in the election talking to many people that live in my constituency. They are very clear on their values. So, there's a tremendous amount at stake. We can't go back to the way things were. We can't go back to a time when people lived in pain because they couldn't afford health care. We have to protect the legacy that was left to us by Tommy Douglas, the greatest Canadian, and we have to continue to move forward to innovate health care and not cling to these ideas, now largely discredited, that would destroy the system.

Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Madam Deputy Speaker, it's a pleasure to be in the Chamber this morning to speak to the resolution for the Member for Fort Rouge (Ms. Howard). I have to say that I'm just a little surprised that the first resolution that the member is putting forward somewhat contradicts her own government's policy. We know that the government, the New Democrat government, in response to public pressure that was put forward here in Manitoba, contracted with the Maple Surgical Centre to do certain procedures. We believe that that was, in fact, the right decision because there were many, many, many people within Manitoba who are waiting for certain kinds of medical procedures, and they were forced to wait under this NDP government, for an extraordinary length of time. So, the government, in response to that pressure from

Manitobans and from members of the Progressive Conservative Party, finally conceded that this was a challenge that needed to be addressed, so they did, in fact, contract with the Maples Surgical Centre to do certain procedures.

Yet, Madam Deputy Speaker, here we have the first resolution from the Member for Fort Rouge contradicting exactly what her government decided to do. If you examine the resolution—and the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald), who I'm sure we'll hear from yet, chirps from her seat that this is, in fact, wrong, but I would direct the Minister of Health to the resolution saying: WHEREAS private facilities lure health-care professionals away from certain areas, and WHEREAS private clinics have a higher cost, yet it's this very government that contracted with a private clinic in response to the high wait times that we were here facing in Manitoba.

So it's interesting, and perhaps I wouldn't want to discourage the Member for Fort Rouge from continuing to contradict her government on certain things. She's following in the path for the Member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) who's contradicted past government policies. She's been following in the path of the Member for Radisson (Mr. Jha) who has contradicted past government policies. So it's a bold thing, actually, on your very first resolution, to come in and to defy a policy that your own government has put into place.

It's truly unfortunate because I think that the government in that case took the right direction. They saw that there was a need in Manitoba, they saw that there were people who were suffering in the system, and decided to, in fact, help those individuals out by contracting with a world-class facility, the Maples Surgical Centre, who said that they could do some of these procedures, do them effectively and do them in the publicly-funded health-care system which we all support here in this Chamber. There's no one, I believe, in this Chamber who doesn't support a publicly funded health-care system, and yet we have the Member for Fort Rouge (Ms. Howard) on her first soirée, her first effort on a resolution, saying that her own government was wrong to do it, that her own government made a mistake.

I wonder if she went, if she knocked on the Premier's (Mr. Doer) door—I'm sure that there's an open door policy to the Premier on the government side—if she went to knock on her own government's door and say to the Premier, you know, I think that we've made a mistake here, despite the fact that our

own government has put this in place, despite the fact it's been approved by our own caucus, I think that this was wrong, and I want to voice my concerns to that.

Perhaps she did, and perhaps the Premier said, well, you should bring a resolution contradicting what our government did to the House, coming forward and raising concerns about what we did. That certainly is a very tortured position I would say, and it really puts Manitobans at a loss in terms of what this government is trying to do in health care.

On the one hand, we have the government saying, well, we think it's good to contract with the Maples Surgical Centre to alleviate some of those long wait times that have grown under the NDP government. On the other hand, you have the new Member for Fort Rouge (Ms. Howard) with the, I'm sure the accreditation, the support of the Premier, coming forward with a resolution contradicting what her government did. All the while, Manitobans, I'm sure, are out there scratching their heads saying, what is it that this government stands for when it comes to health care? They say one thing, they do another, then they bring a resolution forward contradicting what they did, and all the while, people are unsure what the vision is for this particular government.

But I know that it must be difficult. It must take some amount of courage to bring a resolution to the House as one of your first acts as a new member contradicting your own government policy, Madam Deputy Speaker. I would never be one to encourage discord or be one to encourage division among New Democratic members on the opposite side of the House. But I would say that if there are other members, perhaps the new Member for Southdale (Ms. Selby), or the new Member for Kirkfield Park (Ms. Blady), who also want to bring forward resolutions contradicting their government's policy, they should do that. I know, in the spirit of bipartisanship, in the spirit of giving co-operation and some advice to the members opposite, I might make a suggestion.

One of the suggestions might be that they could bring forward a resolution that would contradict their decision to build a hydro power line on the west side of Lake Winnipeg as opposed to the east side of Lake Winnipeg, which has been the context of a number of discussions over the last few weeks, Madam Deputy Speaker. In relation to this particular resolution, I think that it's a relevant topic because

here we have the Member for Fort Rouge who has sat down and looked at a government policy that she disagrees with and says, well, I don't agree with what our government's doing here, and so I'm going to come forward and bring forward a resolution that criticises my own government—if she has the right to do that in a private member's resolution. But in the same way, the Member for Southdale, the Member for Kirkfield Park, new members also have that same right to bring forward a resolution criticizing their government for deciding to build a hydro line on the west side, the daffy detour, as opposed to the east side, the more direct line which also fulfills many of the objectives that we're looking for when we're looking for bipole 3.

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So I do this in the sense of co-operation, of good spirit, I think, in a very bipartisan way, to say to the members opposite that it's not wrong for you to contradict your own government. I certainly applaud the Member for Fort Rouge (Ms. Howard) for doing that, for coming forward and saying, I believe our government is wrong, and there certainly are other ways. There are other ways including the east-side, the west-side issue where they can come forward.

I do think it's important, Madam Deputy Speaker, to put on the record some of the concerns that are being raised regarding health care throughout the province when we talk about different sorts of delivery of health care. We know that the current health-care system is broken under the current NDP government. And while the publicly funded system serves Canadians well, and we all support the publicly funded method of health-care delivery in Manitoba and Canada, we know that there's a management issue, and there's a management problem with how health care is being delivered here in Manitoba.

In fact, whether it's my own riding where there are considerable wait times for surgeries, where it's, in fact, I believe, tripled, in the last two years or whether there are other members in the House—and I'm sure we'll hear from some of them—who have challenges with health care in their particular area, it's less about the debate about the system, which I think we all agree on. So there really is no debate about the publicly funded health-care system, but how that health-care system is managed is certainly a context for debate here in the Legislature and in the coffee shops and in the hallways of hospitals where

people are waiting for care, this debate can happen as well. And I think that the debate is worth having.

Why is it that when billions more resources for Manitobans have been poured into the health-care system, there are, in fact, less results? That's a very, very good question. I think Manitobans have the right to demand outcomes and not just simply putting money into the system but to really understand what they're getting on the back end of that health-care system. Instead of the wait times growing, instead of hospitals and ERs closing in rural Manitoba, instead of hospitals being under threat in our urban centre of Winnipeg, there should be real outcomes.

I know that my time is short, Madam Deputy Speaker, but I do want to commend in some way the audacity, the boldness of the Member for Fort Rouge, for bringing forward a resolution that directly contradicts her own government's position. While I might not necessarily agree with everything that she has said in that resolution, it does take some courage, as your first act as a member of the Legislature, to bring forward a resolution defying her own government's policy.

So with those comments, I look forward to hearing other new members for the New Democrats coming forward and defying other policies of their government.

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): It's my pleasure to stand today, to rise on this private member's resolution concerning public health care and the protection of it, and I am delighted to do so on the heels of the new critic for the opposition for health. As I said before, Madam Deputy Speaker, I welcome him to that role. I have said publicly and privately in the spirit of this bill that I believe that it's possibly the single most important job a leader can bestow on a member opposite, and it's an honour indeed for him, and I congratulate him for that.

Regrettably, Madam Deputy Speaker, he doesn't know what he's talking about, and that's a shame. But he's new, and so we'll give him an opportunity to learn and to grow, and that's great. What I did notice is while he was able, in all of the fervour and bombast that we've grown to love in the member opposite, to fill 10 minutes talking about the motives of the Member for Fort Rouge and the policies from that individual, but at no time were we able to hear the member opposite really stand firm and stand forthright on his position and indeed his party's position about the privatization of health care.

And who can blame him, because, of course, we know very clearly that the leader of his party back in April of '06 very clearly said to the *Brandon Sun*: We would give people the right to purchase private services. We know that members across the way stand firmly in their entrenched belief that health care should be based on the shininess of one's credit card, on the size of one's wallet, and not based on medical need.

Who can blame the member opposite for not wanting to out himself and out his party on their entrenched prejudice against all people in Manitoba getting health care when they need it, but rather just the privileged few? So we heard 10 minutes of the impugning of motives and the blaming and the alleged shaming of government.

What we didn't hear, Madam Deputy Speaker, was his position on this issue because it's a position that we all know and it's a position that we know that the members opposite don't want the people of Manitoba to be reminded of. Because the moment that they're reminded that the members opposite stand firmly that health care should be provided on the basis of one's wealth and one's medical need, we know that the people in Manitoba, and indeed Canada, who hold private health care in absolute low esteem and value the public health-care system in very high esteem, we know that the members opposite don't want the public to be reminded of that.

Let me just point out one of the many, many areas in which the member opposite was so wrong about what we're doing on this side of the House. It is a fact that we entered into a contract in a very pragmatic way with Maples Surgical Centre. It's a fact that we, also, in that agreement made unprecedented rules and unprecedented frameworks for how that arrangement was going to work. First and foremost, we made it very clear that the service would be based on medical need and not on the size of one's wallet.

We agreed in that framework we created, for the first time in Canada we had a rule that suggested that there would be no poaching of medical personnel. No doctors, no nurses would be poached from the public system to work in the private system because we've seen what's happened. We know that there's been much debate recently with the Canadian Medical Association, the president of whom went down in flames in the media for trying to suggest a scenario where we would see the hemorrhaging of the public system. We would see doctors, we would

see nurses going into the private system, and we've seen that work so miserably in other jurisdictions. So we made that unprecedented no-poaching clause in our agreement.

We also ensured, in that framework, that patient safety standards and accountability mechanisms would have to be in place. We would ensure that the process would be cost effective. That's a shame, incidentally, Madam Deputy Speaker, that the previous government, the Filmon government, didn't do such a thing. We know that back in the day when they were contracting out to private clinics the issue of cataract surgery, that they were paying about 30 percent more than we're paying now at the Pan Am Clinic. So the party that on one hand says that they're all about saving money, and I believe the term was management and cost effectiveness, they were setting money on fire when they contracted out cataracts. We're ensuring that we're having those savings.

The other part of that accountability framework, of course, was that along with cost effectiveness and being financially accountable and transparent, we also were absolutely clear that that arrangement would have to comply with the Manitoba regulations and, of course, the Canada Health Act.

Today must be a savings day because, depending on which the wind is blowing, the member opposite wants us to spend. Who can forget the impassioned letters in the local newspaper, the *Steinbach Carillon*, and the dramatic pleas, pre-election, or during the election, when the member opposite was talking about: Spend, spend, spend in my region, Mr. Premier. Spend, spend, spend at my hospital, Madam Minister.

I was really shocked that I did not, last week, receive a question from the member opposite pointedly asking about the terrific investment that we're going to be making in partnership with the South Eastman Regional Health Authority to redevelop that emergency department at Bethesda Hospital. Not one question, Madam Deputy Speaker.

But, today, he can talk about how we shouldn't be spending money on health care. Last week, we should be spending a lot of money. Three months ago, we should be spending more money than that.

But today in the context of a discussion of public versus private health care, an issue on which the member opposite won't take a position because he knows, speaking of contradictions, saying anything

sensible of the preservation of public health care would directly contradict what his own party is saying, the Member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson), the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen). He would be in direct contradiction to that, so he couldn't say anything about that. So he had to go back to the old standard refrain of members opposite, and that is don't spend money on health care because it's not pragmatic.

* (11:30)

The member opposite made mention of perhaps what causes the debate in health care, and that is the issue of wait times. He makes mention of the fact that people wouldn't want to look to the private system if we could bring our wait times down, but he doesn't make mention, Madam Deputy Speaker, to the reality. Yes, we've got more work to do and that's why we're working every day to bring our wait times down, but on the issue of diagnostics, we know that when the members opposite were last in government, 1998-99, we know that median wait time for an MRI, for example, was 28 weeks here in Manitoba, and we know today that the median wait time for an MRI is somewhere between six to eight weeks. That is a significant and dramatic drop in wait times. We've got more to do and that's why we can never relent, but to talk about the way things were versus the way things are, we know that we're working every day to keep public health care in the public consciousness and to make an environment where people don't have to look to the private scenario.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I could go on about our successes in bringing down wait times by over 50 percent in orthopedics. I could go on about other diagnostics. We're going to work every day to make our public health-care system and the professionals in it be able to do the best work possible. That's not going to come through privatization. It's going to come through the preservation of our public health-care system where our services are based on medical need, not on the size of one's wallet.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Again, what we hear from this government—and it's been a long history with them of nothing but fearmongering when it comes to this particular issue. They've even been cited in national media for the scope of fearmongering that this government puts forward when they don't even allow an honest and open debate about health care in Manitoba and what that health care needs to look like for patients.

The Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald), in putting forward her comments, certainly put forward over-the-top rhetoric. What she was putting forward was definitely more political than pragmatic. Without even looking at what is in the best interest of patients in terms of better access to care, how can we improve system capacity in Manitoba and in this country in a very logical and pragmatic way?

Almost every country of the OECD countries have moved in the direction of looking at some sort of relationship, and in many of their cases it's with private clinics, as this government is already doing. They have a relationship here with private clinics, and yet they sit and bash some of this, while at the same time they're actually partaking of it. If we look at other countries and what they're doing, Canada, Cuba and Korea are the three countries that are so entrenched right now in a certain way of providing health care, that we actually are depriving patients of what is needed when it comes to good access to patient care.

France has no waiting lists. In fact, I received a phone call last night from a family friend who has just ended up in a hospital in France, had an MRI within half an hour. We would never even hear of something like that in Canada. Yet we have this Minister of Health that stands up here and the member that put forward the resolution that just in basic NDP ideology stands up with absolute hostility to any open and honest discussion about what we can do to make access to health care better in Manitoba. Their ideology is getting in the way of an honest debate, and that is so unfortunate because what is going to happen in the end is Manitobans, patients, families are being deprived of at least the debate. We can't even have the debate because this government immediately goes down the path of fearmongering.

Nobody is talking about a private parallel system. All that has been brought forward is access to improved health care by utilizing the services of private clinics. Nobody cares, when they've got a health problem, who owns the bricks and mortar. I'll tell you, I get phone calls and letters every day from patients out there. They don't care who owns the bricks and mortar. What they want is good and timely access to health care. There's nothing worse than people out there in incredible pain, or with cancer or with any of the other myriad problems in health care, that are having to beg for health care in this province. How good is that for quality patient care? And yet we see a resolution like this that just throws the whole fearmongering issue right out there

and totally disallows what could be useful to the public in a good debate.

Their hostility showed when we discussed Bill 25 years ago and I see that it has not improved at all, either with the member that brought forward this resolution or by this minister, but we have seen with this Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) that for sure there's more politics involved in her decision-making than there is care about what is best for patients in Manitoba.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I am a nurse and I am passionate about Canada's health-care system, and I don't think you'll ever find us comparing Canada with United States. And the members across the way are chirping. Why would we want to emulate a system that is rated 37th in the world and we're rated better by the World Health Organization? We haven't even talked about the American system and trying to emulate it, and that's where this government has a problem. It's easy with their ideology and their fearmongering to get stuck in that myopic view of just look north and south, but maybe if they want to look at parallel systems, maybe they need to look at what's occurring right now within health care where WCB patients certainly have an opportunity to access care faster than anybody else in the public health-care system. It's happening right now, and yet this government tries to skew all their data, skew their information, stay stuck in their ideology and fearmonger to the nth degree.

But nowhere in all of this, Madam Deputy Speaker, do we hear this government talk about the huge amount of spending that they're putting into health care, and yet their health-care system in Manitoba is rated dead last by the Conference Board of Canada. They can talk about all their ideology and they can talk about how entrenched they want to be, but what is proven by actual data out there is that they are one of the biggest spenders in health care, that patients are not getting the biggest bang for their buck that they should be getting, and, in fact, they are rated dead last in terms of delivery of health care in this country. That is nothing to be proud of. I'm surprised that, in fact, that has not made it into the resolution.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the other thing they didn't talk about is that a third of the health-care dollars coming into Manitoba are coming from other provinces. We are one of the biggest recipients in this country, us and one of the Maritime provinces, in terms of transfer payments. What's going to

happen to health care when these transfer payments dry up and this government is going to be stuck out on a limb in terms of not being able to provide adequate health care worse than what is out there right now? They've boxed themselves in now. They've boxed themselves in with their ideology and when everything hits the wall, when those kind of dollars aren't flowing, when health care remains dead last in the country, when the transfer payments are no longer flowing here from other provinces so that this NDP government can spend it willy-nilly without data, I might say, because we don't have a good information technology system in place, I think they're going to find that they have boxed themselves in from having an open and honest debate.

* (11:40)

They also don't want to talk about the amount of money in health care that is going to administrative costs. We've seen it in all of the RHAs and we've seen it particularly with the WRHA where administrative costs have absolutely skyrocketed, and yet we don't see how, when they talk about savings from our hospitals, what savings? Everything that we have is going into paying for administration in health care, and we've got a government that has known about this for eight years and done absolutely nothing to address these admin costs where those dollars, instead of going to front-line health care, are flowing to pay the administrative bureaucratic costs of growing RHAs.

They didn't talk about their promise of ending hallway medicine and their inability to achieve that even with all of their dollars, that rural ERs are closed, that they sat on an alarming maternity report for two years, that there are patients that are waiting huge amounts of time before action is taken.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, there is so much more that could said about this. There are so many things that could be questioned in all of the preambles that do need more discussion, and I hope we do have more opportunity for that debate in the future. Thank you.

Ms. Sharon Blady (Kirkfield Park): Madam Deputy Speaker, I do find the vocabulary choices coming from members opposite quite ironic, and I don't think that irony is lost on other members of the House, terms like "fearmongering," "contradictory," "hypocrisy" and "ideology." I'm having interesting flashbacks to the months of April and May and the amount of fearmongering that took place on the steps of the Grace Hospital, a hospital which is now well

outfitted with a full complement of emergency room doctors. So I do find it, again, quite ironic and, like I said, the irony is not lost on others.

I also find a certain irony in that these comments are coming from people who promised 28 hockey players and no doctors. So my assumption would be that the team physician for the Jets would have been the one looking after the Grace ER come May 23, had members opposite formed government, but, as we can see, those of the province felt that the ones to trust in health care reside on this side of the House.

There is, in many respects, very little to say because, as has been laid out by my honourable colleague from Fort Rouge and by the honourable Madam Minister, we have been looking after things. There are no contradictions, Madam Deputy Speaker. This is about entrenching longstanding beliefs and policies to ensure that all people in this province are looked after.

When references are made to other locations, I'm curious as to how many members opposite have sought medical care in some of the locations that are brought up for comparison. Have you been to a hospital in the United States? I have. I have family employed as physicians, ironically, in the American medical system. I have family that have had to go through ordeals, and I truly mean ordeals, for simple procedures. I have also been a part of the medical care system in France, and you know what? I will take what happens here in Manitoba with all the little imperfections we still need to work out over a day in a hospital in the U.S. or in Paris, France, in a heartbeat. I also have family that have moved on to other places like Australia, Japan and Korea, and, again, the first thing lamented is the loss of the health-care system that they had access to here in Manitoba.

So before people start bringing out comparisons, maybe they should have actually been in those waiting rooms. They should know what they are actually facing. As someone with family, with children, who has been through the ER at the Grace, I know exactly how well that place operates. It has brought my children back to health, myself back to health, very quickly. So I find it quite, again, ironic to hear the term "fearmongering" coming from the other side of the House, because this side of the House has made sure that we allay the fears of people by providing them with quality health care, by making sure it is accessible for everyone.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this motion put forward merely reinforces not contradicts the longstanding policies of a government that ensures that every single citizen is adequately looked after based on their health needs, not on their bank balance or their credit card. Thank you.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to talk to the resolution which is before us. I want, first of all, to say very clearly to everyone here that we as Liberals support the resolution. We believe very strongly that we need a public health-care system, a public medicare system in Manitoba. Provided this comes up to a vote, we will be voting for this resolution.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to say that we believe strongly in the five principles of the Canada Health Act: principles of universality of coverage, of portability of coverage, of reasonable access to service, of comprehensiveness of service and of public administration. I also want to say that we have a bill, Bill 200, before the Legislature at the moment to support accountability as the sixth principle to be fundamental to the delivery of health care in Manitoba. We hope that the members of the other parties will support accountability in the delivery of health care. We believe this is fundamental.

We are rightly concerned about the state of health care in Manitoba. We are rightly concerned that the system needs to be more accessible instead of less accessible. We are rightly concerned that the system should be more efficient, not less efficient. We are rightly concerned that the system should be done in a way that is affordable and not in a way that costs more, although, clearly, what we are after here is to make sure that the dollars that we are spending are spent very wisely and that the dollars that we are spending are appropriate to the needs, but the dollars that we are spending are not spent in a way that causes a lot of waste and excess problems in the system, as indeed is currently occurring.

I would argue, Madam Deputy Speaker, that there are two major risks to Manitoba's public health-care system. The first of the risks, a great risk has come from the poor management of the NDP: the frustration of Manitobans over long waiting lists, the frustrations of Manitobans over too many medical errors and the frustrations of Manitobans over too much waste in the current system, to name just some of the frustrations.

Clearly, the poor performance of the NDP is putting the system at risk because citizens in

Manitoba are rightly asking and demanding and wanting, and appropriately so, better access, fewer wait times, shorter wait times. Indeed, Manitobans should have quick access to quality care.

I suggest to you, and I have talked about some of the major problems including last week, the problem of offloading by RHAs onto other RHAs, instead of providing quality health care as close to home as possible.

We also have the other risk of Manitoba's publicly funded health-care system and public medicare system, and that is the problem and the risk of a PC government privatizing the system, and we acknowledge that. But I want to say, and to speak specifically, specifically to our RHA report: *Delivering the Care You Need, When You Need It*, when we put on the table this report, not very long ago.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair.

We are very concerned about the system, about the need to reforms to the system. We have put forward a seven-point approach to make some major changes to the system.

First point would be accountability, setting accountability as a fundamental system and changing the system so it's actually lined up to deliver the accountability that Manitobans should have, instead of having as much waste as there is at the current time.

Second, we believe that timely access to quality care is fundamental and we have recommended a whole series of changes, including a guarantee that people would get quick access to quality care when they need it. We believe quality should be in that every Manitoban gets a quick access to quality care and that no Manitobans should have to wait the length of time that too many Manitobans are having to wait right now.

* (11:50)

Third, we want to see that patients and family physicians are put first in the system. Too often now family physicians are marginalized and patients and their care are not put first. We want to change this and make sure that, instead of the NDP bureaucracy-first approach, we put the patients and the family physicians first and make sure the system works well and that we create a really positive environment for family physicians who are working in Manitoba. I believe that will be very important in ensuring that

we've got the appropriate number of family physicians in our province and that they are available, and that no Manitoban is without the services of a family physician.

Fourth, we have made the case that we need specialist networks based on the same sort of approach as Alberta Bone and Joint Health in the bone and joint health area. This clearly is very important to Manitoba that we have province-wide specialist networks not specialist networks which are run by one RHA or another and that we have a system which works and gives you the co-ordination, the organization, the province-wide approach that dramatically improves care.

Fifth, we have put forward a number of recommendations to dramatically reduce medical errors in Manitoba on a province-wide basis. We believe this is important and that this is fundamental both to improving quality of care and to reducing costs.

Sixth, we have put forward approaches for better prevention of illness. We note that there hasn't been as much progress as there should have been under the NDP in this regard. Indeed, I had an NDP appointee to a regional health authority come to me and tell me in disgust that he thought that the current government was out to lunch when it came to a lot of aspects of prevention, and that's certainly been true.

Last, seventh, improved Aboriginal health care and co-ordination of health care for Aboriginal people. Clearly, there is much to be gained here in terms of improving care for Aboriginal people in much better working relationships between the province, First Nations communities, and the federal government.

There is much to do, Mr. Speaker, and so we support this resolution. We also support many fundamental changes as we've put forward in our RHA report to the system to improve the system in a major way and to make sure that Manitobans have quick access to the quality care they need when they need it. Thank you.

Mr. Bidhu Jha (Radisson): Mr. Speaker, I don't know how else to, but please—I feel very, very sorry for the Member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) and also the Member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) that they did not either read it properly or did not understand the resolution.

Reaffirming something is not contradicting. This resolution reaffirms what we are doing, establishes

the fact that we are to continue doing this but the Member for Steinbach perhaps is hiding or not really telling the truth that their whole strategy on health care is to sneak in somehow, install private clinics, pay for public purse and then slowly take over the medical system that is very, very dear to the Canadians.

That is the whole problem, Mr. Speaker, when we hear from the opposition. I have spoken many times on this particular aspect of health care and all I can say is that I was very impressed with the Member for Kirkfield Park (Ms. Blady) when she said go to the global scenes and see what's happening. So this is something I would very, very strongly support and like the opposition to realize that they are wrong. Thank you.

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): Mr. Speaker, I just want to thank the Member for Fort Rouge (Ms. Howard) for putting up this resolution as quite a debate that we can have within this Chamber. I think it's important that we debate the pros and the cons of the private health-care system, but we also, in this debate, reflect on the way things are going within this province. I am reminded of—it's 1999 when it was the Premier (Mr. Doer) of the province who said that within six months and, of course, \$15 million, he would solve the ills of health care within this province.

Well, the Premier—I find it interesting, but to date, we still have the same problems we had back then. Yet he said that he would fix them, that he would resolve the issues that are out there.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's good to continue the debate. I believe it's good if we look at ways of trying to improve a system that we have. I think all of us, collectively, would agree that it is important that we provide the best health care for people within our province, the best that is possibly available.

Mr. Speaker, I must also indicate that there are some myths that the members opposite continue to deal with. I'm not advocating that we go towards the U.S. style of health care. However, I do happen to have a sister-in-law who lives there, and she's the administrator of a fairly large hospital in North Carolina, and when I talk to her about the health-care system that they have—and, of course, the fact that members opposite would continue to indicate that if you don't have insurance out there, you're just bound to lie on the streets and suffer; you have no recourse. That, Mr. Speaker, is absolutely false. They have a

responsibility, whether the person has insurance or not, to give health care to people who need it.

Now, yes, there is that opportunity to buy health-care insurance. That is correct, but it is absolutely a myth that those who don't have the insurance out there are going to be dying as a result of it. That is not true. So, Mr. Speaker, we have, and I think I could give you, and cite, examples of people within this province who are struggling to survive because of the health-care system that this province has at this point in time.

I've got friends that need to have hip replacements or knee replacements. Do they get it? No. They're waiting and waiting. I've got a friend who's waited for two and a half years. He can't get what he needs. He needs to get an MRI, or he needed to get a CT scan, and what did he do? He went to Grafton. He paid for it himself. So do we have a flawless system within this province? Absolutely not.

I want to go back to the U.S. style. I've got a daughter who lives in Colorado. They do buy their own insurance, but I will indicate to you that, where the cost of that insurance is high, when I look at the kind of a tax structure that they are in versus what we have within this province, they are still ahead. They have a very good program and a very good health insurance plan.

So, Mr. Speaker, I believe that there are a number of myths that are being presented from the members opposite in this Chamber here. I'm not advocating that we go that direction. All I'm saying is that we need to look at this realistically.

Of course, as the Member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) so eloquently expounded at the outset here about the irony of the Maples Surgical Centre contracting, whereas here we have a government, we have a party in place who said they would never ever do that. And yet, somehow, I guess they saw—there was the light at the end of the tunnel—they saw that maybe this would be advantageous to somebody. So whether it was for political reasons or whether it was just to try and help someone out as far as health care is concerned, that they went that direction, that would be an interesting debate to have as well.

Why did they do it? Did they go out there and say, yes, we saw the error of our ways, and so consequently, we needed to go in that direction in order to provide better health care? The Member for Steinbach said, ah, there was an election coming, so

this was probably something that would be good for them to endorse.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not totally sure as to why they went that direction. As I say, whether they saw that this would be something that would be good for Manitobans, whether, in fact, it would help to improve the health care for the people, certainly—*[interjection]* I have just been encouraged to keep going, and I want to because I can cite many more concerns that I have within my area regarding some of the health care as we see it today.

I believe it is absolutely important that we try to improve health care within the province of Manitoba, and I want to cite the example of things that are happening in the Pembina constituency. Mr. Speaker, I'm absolutely proud and pleased that we had groups within our area that got together, that raised money, and they bought the CT scan, the equipment that's in place that's been—

Mr. Speaker: Order. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable Member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck) will have 4 minutes remaining.

The hour being 12 noon, we will recess and reconvene at 1:30 p.m.

CORRIGENDUM

Vol. LIX No. 14 – 1:30 p.m., Wednesday, October 3, 2007, page 735, the second column, first paragraph should read:

. . . Framework Agreement and the individual TLE agreements were signed under a PC government. What we don't support is the fact that 75 acres of land were transferred to Roseau River First Nation in the R.M. of Rosser without meaningful input from the municipality.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

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