



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

DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)

37 Elizabeth II

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Denis C. Rocan
Speaker*



VOL. XXXVII No. 34A - 1:30 p.m., MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 1988.



MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fourth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, September 12, 1988.

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Federal Government Provincial Patronage

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the First Minister (Mr. Filmon).

Late last week, the federal Government once again by-passed Manitoba in providing funding to a multimillion dollar oil sand project or oil mega project at Lloydminster, heavy oil, of course once again outside the Province of Manitoba. This time, Alberta and Saskatchewan are going to benefit from the munificence of the federal Government.

This weekend, a former senior environmental official informed us the federal Government has shafted Manitoba by supporting an irrigation project in Saskatchewan which severely threatens Manitoba's environment.

Will the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) tell this House when will Manitoba cease to be the victim of federal Conservative patronage?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, just in case the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) is not aware, I will tell her that we do not have any heavy oil here in Manitoba so we could not apply for that particular project. She is well aware of other programs and other initiatives that we are pursuing, and we are quite confident some of them will be recognized and supported by the federal Government when we have a specific proposal to put forward that requires federal aid.

With respect to the issue of the project in Saskatchewan—the Rafferty-Alameda Dam project—and the allegations of the effects that were made by the lawyer for the federal Government, I might indicate that my Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner) has had a number of meetings with respect to that particular project with both the federal Government and the Government of Saskatchewan. Unlike the predecessor Government, we have had our Minister of Natural Resources actively involved ensuring that Manitoba's interests were being protected. The previous administration would not meet with either Saskatchewan or the federal Government on those issues.

I will turn it over to my Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner) to give more specific details to the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs).

* (1335)

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, it is certainly reassuring to know that when we have a project, we might get it funded. We thought this Government was proactive.

Environmental Programs Rafferty-Alameda Project

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): We have a question, please, to the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Connery).

In light of these new revelations, has the Minister of the Environment changed his position with regard to the environmental implications of this project on Manitoba?

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister of Environment and Workplace Safety and Health): I can assure the Member opposite and the people of Manitoba that when we took office, we only strengthened the resolve to ensure the water quality and the quantity for Manitobans was there. We are very strong in our commitment to ensure that is there. As the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) said, the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner) is the lead Minister in the negotiations and we will have him answer that question.

Mrs. Carstairs: We have an Environment Minister in this province, and my question to the Minister of the Environment: Has he ever been consulted about the environmental impact of this project?

Mr. Connery: We have had many, many meetings on the environment issues and the impacts of the water quality and the water volume that is coming down the river from Alameda. As the Member should know, it is water quantity that is the concern because that will have the greatest effect on water quality. Since the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner) is the Minister who is negotiating with the federal Government, he will give you those answers.

Technical Committee U.S./Cdn. Environmental Study

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): To the Environment Minister: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Wildlife Agency and now a senior Canadian environmental official have all stated that it will have a negative environmental impact on Manitoba. Will the Minister now order an environmental impact study in this province?

Hon. Jack Penner (Minister of Natural Resources): I think it is time that the House knew that there has been an ongoing technical committee established by the Government of the United States, the Government of Canada, the Government of Manitoba and the Government of Saskatchewan. This technical committee has studied not only water flows but also water qualities, which will result as of the construction of the Rafferty-Alameda Dam.

The Province of Saskatchewan did an environmental impact study in their own province, but we must

remember that environmental impact study in Saskatchewan pertains to Saskatchewan only, as it only can. The Army Corps of Engineers in the United States has done, and is doing, an environmental study for North Dakota as it will affect North Dakota.

The technical committee has indicated that they will table their findings and their report at the beginning of September, and we are waiting for that report. However, if and when Manitoba would have or would do an environmental study, it would only be for within the boundaries of Manitoba and would not give us any environmental effects of water flowing from out of the Rafferty-Alameda system.

Mrs. Carstairs: My question to the Environment Minister once again, environment legislation makes it possible for him to conduct a study. Will he conduct an environmental impact study in Manitoba, for Manitobans, by Manitobans, to serve Manitobans?

Mr. Penner: If the Honourable Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) wants to waste the money of Manitobans to do a study that would indicate absolutely nothing until we have heard from the technical committee that has been established to study exactly this, can anybody in this House tell me why we should, until we have the results of that study of that technical committee, enter into another study which would cost large amounts of money, which might just be duplicating what was already being done?

* (1340)

Legislative Authorities Manitoba Impact Study Request

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): With a question to the Environment Minister (Mr. Connery) once again, if it is important enough for Saskatchewan to do impact studies and it is important enough for North Dakota, why is it not important enough for the Manitoba Environment Minister to do his job?

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister of Environment and Workplace Safety and Health): I would like to assure the Honourable Member that we are doing our job, that we have a committee in place that is looking at all the ramifications of all the areas involved, as the Minister for Natural Resources (Mr. Penner) has already said. We have that technical committee in place.

Once that report comes through, we will have an opportunity to review the recommendations, and I am quite sure that we will do—well, I am not sure. I know we will take the action that is required, but we have had ongoing meetings, we have had staff in Ottawa on an ongoing basis. There was a meeting last Friday of the individuals involved. Mr. Gottleib is meeting with the Minister of Natural Resources and myself on Tuesday. There is another meeting in Bismarck, North Dakota, on Wednesday.

Our departments are on top of this issue. We have a resolve to ensure that Manitoba has the best quality water and volume of water that we can obtain.

Tabling Assessment Request

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): In view of the fact that a former senior official to the federal Minister of Environment has indicated that the Rafferty Dam was approved as part of a backroom deal with Grant Devine, rather than after due consideration of Manitoba's concerns; and in view of the fact that the federal Minister did not even follow his own department's guidelines with regard to environmental assessment and review that called for a public inquiry by an independent panel on projects such as this before they are licensed; and in view of the fact that this incompetent Minister of Environment (Mr. Connery) says that it will have positive effects on the Province of Manitoba, will this Minister of the Environment now explain to this House and the people of Manitoba why he supports this project, and will he table that information on which he has based his assessment in this House today?

Hon. Jack Penner (Minister of Natural Resources): I want to indicate to this House that, as of June 22, I met with the Americans or my staffpeople met with the Americans, as well as with Canadian and Saskatchewan officials, to discuss the quantity and the quality of water coming down the Souris River.

On August 25, I met with the Deputy Premier of Saskatchewan, and we discussed quantity and quality of water coming down the Souris River. On September 9, my officials met with American officials, Saskatchewan officials and Canadian officials to discuss again the quantity and quality of water in the Souris River. We are, as the Environment Minister (Mr. Connery) has indicated, meeting again this week not only with the federal and American and Saskatchewan officials, but we are going to also meet with Mr. Gottleib to discuss the Souris project.

Now I want to indicate to you that this is more, by far, that we have done in the last three months than the previous administration has done in three years to deal with the environmental impact of water quality in the Souris River.

* (1345)

Mr. Plohman: The fact is that the federal Minister of Environment licensed that project on June 21 when this Minister was in office and when that Minister of Environment (Mr. Connery) was in office, and they did nothing at that time.

I would ask this Minister of Environment whether he will at this time, and the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner), stop blaming someone else for their incompetence on this issue, and demand that the federal Minister now pull back on that licence for Saskatchewan on that particular project and demand that the federal Government immediately undertake the studies that they had promised to the people of Manitoba and provide us with that information immediately before going forward and allowing Saskatchewan to go forward with that project.

Mr. Penner: I think the Honourable Member opposite should know that the licence issued to Saskatchewan

to start construction on the dam project states very clearly that the licence shall comply with any obligations and responsibilities which Canada may assume under any agreement entered into with the United States in respect to the improvement and any subsequent improvements or agreements thereof.

I think the opposite Member also needs to know that I personally wrote a letter to Mr. Clark asking that he go to the United States and ask the American Government to put in place somebody who will have the authority to give us the assurances that water flows coming out of North Dakota into Manitoba, in future, would be of the quality that is presently entailed in the agreement of 1959.

Mr. Plozman: I have never seen so much nonsense in my life. After the horse is out the barn, now he is going to ask for this information. The fact is . . .

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Government House Leader, on a point of order.

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): The Honourable Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plozman) has been up several times today to put questions, and he knows that at this point in the game a carefully drawn preamble is not even required at this point, just a question at this point of the proceedings.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank the Honourable Government House Leader. If the Honourable Member for Dauphin would kindly put his question.

Mr. Plozman: Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner) to table that letter that he said that he has written to Joe Clark. And I would also table at this particular time a chronology of the efforts that our Government undertook on this issue, as well as letters that we sent to two federal Ministers, McMillan and Joe Clark, as well as the . . .

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I have recognized the Honourable Member for Dauphin to kindly put his question. We are not tabling the reports.

Clean Environment Commission Public Hearings Request

Mr. John Plozman (Dauphin): If this Minister of Environment (Mr. Connery)—Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to table this information—will not contact the federal Minister of Environment, Tom McMillan, who issued this licence as a result of a backroom deal instead of on the basis of the interests of Manitoba, if he will not ask him to conduct the studies, will this Minister immediately convene hearings of the Clean Environment Commission so that Manitobans have an opportunity to voice their concerns on this project?

Hon. Jack Penner (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, not only has this Government clearly indicated that we will not stand for it, we will not stand for water qualities coming down that Souris River that

are of a lesser quality than they were prior to the construction of that dam.

Secondly, we have asked for assurances of substantial and substantiated water flows down that Souris River.

I think we need to indicate the kind of cooperation that we have received from the Americans, as well as from the Saskatchewan people, when it comes to not only water flow, because it is only in years like this when the pools in the Souris River, when the rivers such as the Souris River quits flowing, would become stagnant and the water would deteriorate to standards that we could not live with. It is because of constructions that have taken place on the Souris River on previous water retention systems that we have been able to ask our American friends to flow waters down that Souris that would give our people water, not only water of better quantity than what would have been flowed down that river had there not been any construction on that river but better quality water.

Not only have they complied with the 20 cfs. flow under the provisions of the 1959 agreement, but they have increased not only to 20 cfs. but to 35 cfs. to give us water down the Souris River, a good quality water.

* (1350)

Mr. Plozman: Mr. Speaker, this Minister of Natural Resources talks about cooperation.

I ask the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Connery): Was he consulted before that licence was issued prematurely by the federal Minister of the Environment, and does he agree with his colleague, the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner), that hearings of the Clean Environment Commission in Manitoba would be a waste of money?

Mr. Penner: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated to you before, we have a four-party committee that is looking into not only quantity but also quality of the Souris water coming down that river. I am quite pleased with the results that we have been able to obtain so far and the assurances that we have obtained up to now and during the last two months of discussions with our American as well as our Saskatchewan counterparts.

The letter that I received in response from Mr. Clark indicates very clearly that they are as concerned about water qualities for Manitoba as we are, and that we have assurances from the federal Government that no action will be taken that will deter the quality of water that we receive.

Rafferty-Alameda Project Manitoba Impact Criteria

Mr. Harold Taylor (Wolseley): My question is for the Minister of Labour and Environment (Mr. Connery).

The Saskatchewan Environmental Impact Assessment Studies on the Rafferty-Alameda have been faulted for their poorly done water quality studies and the fact that there is little downstream study that has

been conducted by them. North Dakota has had its Environmental Impact Assessment conducted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. That report, although relegated to North Dakota, makes negative comments on what will happen to Manitoba's water.

On four other occasions, we on this side have asked for further information for a complete study, along with public hearings.

Mr. Speaker, my question is that without adequate data, it is absolutely impossible to know what the potential impacts are on Manitoba from the Rafferty-Alameda. What data, if any, is the Government using to come to its absurd conclusions?

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister of Environment and Workplace Safety and Health): As the Member knows, we have already told him, there is a technical committee in place that is negotiating.

I think, Mr. Speaker, the important issue that people of Manitoba should know is that the main body of water which comes into Manitoba at the North Dakota-Manitoba border originates in North Dakota. Prior to the dam going in, only 19 percent of the water that enters Manitoba from North Dakota originates in Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan, by law, has the right to withhold or to impound 50 percent of that water. What we will be seeing, Mr. Speaker, is about 10 percent of the water coming into Manitoba, originating in Saskatchewan. Our concern is with the water coming out of North Dakota, the quality of water and the volume of water. Lake Darling is the major structure that controls the flow of water into Manitoba.

The Minister of Natural Resources' Department and the Department of Environment are working in close cooperation with the federal Government. We are having consultative talks to ensure that Manitoba will at least maintain its existing flow of quality and quantity. We are trying to increase the volume of water that Manitoba will be receiving under the 1959 International Agreement.

Souris River Agreements Signed

Mr. Harold Taylor (Wolseley): A question to the same Minister, my question is to the Minister of Labour and the Environment (Mr. Connery). Given that there is insufficient water in the Souris River basin in Saskatchewan to fill the Rafferty-Alameda reservoirs and that there is consideration to take more of Souris water than 50 percent and also to divert South Saskatchewan water south to fill those reservoirs instead, Mr. Speaker, what studies has this Minister ordered to carry out on the impact of those further water diversions on the northern Manitoba fishery and on the generating capacity potential being limited of Manitoba Hydro?

Hon. Jack Penner (Minister of Natural Resources): It becomes fairly evident when you listen to the questions coming from Members opposite that they have very little understanding of the real world out there.

When we talk about the ability of towns such as Souris to be able to avail themselves of a quantity of water; when we talk about the ability of farmers being able to avail themselves of a quantity of water that their cattle and their farms are being able to be maintained; when we talk about quality of water down in the Souris; when we talk about the whole debate and discussion that has gone on in the last two or three months; when we talk about the processes that we have initiated as a Government, then it becomes fairly evident that, if the Members opposite would want to come to my office and sit down and discuss privately where we were at at the discussions and the negotiations that were going on, we will provide them with that. But I will not stand here and debate or negotiate, either in the media or in this forum, the agreements that we are intending to reach with Saskatchewan and the federal and the American Government.

* (1355)

Mr. Speaker: Order. We are not debating. Order, please. We are not debating. This is Question Period. The Honourable Member for Wolseley, with a supplementary question.

Mr. Taylor: My question—and I hope it is to the Minister of Labour and the Environment (Mr. Connery) and not the Member further south. As a given, there are adequate resources in the province, both within his department and in the form of the International Joint Commission to conduct proper studies which would produce the information required. Will this Minister assure the House and all Manitobans that he will not concur in the Rafferty-Alameda project as proposed until some appropriate study has been carried out, or has he already signed away Manitoba's rights?

Mr. Penner: Mr. Speaker, I want to assure you and the House that nothing will be done to deteriorate and no agreements will be signed to deteriorate the water qualities on the Souris River.

Keystone Club Political Membership

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): So we see Rafferty-Alameda being proceeded with to help out Grant Devine at the expense of Manitoba, but we are familiar with this kind of thing, Mr. Speaker. We have seen untendered contracts to the friendly firms by this Government, travel business routed to friends, the wholesale replacement of boards and commissions, and now we hear about the Keystone Club.

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the First Minister. Has the Premier agreed to participate and have his Ministers participate in the Keystone Club, membership in which is obtained by the payment of \$1,000 to his political Party?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I suggest that the Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) consult his

colleague smiling, sitting behind him, because I recall when he raised this issue in 1981. He said that this was some secret organization that was going to somehow curry favour with the Government because these people were contributors to the Conservative Party. The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that Members of my Government will go and speak before the Keystone Club, as they will before the Canadian Club, as they will before the Chamber of Commerce or environmental groups or labour groups or any other groups in this province upon invitation. They will go and they will provide information and respond to questions openly and honestly about this Government and its intentions for the betterment of this province.

The Keystone Club is one of many organizations that my Ministers will speak at and provide information to. We are meeting with the Young Presidents' Organization some time later this fall, literally hundreds of groups that we will go and speak before and provide information about all the plans, all the commitments, all the ideas we have to make a better province and a better life for Manitobans.

Mr. Alcock: Mr. Speaker, I would be interested in knowing the fees he is charging those groups.

I am glad though he referenced the Member for St. Norbert (Mr. Angus), because it was in fact during the Lyon Government the Member for St. Norbert made that comment. He suggested that, since the City of Winnipeg could not get access to the Government, perhaps the City of Winnipeg should purchase a membership in the Keystone Club because that seemed to be the only way in which you could in fact get . . .

Mr. Speaker: Will the honourable Member kindly put his question?

Mr. Alcock: However, I would like to ask the First Minister (Mr. Filmon), Mr. Speaker, is it the policy of this Government that some Manitobans shall have easier access to the Government than others, access determined by a donation to his political Party?

* (1400)

Mr. Filmon: No, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that the Member for St. Norbert (Mr. Angus) was as wrong then as the Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) is today in his allegation. I can also tell him that, of my own free will, I am a member of the Keystone Club, as are several members of my administration. They believe in supporting their political Party and they make financial contributions to the political Party, just as I see when I review the reports of contributions made by Members opposite that all of them make contributions, or many of them, to their political Parties. That is the way in which we fund our elections. That is the way in which we fund the efforts of our political Parties and we make those contributions. But I say this, Mr. Speaker, that under no circumstances do I accept access to me or to my Party based on political preference, based on membership in a Party or membership in any other organization, or contributions to our Party, under no circumstances whatsoever.

Mr. Alcock: I am certainly pleased to have that reassuring statement from the First Minister (Mr. Filmon).

Perhaps then, in the spirit of open Government, you might tell us how many members of the Keystone Club have received appointments from this Government or are members of firms that have received contracts from this Government?

Mr. Filmon: To be quite frank with you, I could not tell the Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) the answer to that because I do not make myself familiar with who is a member of the club. It never affects any decisions that I make or any information that I make. There may well be hundreds of members of the club.

Under those circumstances, if some of them happen to get appointments or work, it is because of the fact that we are making appointments of people from all walks of life, from all areas of the province. Under those circumstances, there may well have been some appointments that we have made who were members of the club. If so, I can assure the Member for Osborne it was not because of their membership in the club that they were appointed.

Unemployment Figures Minimum Wage Stats

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): I would like to address a question to the Minister of Labour (Mr. Connery) who, in answer to a question from my colleague, the MLA for Logan (Ms. Hemphill) last Friday, the Minister inferred that an increase in the minimum wage in Manitoba was the reason for the worsening of the youth unemployment in this province. But, Mr. Speaker, the recent statistics published by Statistics Canada do not provide evidence of this. What the figure shows is that unemployment has worsened August over August, this August compared to a year ago, for those over 25 than for those under 25. For the youth, the increase went from 11.0 percent to 11.3 percent, that is 0.3 percent increase, those over 25 it went from 5.9 percent to 6.5 percent, an increase of 0.6 percent, substantially quite a bit more.

My question for the Minister then is this: How can the Minister conclude that worsening youth unemployment is a result in the increase of the minimum wage?

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister of Labour): What I said on Friday, and I guess the Member was not listening too well, there was a variance in the minimum wage for those between 15 and 18 and for those over 18. I said to the Member that I asked the Department of Labour to do a study to see what effect that had on the employment of young people between the ages of 15 and 18. They included Saskatchewan in there because they also have no spread between the minimum wage to young people. The conclusion of that study showed that unemployment to youth between 15 and 18 increased. There is no increase in unemployment that is acceptable to any Government and much less to this Government. My colleague, the Minister of

Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Ernst), is working hard with the rest of his colleagues to ensure that we can have the best work climate for people in Manitoba. We are not happy with any of those statistics, and we will work our hardest to make Manitoba a good place to work and where the unemployment level is low.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Mr. Speaker, the Minister refers to studies and surveys and so on. I would like to find out from him exactly what survey he is talking about or what study he is talking about, because there have been many studies and many surveys, and there are arguments on both sides of that theoretical question. I would suggest that if he is so positive about a study or a survey that he has done with information that he has that he should table it in this House. I would ask him at this point to table that information for all Members of this House.

Mr. Connery: Mr. Speaker, obviously the Member for Brandon East (Mr. Evans) thinks that this is a fictitious survey that was done. I would be very pleased to table this study. It would have to be tomorrow because I do not have it in my hand but I would be very pleased for him to peruse it.

Training for Tomorrow Program Cancellation

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): A supplementary question about studies and surveys, it was indicated the other day in Interim Supply that the Training For Tomorrow Program -(Interjection)- My question is with regard to the Training For Tomorrow Program which was terminated as of June 30, a major multimillion dollar job program involving small business giving permanent jobs to mostly young people. This has been terminated. I would like to know from the Minister what studies has his department or has the Government concluded to stop this major program which has given thousands of jobs to young Manitobans over the years? What studies have you done there?

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I have asked our department to do further studies on the employment and the effects of various programs, but that will come forth in a matter of time. When we have that information available for the Member for Brandon East (Mr. Evans), we will make it available. We are concerned as well—and I respect the Member for Brandon East being concerned about unemployment in Manitoba. We are equally or more so. When I have more information for the Member for Brandon East, I will make it available.

Human Rights Code Minimum Wage Reduction

Mr. Allan Patterson (Radisson): My question is to the Minister of Labour (Mr. Connery). On Friday, the Minister stated his concerns about the minimum wage for younger people, the teenagers of 16 and 18, and we all recognize that unemployment among youth is high and that solutions for this problem are very desperately needed. This Government must indeed be short of ideas

and solutions if the only manner in which it feels a problem can be dealt with is by introducing such aggressive measures as lowering the minimum wage. Let me assure the Minister that the higher minimum wage is not the cause of youth unemployment in Manitoba, but rather his Government's lack of initiative in this area. Furthermore, any such action would result in a clear violation of the Manitoba Human Rights Code.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Radisson, to finish his question.

Mr. Patterson: My question is to the Minister: Is he going to recommend the lowering of the minimum wage for those under 18?

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, all decisions on the minimum wage go before Cabinet, as you know. Appropriate recommendations will go before Cabinet and those decisions will be made. I do not foresee any lowering of any minimum wage personally.

Mr. Patterson: Mr. Speaker, to the same Minister, will the Minister authorize a study to determine how the lower minimum wage will disrupt the labour force by inciting employers to hire workers under the age of 18 rather than pay the higher wage to older employees.

Mr. Connery: Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate when the Member has written questions and cannot discern from the first answer that, no, we are not looking at lowering the minimum wage. If anything, we look for the highest wages possible in Manitoba, because people of Manitoba deserve the best.

* (1410)

Youth Employment Incentives

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Radisson, with a final supplementary.

Mr. Allan Patterson (Radisson): A second supplementary, what programs will this Government introduce and initiate to focus on youth employment opportunities?

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister of Labour): As the Member knows, our department does not initiate programs. The Minister of Community Services (Mrs. Oleson) does, through her portfolio and, with the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Ernst), they generate the program for employment. We do the recording and the reporting, and those initiatives will come from those departments.

Discriminatory Wage Policy

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): As Youth critic, I have some further questions for the Minister. Over the weekend, we have seen a bit of a flipflop on the part of the Minister, who last Friday was talking about rolling

back the minimum wage for young people. Now he is suggesting he is not going to roll it back.

My question, however, to the Minister: Will he say categorically now that he will not have a discriminatory wage policy of any kind? Will he ensure the move of the New Democratic Party when it was in Government to equalize the minimum wage between young people and other Manitobans will be kept, as is the case in seven jurisdictions across Canada?

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister of Labour): You can be assured that this Government will introduce no discriminatory wages of any kind in Manitoba. The actions of this Government will be to ensure the maximum employment of people in Manitoba, whether they be youth, whether they be males, females, whether it be affirmative action group people. We will attempt to ensure a job for every Manitoban. As everybody knows, that is not possible to make sure that everybody has a job. We would like that, but we will ensure that the employment rate will be the highest possible in Manitoba. We are concerned, we are acting and, along with my colleagues, we are trying to make Manitoba a good place to live and a good place to work.

Mr. Ashton: I assume by that answer that question is, yes, there will be no discriminatory wages of any kind affecting the minimum wage. Given the fact that over the weekend the Minister has undergone a miraculous conversion in terms of economic policy, will he now also support the reinstatement of the many Jobs Fund programs that directly provide job creation for young people that this Government is talking about cutting?

Mr. Connery: Well, as the Member knows, that does not come under my jurisdiction. It is a matter for Cabinet, and Cabinet does what they believe is in the best interests of Manitoba. We have made many decisions over the last few months, all of them in the best interests of Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Thompson has time for one final question.

Mr. Ashton: My final question to the Minister, I wonder if the Minister could save himself, this Government and this Legislature some embarrassment in the future and indicate that in the future he will consult about any statements on policy he makes, in this case for example, with groups affecting young people and other Manitobans who are concerned about it, and not come in and make statements that he then turns around one weekend later and has to disown because he has obviously been taken to the woodshed by his Premier (Mr. Filmon).

Mr. Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

NON-POLITICAL STATEMENT

Mr. Mark Minenko (Seven Oaks): I would like to ask leave of the House to make a non-political statement.

Mr. Speaker: Does the Honourable Member for Seven Oaks (Mr. Minenko) have leave? (Agreed)

Mr. Minenko: On the first day of the Jewish New Year, I would ask that all Members of the Manitoba Legislature join me in commemorating the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the State of Israel. Each year on April 22, Jews around the world celebrate the day when the State of Israel was born. Earlier this year, on April 21, the Jewish community in Winnipeg commemorated this event with song, dance and speeches at the Centennial Concert Hall. Throughout 1988, the Jewish community has held many events locally, nationally, and internationally to acknowledge the many achievements of this nation. These achievements include the agricultural miracle in the desert and the many achievements in the arts and sciences. The Jewish community in Manitoba has contributed to these successes. Manitobans have assisted with many of the projects in the fields of education, industry and culture.

I would ask that in this year when we are commemorating the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the state of Israel, all Members of the Manitoba Legislature join with me to acknowledge the contribution Manitobans have made to the Israeli state. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Mr. Harold Taylor (Wolseley): I have a motion pursuant to Rule 27 of the House. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Niakwa (Mr. Herold Driedger), that the ordinary business of the House be set aside to consider an urgent matter of public importance, namely, that this Legislature urge the Government of Manitoba not to sign any agreement which would in any way concur in the Rafferty-Alameda Project as it is now proposed, until a full and proper environmental impact assessment conducted on behalf of Manitoba and including public hearings has been completed.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Government House Leader, on a point of order.

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I think each time a motion raised in this House under Rule 27 of our Rules relating to matters of urgent and pressing importance, each time I believe I have raised the question of the motion involved itself and, in this case, I do not believe that we have any exception to that practice of bringing forward motions under Rule 27 which are not, in my submission, Sir, correctly put to the House. In the case of the motion we have today, which I unfortunately have not been given a copy of, I think the motion calls upon something more than just a debate in this House today. Rule 27 calls for and deals with debate on a particular matter and, if I recall the motion read a moment ago by the Honourable Member for Wolseley (Mr. Taylor), it calls on the Government either to do something or not to do something, which amounts to a direction to the Government.

Mr. Speaker, I would read to you Rule 27, Subrule (5)(f): "The discussion under the motion may not raise

any question that, according to the Rules, may be debated only on a distinct motion under notice." Mr. Speaker, I now have in my hand the motion moved by the Honourable Member, and it urges the Government of Manitoba not to sign any agreement which would in any way concur in the Rafferty-Alameda project.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would like to thank the Honourable Government House Leader for his point. Rule 27(5)—I have taken under consideration Rule 27, and I will be coming back to the House with a statement on Rule 27.

Before determining whether the motion meets the requirements of our Rule 27, the Honourable Member for Wolseley (Mr. Taylor) has five minutes to state his case for urgency of debate on this matter. A spokesman for each of the other Parties will also have five minutes to address the position of their Party on the urgency of this matter. Therefore, I will be recognizing the Honourable Member for Wolseley to state

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Speaker, I was not quite finished my comments on the point of order. I am not discussing the merits of the issue. I understand I will be given five minutes to do that. I am discussing the legality, if you like, of the motion as it is put to you, under Rule 27. I am arguing on the point of order, that the motion as it is moved is improper and need not be discussed for five minutes by anyone because it is improper to bring to the House.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Opposition House Leader, on the same point of order.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Opposition House Leader): I am prepared to speak to this point of order, Mr. Speaker. I think, if the Honourable House Leader for the Government reads the motion carefully, he will notice two things. One is that it calls on the Legislature to urge the Government of Manitoba; that is the action that is requested. The second thing is, I think, if you were to research previous Speakers' Rulings, he will find that this motion, having noted his concerns in the past, is modelled on a motion that his Party put forward in the last House.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank both Honourable Members. I will take this matter under consideration. The Honourable Member for Wolseley has five minutes to state his case.

* (1420)

Mr. Harold Taylor (Wolseley): It is not with pleasure that I rise to address this matter but one of necessity, necessity because there is no other route available to us in dealing with this matter in that the Government on four other occasions before today has chosen not to give the answers or the action necessary to deal with it. There is no other opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to deal with the motion dealing with the Rafferty-Alameda project in that we are under Estimates process and, in that process, the Natural Resources and Environment departments will be discussed long into the process.

I am very sorry to say that the time management which was initiated by us has not been adhered to and, as a result, we may not get to the Department of Environment in this Estimates process. We definitely will not get to Natural Resources which is the other appropriate department, being that it is second to last.

Given that situation, the only opportunity available to us is to deal with this as a matter of urgent public importance through the method of putting into effect Rule 27. Now if one takes a close look, Mr. Speaker, at the precedents to be found in Beauchesne, Chapter 6, citing No. 285, 285 specifically gives very wide and considerable discretion to the Speaker to deal in matters of this nature and has been used on many occasions to allow a debate of this type and of this importance.

I would also though like to take a moment to cite No. 287, and 287 deals with the word "Urgency" and talks of the "urgency of debate." The reason it speaks to that is that there will be no other opportunity to bring this matter forward, therefore something else will happen. Because something else will happen—in other words, there is impending action—we will not in this House have the opportunity to deal with the matter of the Rafferty-Alameda, because potentially the Government will have signed away the rights of Manitoba without having done the proper studies. The purpose of this debate is to bring to the full the issues as they are on the matter of the Rafferty-Alameda and the potential impacts on things such as water quality, water quantity, wildlife, fisheries, power generation and those sorts of things.

We wish in this debate to be dealing with an urging of the Government to take action in this matter, as they should be responsible for. If, however, we do not have a debate on this matter now, potentially before the end of this month, the Government of Manitoba could sign away the rights of Manitobans to change the project, to amend that project, to get a full knowledge of the impacts of the Rafferty-Alameda project and all the ensuing repercussions, so that they know what must be changed and so that they know what has to be asked for in the way of compensation, so that it is not the public purse of Manitoba that will be tapped in the future to make amends to those Manitobans who are detrimentally affected by this sort of thing.

The time we have left is less than three weeks. That is rather significant. There is barely time for this Government to get a hold of this subject at long last, and to come to a conclusion that it does need more information before it can come to any conclusion, before it can sign away anything.

Therefore, I would urge you to look at those cites contained on pages 90, 91, 92 and 93 of Beauchesne to deal with this matter in what we think in proposing it from this side of the House a very fair, reasonable measure to bring forward debate, in fact, the only device available to bring forward debate on this matter. I am asking for your positive concurrence in allowing debate to take place this afternoon, and in the setting aside of the regular business of the Legislature of Manitoba. Thank you.

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): In addition to my suggestion to you a few moments ago about the inappropriateness of the resolution or the motion that we are now unfortunately discussing, I would like to make a few other comments.

I share with all Honourable Members a concern about seeing to it that our interests are safeguarded and taken care of, and that the rights and privileges of all Manitobans who are fortunate enough to live in this province are safeguarded by those Governments that have the power to do that.

I suggest to the Honourable Member, regardless of the fact that I object to the reference to the signing of an agreement in this resolution, the fact is that my understanding is that Manitoba is not required to either sign anything or not sign anything. So that on its face the resolution is patently ridiculous and the Honourable Member does not know what he is talking about when he brings this matter forward. But if it would please the Honourable Member to have a debate, well, there are opportunities available for the Honourable Member to debate.

I bring to your attention Resolution No. 3 for a private Member's consideration which happens to stand in the name of the Honourable Member for Wolseley (Mr. Taylor), the first person who would have an opportunity if, by leave, Honourable Members in this House should agree to a discussion of this matter in Private Members' Hour.

I am willing today to say that on behalf of the Honourable Members on this side of the House, leave would be granted for today's Private Members' Hour to proceed directly to Resolution No. 3, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Wolseley (Mr. Taylor). Yet the Honourable Member did not see fit to come forward and ask me, through his House Leader (Mr. Alcock), if we would agree to such a thing. There seems to be something else involved here and perhaps I will leave it to your imagination, Mr. Speaker, because there are rules about what one can and cannot say in this place.

Citation 287 of Beauchesne refers to urgency, which is one of the requirements under our Rule No. 27. I will read Citation No. 287 for Honourable Members: " 'Urgency' within this rule does not apply to the matter itself, but means 'urgency of debate', when the ordinary opportunities provided by the rules of the House do not permit the subject to be brought on early enough and public interest demands that discussion take place immediately."

Mr. Speaker, what is different today from the situation that existed on Friday or the situation that existed previous to that? I suggest to you that the main research done by the Liberal Party is the research provided to them by the Winnipeg Free Press which refers to one Elizabeth May, a former federal employee, who has made a certain statement which happens to be similar to statements by the Honourable Member for Wolseley (Mr. Taylor). All of a sudden, the Honourable Member for Wolseley sees some kind of urgency here that did not exist last week.

The other point is that the Honourable Member for Wolseley and all Honourable Members in this place,

who have not used the privilege, have the right to use their right of the use of the grievance rule in our Rule Book to have a debate on this or any other matter.

So, Mr. Speaker, on pretty well every account, the Honourable Member is out to lunch on his application today. He and others in the Opposition do not know how to draw a resolution for this kind of debate. I have referred to this on each and every occasion about the form that these resolutions take. Some Honourable Member might be able to find some examples somewhere that an improper resolution was allowed once before. I suggest that one precedent does not a custom or a usage or a tradition make, and that we better be careful before we head off on these dangerous paths on how we are going to use our Rules for the future. I suggest that the format of this Rule makes it absolutely impossible to go ahead at this point.

If that should fail, which I suggest it should not on the basis of the Rules, the other arguments that I make are equally as strong and I suggest that the Honourable Member has other opportunities. The matter is important but it does not fall under the definition of urgency set out in Citation 287 of Beauchesne. The debate referred to by the Honourable Member does not fit with our Rule No. 27. I make those arguments strongly. The Government of Manitoba has business to do. The Honourable Member for Wolseley (Mr. Taylor) is obviously on his own agenda and it really has nothing to do with what is right and what is the best thing for the people of this province.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) will also have five minutes to address the urgency.

Mr. Jay Cowan (Churchill): The Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger) asked me what I think. The Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) tells me not to think. As much as I like to follow his example in this House, I am afraid I cannot on this occasion, nor can I allow this opportunity to speak to this call for an emergency debate by the Liberal Party to go by without making some note of the remarkable transformation that enables them to put forward their call for an emergency debate without even the slightest hint of hypocrisy, without even the slight blush nor embarrassment.

* (1430)

No one should be too surprised at anything they do inside this House since last Thursday when they opened their arms and embraced the Member for Springfield (Mr. Roch), as they would a long-lost brother, and immediately called him one of their own. Now they are calling the emergency debate process one of their own. That is sort of political opportunism. One has to question just who took most advantage of the opportunity I just referenced last Thursday. It should clearly demonstrate their abilities to change their political stripes as easily as they change their mind, and indeed they have changed their mind on emergency debates by their call for this particular one.

Now I make that point because this resolution, this call for an emergency debate does signal a 180-degree

turn. It is the second one we saw today in this House. We saw one on the part of the Minister of Labour (Mr. Connery) with respect to comments he made last Friday. He did not do a flipflop. He did backward cartwheels down from the Premier's Office to his own after he was called in to bring about that remarkable change. But it does represent a 180-degree turnabout from their previous position on emergency debates in this Legislature.

So in determining whether or not this debate or at least the need for this debate is urgent under the rules of the Legislature, one must put it in a proper context. In order to do that, one must look at how the authors of this motion have responded to requests for other emergency debates on other subjects during the Session. On July 22, they spoke and voted against an emergency debate in support of the In-Vitro Fertilization program. They voted with the Conservatives against childless couples—you can keep shaking your head, Mr. Premier (Mr. Filmon).

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. We are discussing this matter of urgent public importance.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. This is a serious matter. The Honourable Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) will address this issue.

Mr. Cowan: At that time, they did not think it to be urgent. At that time, they said that the NDP were only grandstanding and that they were opposed to that debate. They were opposed at that time because they did not think that it fit within the rules that are required for emergency debates. So, either as justification or a blatant excuse they said, and I am quoting them, that it did not fit within "... the certain rules which are required for emergency debates, which said that debate was out of order unless there was no other opportunity to discuss the subject in the House," and they mentioned some possible opportunities for discussion such as the Question Period -(Interjection)- And Budget and Throne Speech, and we will come to that. The Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs) also tried to excuse away the Liberal's decision to vote against supporting the in-vitro program by stating that she believed that the Government would act on this program

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I have asked the Honourable Member to state quite clearly the urgency of the matter before the House at this time. The Honourable Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) will kindly address the issue.

Mr. Cowan: Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, I have mentioned why it is on numerous occasions the Liberals have voted and spoken against emergency debates referencing the rules. They referenced the rules; I have referenced the rules. I will continue to do that as I conduct an historical overview of why it is we should deal with their request for urgency in this instance, as compared to how they dealt with urgency in previous instances.

She also strongly objected—and listen very carefully for the word "rules" here—to what she said were "... attempts to twist House Rules," when the NDP called for an emergency debate on that important issue. Perhaps it is only a twisting of the Rules when the NDP calls for it and not when the Liberals call for it.

It is interesting to note that the Liberals were wrong when they thought that the Conservative Government would act before the Budget and, for that reason, one has to note that just today we heard on the radio that the In-Vitro Fertilization program could not start up for an entire year now even if approval was given because they thought they would act before the Budget. They were wrong in that particular instance. They were wrong again on July 27 when they voted and spoke against a resolution called by the NDP for an emergency debate in support of the Port of Churchill.

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

I have received the required prior notice of the Honourable Member's matter of urgent public importance. For such a matter to be given priority over the regularly scheduled business of the House and to be debated immediately, there must be no other reasonable opportunity to consider it. I believe, in this case, there are other reasonable opportunities such as: during examination of the Estimates of the Manitoba Water Services Board under the Department of Agriculture, which are to be considered next in the Chamber; by raising a grievance when the motion to go into Committee of Supply is before the House; or by introducing a Private Member's resolution.

If the House were to grant unanimous consent, it would also be possible to continue the debate on Resolution No. 3, introduced by the Honourable Member for The Pas (Mr. Harapiak), in Private Members' Hour today. Because the agreement respecting the Rafferty-Alameda project is not due to be signed until the end of this month, I have some difficulty accepting that the public interest will suffer if this matter is not debated today.

In comparing the motion of the Honourable Member for Wolseley (Mr. Taylor) with Private Members' Resolution No. 3, I note that both motions propose the holding of public hearings into the impact of the project. Admittedly, in one case, the hearings are to be conducted by the federal Government and, in the other, on behalf of Manitoba.

Our rules stipulate that a motion respecting a matter of urgent public importance shall not anticipate a matter to which a notice of motion which has previously been given and not withdrawn. I believe that this matter does anticipate Private Member's Resolution No. 3.

With respect, I must therefore, in accordance with our Rules and practices, rule the Honourable Member's motion out of order as a matter of urgent public importance.

The Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, it is with great regret that I must challenge your ruling.

Mr. Speaker: Call in the Members. Yeas and Nays? Okay. The question before the House is: Shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained? All those in favour of the motion, please say Yea. All those opposed, please say Nay. In my opinion, the Yeas have it.

Mr. Alcock: Yeas and Nays, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Call in the Members.

The question before the House is: Shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained? All those in favour of the motion will please rise.

* (1510)

A STANDING VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:

YEAS

Burrell, Connery, Cummings, Derkach, Downey, Driedger (Emerson), Ducharme, Ernst, Filmon, Findlay, Gilleshammer, Hammond, McCrae, Mitchelson, Neufeld, Oleson, Orchard, Pankratz, Penner, Praznik.

NAYS

Alcock, Angus, Ashton, Carstairs, Charles, Cheema, Chornopyski, Cowan, Driedger (Niakwa), Edwards, Evans (Brandon East), Evans (Fort Garry) Gaudry, Gray, Harper, Hemphill, Kozak, Lamoureux, Maloway, Mandrake, Minenko, Patterson, Plohman, Roch, Rose, Storie, Taylor, Uruski, Wasylcia-Leis, Yeo.

Mr. Clerk, William Remnant: Yeas, 20; Nays, 30.

Mr. Speaker: The ruling of the Chair has been overturned. The question before the House is: Shall debate proceed?

All those in favour, please say Yea. All those opposed will please say Nay. In my opinion, the Yeas have it.

Mr. Harold Taylor (Wolseley): The issue before us is the Rafferty-Alameda project in southwestern Saskatchewan. Included with that are a series of dams for the purpose of irrigation of farm land, for flood control and, in the case of the Rafferty, as a cooling pond for the new Shand Generating Station to be constructed by Saskatchewan Hydro.

This is a Saskatchewan project with significant impacts on North Dakota and on Manitoba. The Province of Saskatchewan has been issued a licence by its Environment Department after it carried out an environmental impact assessment study. Would that that study have been better done, because there are very serious questions as to the water quality modelling that was done for that study, both in the sense of inclusion of historical data and in the calibration of the models employed, which puts in question the data being brought forward by Saskatchewan as to its negative impacts downstream on both North Dakota and on Manitoba.

(Mr. Deputy Speaker, Mark Minenko, in the Chair.)

In addition, the Saskatchewan study does little work in the sense of further impacts downstream on both water quality and water flow as it proceeds through the rest of the system. To say the least, we do not have a system study. We have a partial and questionable Saskatchewan environmental impact study. We have a somewhat better environmental impact study for North Dakota, conducted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and with appropriate supplements from the U.S. Wildlife Service. That service concludes that there will be very major impacts on wildlife in both North Dakota and in Saskatchewan and alludes to same in Manitoba.

It does, however, make very special mention of flow problems in Manitoba. It talks about the fact that there will be, in a wet year, potentially 100 percent flow into Manitoba of the flows that we have today, but we have not had very many wet years. In the case of an average year of rainfall, there will be up to 85 percent of flow into Manitoba from the now diverted Souris River waters. In dry years, there will only be 45 percent of the present flows into Manitoba—only 45 percent? That is the sort of a year that we are experiencing now.

This is really quite significant on Manitoba as it potentially impacts fish in the river, it impacts other biota, it impacts wildlife alongside the river shores. It also speaks of whether there will be sufficient water quality given the impact of water quantity. Now when one talks about a diminution of water quantity, it is not a case of you just have less water to deal with. As soon as there is a diminution of water flow in a low-flow river, what you do start to have is more growth in that river because there are now slower, more sluggish flows. You have silting up of the shallows, you have reduction of the wetlands. There is a whole series of impacts that must be dealt with, ones that unfortunately we have not yet addressed in Manitoba.

Whether the NDP would have conducted those studies had they retained Government in the spring of this year, I would suggest, may be debatable. It may be debatable in the sense of what was their intent. It may also have been debatable given how the federal Government is playing this issue in the sense of including Manitoba as a participant because there has been very, very little information coming out of this.

The Premier (Mr. Filmon) has said across the House Manitoba does not have to sign anything, and he was addressing myself as the mover of the motion for the emergency debate. If that is the case, then something has changed radically, because in Canada over the last 50 years there has not been a water agreement signed in any fashion, whether it was sharing of water for irrigation, whether it was flood control, whether it was hydro generation, whether it was international locks on the St. Lawrence River, there has not been one document that has been signed between Canada and the U.S. that has not had the concurrence of the adjacent states and provinces. That goes for both senior Governments and is something that should be borne in mind.

If Manitoba is not signing anything, then I would suggest there is a dereliction of duty in the sense that Manitoba is not saying what it is it wants to do, what

its views are on this project, and it certainly does not have the studies to back up any sentiments it may have in any case, and that is the reason for today's debate. On July 27, on August 17, twice, and on August 23, I raised those matters before this House and got the, in effect, nil response from the Minister responsible, the Minister of Labour and Environment (Mr. Connery), and note that I put Environment second because that is what happens here in this province. Environment is very much secondary for the carryings on of the Filmon Government.

We have today the example of answers being attempted to be put on the record by the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner) instead of the Minister of Labour and Environment (Mr. Connery). I guess he does not read the same document that I read or he certainly does not read it in the same way and have the same understanding of English that I do.

This document says very clearly that North Dakota is not likely to be able to meet the statement in the 1909 Water Boundaries Treaty between Canada and the U.S. in that it will send across waters of a deleterious nature, waters that are of not the same quality as going across that boundary today, and ditto for Saskatchewan. I would suggest that this Government can no way possibly negotiate fully without having that sort of information.

* (1520)

On the other hand, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) says we have nothing to sign. At the same time, in this House, we have had comments from the Minister of Labour and Environment (Mr. Connery). In private conversations, four times he has told me, "Harold, we have negotiated down there." And I believe Manitoba does have negotiators down there. There has been talk about the informal relationships that go on with the U.S. and Saskatchewan authorities at the technical level.

But how can you negotiate for Manitoba if you do not have the backing? We have a partial Saskatchewan study, we have a better U.S. one, we have got nothing in Manitoba, and we do not have a system study. So let us get serious about this issue. Let us have Manitoba do its work for a change here on this matter. Let us have those things carried out properly.

And yes, there is a sign off, and the Minister of Environment (Mr. Connery) has said there is a sign off, and that is normal on international agreements of this type that there is an annex to those agreements in which the lower levels of Government, the adjacent provinces and states, do sign off. That is when you put in conditions to the agreement, and that is when you amend projects because of a study having been carried out.

Manitoba does not know whether we have to amend this project. It does not know it because it does not have the basic information. If we do like it, after amendment or not after amendment, we must know the impacts because the impacts will have dollar consequences for the province. We should not, as the Province of Manitoba, be funding those consequences. The proponents of the project, i.e., Saskatchewan and

North Dakota, should be the ones that pay for those consequences. So how is there to be compensation? How do you calibrate that compensation when you do not know what the heck the impact is going to be? A great way to negotiate!

I hope the Premier (Mr. Filmon) is listening well, because I am hoping after this and the attendant press and public concern that will come of this that there will be direction given to this project. I am hoping we are not going to see the Americans go through with this and provide this money now. I hope we see a moratorium. I hope we see that money lapse for a year and the U.S. has to go through its financial process in the next fiscal year with hopefully a new administration in place which will give some cognizance to its own American reports. There will be time to think this out properly and we will not see the Rafferty-Alameda project implemented in the fashion that it is today because it would be harebrained to have this happen.

I think the dereliction of duty that we have seen on the opposite side of the House is indicative of the lack of seriousness that this Government takes on environmental matters. Whether we are talking the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Connery) or we are talking the kiss-off today and the lack of understanding today by this Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner), we are seeing here where the Filmon Government does stand on environmental matters and on matters important in this nature to Manitobans all over the province.

I hope there is a realization in southwest Manitoba what can happen out of this. The flows on the Souris River in Saskatchewan are such that, if Saskatchewan takes its 50 percent as it wants—and it wants more than that. I would like that on the record. They are already negotiating for 60 percent. They cannot possibly fill those reservoirs in a reasonable length of time. We are talking two to four decades. They are going to tap waters in the wetlands habitat and, more importantly, they are going to tap South Saskatchewan waters, bring it through the Qu'Appelle, through a connecting corridor, down to the top end of the Moose Mountain Creek, and thereby take waters away from northern Manitoba's fishery and northern Manitoba's power generating capacity. That requires action.

Hon. Jack Penner (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is certainly with interest that I listen to the Honourable Member from across the way on some of the comments that he has made regarding the Souris-Rafferty project in Saskatchewan. There are a number of issues that he raises that are Manitoba's concerns and will be Manitoba's concerns.

There are some inequities or inaccuracies that he states. He states the wildlife organization from North Dakota—he indicates that there will be severe damage to Manitoba. I suggest to him that he must be reading a different document than what I have been reading.

The Souris River is an important waterway for Manitoba, and hopefully will remain a significant waterway for Manitoba. It supplies water to numerous communities in our province, as well as individual

farmers and others who rely on the Souris River for water. There has been a project constructed on the Souris River some number of years ago which, of course, formed Lake Darling in North Dakota. Would it not be for the water retention capacity of Lake Darling in North Dakota and the cooperation that we have had from North Dakotans at this time, there are some of our communities and individuals living along that stream who would simply have been without water for some time this summer. It is because of the water retention dams that have been built and constructed in the Souris watershed that we have in Manitoba, in fact, been able to ensure our communities that they will have water and that they will be able to remain viable.

The quality of water that the Honourable Member refers to is something that is of concern to all Manitobans. We are as concerned on this side of the House as he is that the quality of water that we receive from other jurisdictions, whether it is our American friends or our friends from Saskatchewan or Ontario or any of the other provinces that flow water into Manitoba, that the quality be such that our communities are going to be able to use this water and use it in confidence.

The agreement, the Water Treaty of 1909, refers to a process which will be put in place or has been put in place that we will use. It is simply the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909 that I refer to. The original reference by Canada-United States requesting a joint commission, which was established in 1940, gives us the assurances that we will retain quality as well as quantity down that Souris River.

The other agreement that I referred to before is the agreement of 1959 which ensures Manitoba, during the months of June to the end of October, a flow of 20 cubic feet per second of water into Manitoba. Had it not been for the construction of Lake Darling and the dam that retains the amount of water behind Lake Darling, we simply would not have had the assurance that we would be able to flow that amount of water into Manitoba.

As far as Rafferty and Alameda are concerned, yes. The communities in North Dakota that live along the Souris River wanted, and have for many years, assurances and some sort of action taken by their Government to assure themselves that the large floods that cause huge amounts of damage to cities such as Minot would be constrained. The Government of the United States is going to contribute some \$41 million to the construction of a project in Saskatchewan that will retain those large fluxes of water that some of us experience periodically, especially those of us who are unfortunate enough to live in those areas that experience flood waters. I am well aware of what it means to live in a flood-stricken area.

The damages that have been estimated that would have been incurred by Minot, North Dakota, had not Lake Darling, had not other flood preventions been taken, could have been somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$380 million a few years ago when the high flood waters down the Souris River were experienced, \$380 million worth of damage plus countless other damages that were incurred that simply

we were not able to calculate, such as damages to our lands, damages to our infrastructures and countless other damages that simply I nor anybody else has any way of calculating. It becomes somewhat questionable why the Honourable Member would raise at this time or the Liberals across the way would raise at this time the environmental impacts to Manitoba.

* (1530)

Again I refer to the ability of the Rafferty-Alameda to maintain and retain those large fluxes of water that we experience periodically and that cause huge environmental damage during the Spring of the year and those times of year that we have large rains, and we simply have no way of controlling those large amounts of water. This will allow Saskatchewan to retain those large amounts of waters behind the dam and regularly, on a regulated basis, flow some of those waters through that will prevent the kind of flood damage that I referred to a little while ago. Those were some of the advantages that were referred to my honourable colleague a few days ago in this Chamber.

It is also of immeasurable importance to people in the United States and the rest of the Souris River Valley who experience those kinds of large amounts of flood water coming down the Souris River. However, it is not only North Dakotans who experience those damages. It is also those of us who live in Manitoba—and the quality of water that is experienced during those flood periods, I say to you, and I say to you Mr. Speaker, are of such a quality that few of us would want to experience and few of us would want to have to consume.

The regulations of waters or the ability to regulate flows down the Souris because of construction of water retention facilities could be somewhat beneficial to Manitoba. The damages that were referred to by the Honourable Member from across the way, that were referred to by the Wildlife Federation of North Dakota, are also questionable—and they say "may be," not "will be." I think it is imperative that we pay attention to what is real and what is perceived in this debate.

We in Manitoba have indicated very clearly that we are willing to cooperate in every way to allow Saskatchewan and North Dakota to construct the two dams that are being referred to in this debate. However, we have also at the same time indicated very clearly that we will not stand idly by and watch our water quality deteriorate as well as our quantity be jeopardized.

As I have indicated before, we are doing everything in our power as a third-party participant in this project to assure that Manitobans will not be subjected to poorer quality waters than we have today and lesser quantities than we flow down that river.

Mr. John Plohma (Dauphin): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am very pleased that we have this opportunity to discuss this very important issue here today in the Legislature and hope that it does bring some sanity to the Government of Manitoba, these Members across the way who seem to think that taking someone's word

that there will not be any effects is good enough when dealing with the people of Manitoba. That is what concerns me, this blind faith, very similar to the kind of blind faith that they have taken with the Mulroney Government on the free trade issue. Without getting the facts together and knowing those facts and assessing those facts, they make a predetermined decision that everything is going to be okay. That is what worries us so much, the action of this Government in previous issues like free trade and very much the similarity of their performance on this particular issue.

This particular project has been of major concern to us for a number of years. As a matter of fact, back in 1985 already, we had officials meeting on this issue when we first became aware that Manitoba would be impacted by a project taking place in Saskatchewan. As far back as 1985, we have had numerous meetings with staff during that time, so I reject completely the statements of the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner) at this time that the former Government did not take its responsibility seriously on this issue and attempt to ensure that Manitoba's interests were protected. We did indeed attempt to ensure that Manitoba's interests were protected, but the important factor here is that the licence had not been issued by the federal Minister, by the federal Department of the Environment, so that we were receiving assurances from federal Ministers, from senior federal bureaucrats, to our officials that Manitoba's interests would be considered to our satisfaction before any action was taken on the licensing of this dam.

So we were shocked on June 21 when the federal Minister issued this licence, indeed issued it prematurely without having a documentation. That is why I believe what Elizabeth May is saying on this issue. I feel she is right here. There have been enough signs pointing to this. There have been senior officials in the Department of the Environment previously who expressed dire concerns about this and the fast-tracking approach that the Saskatchewan Government was taking on this issue. I think that Elizabeth May is right on. She has raised a very important issue for the people of Manitoba now. I cannot understand why these two Ministers of Environment (Mr. Connery) and Natural Resources (Mr. Penner) can continue to put their heads in the sand and say everything is just fine when they have that kind of evidence, along with all the other evidence.

Let us remember one of the reasons we were very suspicious of this issue was because the true purpose of the building of this dam is of course to facilitate the construction of a Shand generating station, a major hydro power station in Saskatchewan, which means that they will be purchasing less Manitoba hydro in the future at a higher cost in Saskatchewan to build this dam. That is not what they have been telling the people of Saskatchewan, but that is the information that we have, that it will actually cost them more per kilowatt hour to build that station, but they want to justify it. They have been fast tracking this dam through so that they can build the Shand generating station for the political benefits of Premier Grant Devine and Deputy Premier Berntson in the Province of Saskatchewan.

That is what we believe are the motives behind the fast-track approach. They do not care what the wildlife

organizations and conservation organizations think about this project. They are not concerned about that. They are a nuisance to them. As fast as they can get this through, the better, and they have got North Dakota money because they are worried about floods in North Dakota. That is what seems to be the major concern of this Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner), the flooding in Minot. That is what he is taking as his primary concern rather than the concerns of the environment of Manitoba and the impact on the people of Manitoba who live along the Souris River and depend on that waterway.

So I have taken a position with the federal Minister consistently over the last number of years on this issue when we were in Government that we wanted all of this documentation to our satisfaction. We were assured, we felt, by the federal Minister of External Affairs, Joe Clark, that indeed they would ensure that Manitoba's concerns were dealt with before allowing Saskatchewan to proceed or issuing a licence. That does not seem to have been the case at all.

They went ahead with this thing in June before those studies were done. The Minister admits that a technical committee has been set up, but they have not reported. So meanwhile, the construction is going ahead and plans are proceeding as fast as they can go and we still do not know what the impacts are. If that is not letting the horse out of the barn and then closing the door, I do not know what is.

* (1540)

That is why we say the federal Minister, first of all, should withdraw that licence that he has issued so that construction is stopped. Then the studies can be done and then a decision could be made that is based on the facts, on the best information that we have, because the Member who introduced this resolution, it was correct in saying that there has not been those studies for Manitoba.

The reason our Government did not order those studies by the Manitoba Clean Environment Commission is because we felt that the federal Environment Department should be responsible on a matter of international importance dealing with a number of jurisdictions, should be primarily first, responsible, for that kind of a study. Then at this point in time, if they are letting us down in Manitoba as Manitobans, if the federal Government is not considering our wishes, then we have to rely on our Minister of Environment (Mr. Connery) to show leadership and ensure that we have an impact statement to determine what the impacts are so then we can negotiate with those other parties. But, in fact, that project should be stopped immediately and first, and that is our major concern here.

So we think that the Minister should immediately change his position and indicate in the strongest terms his concern to Mr. McMillan, who issued that licence prematurely on this project, and to the Prime Minister, to all of Manitoba's Ministers, and indicate to them that we demand to have the impacts on Manitoba known before this project proceeds any further.

I want to tell you something. We did not, as a Government, want to meddle in the internal affairs of Saskatchewan, so we played that part of it very low key. We knew there were a lot of concerns in Saskatchewan and we knew what their motives were.—(Interjection)— Well, I find this very strange that the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner) now would object to that because he can just ask his officials. I played that very low key as Minister because I wanted to ensure that Saskatchewan's politics were not being misinterpreted or mixed in with Manitoba, and that is what I did.

But once the federal Government played political games, backroom deals, with the Saskatchewan Government to fast track this thing through, then we have to change our position and we have to demand, in the strongest terms, fairness for Manitoba which is being overlooked for political expediency. We know what was going on in Saskatchewan with this project but we did not want to interfere, as I said, and we did not. But we said to the Federal Government, "Make sure that our concerns are dealt with." They said, "Yes, your concerns will be dealt with and will be considered right through."—(Interjection)— You are darn rights I will read Hansard. It is just amazing that these people in Government, the Conservatives in Government here, will fall into the trap with Saskatchewan and with the federal Mulroney Conservative Government at the expense of Manitoba that they would allow them to play politics with this Government right here and fall right into the trap because they happen to be of the same political stripe. It put political expediency ahead of Manitoba's interest, and that is what we find so regrettable in this issue. Of course, it is consistent with the way they approach many different issues.

I wanted to, Mr. Deputy Speaker, before table in this House a piece of information that provides a chronology of a number of meetings that we had and letters that we wrote to indicate clearly that these Ministers were not providing the true facts, as we know them, to this House when they said that our Government did not represent Manitoba's interest over the last number of years. In addition to that, I want to ensure that all Members are aware that we had required, as a statement of principle, all of the studies first before a licence would be issued. We made those statements clearly to the federal Minister, and we demand that this Minister now listen to the wildlife federations, to the U.S. Department of the Interior, who also shares those concerns—and I have information to that effect—shares those concerns that . . .

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Member's time is over. Order, please.

Mr. Herold Driedger (Niakwa): I, too, have some regrets. The Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohma) just referred to a few that I have been aware of what was happening in Saskatchewan and had not done anything about it because they were waiting for a certain process to be carried through. Maybe they should have gotten involved sooner. The regret that I have is that we tend to have, at this point in time, a rather diverging opinion in the nature of what constitutes environmental impact and what does not.

We have in here, in a situation that has happened with the Rafferty-Alameda Dam, something that where Governments have provided or undertaken some environmental impact assessments as they may affect the small jurisdiction, each as they affect their own, none of them taking a look at the whole intrabasin impact, because if there is one thing we have learned in the Eighties, it is that there is no single environmental concern anywhere that does not have impacts far beyond its borders.

We have only to take a look at the relationship that seems to be developing between some of the—our habits with cosmetics and the spraying of aerosols as these eventually filter up through the atmosphere to affect the ozone layer which will affect us directly. I mean none of us would have ever thought of this in the Sixties.

We happen to have here a situation where there is an economic development which tells us that investment is more important than the long-term environmental impact. We have to be convinced first that our concerns here, which are downstream not only of the water that we are to receive but also downwind of the potential Shand pollutants that might be created—I do not say that there will be because I assume this Shand electric facility, one of its aspects should be the installation of high-capacity scrubbers in the stacks so we should not have to fear for acid rain—but the whole aspect that this might be something that could affect us is something that we should use when we sit down and determine what our priorities are. It is commonly accepted now that environmental degradation flows downstream as I indicated earlier.

Now, even if we take a look at the particular project as it exists on its own merits, I think we have to find that this, too, is questionable. Perhaps, here again, rather than taking a look at environmental impacts of a potential reservoir that is filled, we should perhaps take a look at some of the impacts that might be created by what we do when we start interfering with the flow of water to the way it would normally flow. In certain parts of this world where we accelerate the flow of water with the production of drainage ditches, we cause runoff.—(Interjection)— I will answer that question shortly. The Minister of the Environment asked if we wished to have this be a desert.

Mr. Penner: There is a part of this province that is drying up.

Mr. Herold Driedger: I am glad the Minister of Natural Resources brought that to my attention, too. There are parts of this province that are drying up. What he is referring to is any land west of the 100 millimeter isohyet. Let us go back to inches. The 20-inch isohyet which passes through Winnipeg, west of Winnipeg, we receive less and less and less rainfall each year. When you receive rainfall of about 10 inches per year, we have what is technically classified as a semi-desert. This is the situation that you have in the area where these two dams are to be built and you want to have this negligible natural water replacement to fill two reservoirs which, when they are full, if they are full, the actual numbers of years that are being anticipated for

these things to fill up is incredible. We are looking at 35 years.

To fill them up, I have also heard—now there are people here on this side who have some more of the detailed evidence, but I have also heard that there are not decisions yet, but there are intentions to hasten the filling of these reservoirs with the digging of deep water wells or the Rafferty reservoir and perhaps the diversion of the South Saskatchewan River to hasten the filling of the Alameda reservoir.

What I ask us to think about here is what are we saying then to those people who have listened to us when we objected so strenuously with respect to the potential basin problems, the inter-basin transfer of water problems, when we put up objections to the Garrison?

We need to think carefully what we do here, but I was also referring to the fact that when we start interfering with the natural flow—not that we wish to negatively look at every modification—but we have to start thinking about what we do when we do actually either provide a ditch to hasten the water flow or to build a dam to delay water flow. All of these two things need to be looked at in conjunction. We need to take a look at the environment holistically, not independently. We cannot carve out a certain part of the planet or a certain part of the province and say that this only will be affected.

* (1550)

The effects will not stop at the Saskatchewan border. They will not stop at the North Dakota border. There will be a complete and total basin effect, regardless of whether or not the impacts may, in actual point of fact, when we have taken our total study and have satisfied ourselves that everything has been taken into consideration, then we may say, all right, this will happen and we are aware that this is going to happen and we have made decisions, fully cognizant of what those impacts will be.

There have been plans, more grandiose than this one, which anticipated building dams where water was flowing at that time wastefully south. I am thinking of the Niger River in the Sahara which was to be dammed and have a massive lake being created right in the middle of the Sahara, bringing all kinds of bountiful water to the dry region, bringing water where no water was before—all this under the subtropical anticyclone which would mean that we would hasten evaporation and therefore essentially have a salt lake in the middle of the desert.

We have the same kind of thing, actually, potentially, here in Saskatchewan. This is a dry region; you are going to have evaporation; the water will become salty. Furthermore, as you increase the runoff into these reservoirs to try to cause the reservoirs to fill up faster, these runoffs, being from farm land, will carry with them not only the salts and the phosphates and the nitrates that we produce by virtue of fertilization, but also certain of the pesticides and things of that nature which flow off, and herbicides, which we apply as we carry on modern farming techniques. What happens here is you

end up looking at —(Interjection)- If I could just finish this statement here. We end up having a situation where the waters themselves can become, for the flow downstream to North Dakota, toxic.

One more aspect that perhaps might be addressed in this issue right here, since the two dams—the Rafferty and the Alameda—happen to be in the ridings of friends of the Prime Minister, perhaps, here we have once again an indication of the deal-making tradition of the Mulroney Government.

All we want to see is that the guarantees that were made to Manitoba's water quality are actually fulfilled, and those need to be fulfilled not only in actual point of fact but also in perception that this is being done. The fact that the permit was issued before our concerns were satisfied suggests to me that we are hastening towards some form of disaster which we will only find out after the fact.

Mr. Bill Uruski (Interlake): I am amazed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that there is silence from the Government benches.—(Interjection)- Oh, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) is now indicating he is waiting to see whether there is any new information. The Premier should have been on his telephone to the Prime Minister long ago instead of putting his head in the sand and saying everything will be fine, we believe Grant Devine.

Where is this whole era of cooperation that we were going to see between the new provincial Government and Ottawa and all the Conservative provinces of this country? The Premier may be on the telephone, but there is no one at the other end. They have left him hanging on the line. There is no one answering. And we have the Minister of Environment (Mr. Connery) and the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner) of this province basically saying we think it is great, this project is good; there is a drought in the Province of Manitoba and the western part of our province is going dry, so why would we not now be in favour of this project?

Everyone knows that the need for conservation of water right across North America is of utmost importance. No one argues that point. The fact of the matter is Manitoba, since 1985, has raised a number of concerns to say that, look, we are not opposed to this project but we want to be assured that the quality and the quantity of water can in fact be protected, and the likely body in which to review this project is Ottawa, because you basically have two Canadian jurisdictions, one a proponent and one a recipient of the water, not quite agreeing to what all the impacts might be, and Ottawa to play the dominant role in saying, look, here is how we view it.

The former Minister of Natural Resources, the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), wrote, after an all-officials meeting held by Environment Canada in Ottawa, and we in fact congratulated the federal Government for taking the leading role, their rightful role in this project, to say that all interests will be protected and that there would be the necessary environmental impact studies to review all the concerns before any approvals are granted.

We have here the spectacle over the last number of months of a Government which I consider very weak,

a very weak Government. I say this in the kindest terms. Can you imagine a Minister of Environment of any jurisdiction getting up, without having any studies to show the impact of this project saying I think this project is good, it is good for Manitoba; why would not we want any more water? We are short of water in southwestern Manitoba. That is really what has been said. He goes around and he repeats it on the weekend and yet, over the weekend, the chief legal advisor on environmental issues, a political advisor who has a great knowledge and experience in environmental matters who was hired by the Minister McMillan in Ottawa, said that there was a backroom deal between Ottawa and Saskatchewan to approve this project with no assessment whatsoever.

Now talk about having your federal colleagues pour water on your head here in Manitoba. These people in Manitoba must be saying oh, no, what have we said? Here we have a political conundrum in Ottawa where the chief political advisor has now resigned and accused her own Minister of politics in an issue that should not have been politically motivated, and we have these Ministers saying it is still a good deal. If that is not an indictment of a weak Government and of weak Ministers, nothing else is. These people who are to be protecting the interests of Manitobans seem to sit there and talk about it is a great deal, we need the water. Of course, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we all agree.

No one on this side of the House does not agree that there should be works or at least the need for preservation of water, and water quality should not be there, but let us do our homework. These guys are prepared to do it by putting their heads in the sand, in the proverbial sand. That is really the issue here. It is the incompetence of those people on the other side. This administrative group, this administrative strong group, that said we know how to govern, we will have good relations with Ottawa, where are they? They are going to speak to the—

An Honourable Member: Federal Minister.

* (1600)

Mr. Uruski: No, they are not even going to speak to the federal Minister. They are going to speak to our Canadian Ambassador to Washington. That is a laugh. I say that is a laugh because the political decision was not made by the Canadian Ambassador in Washington; it was made by the federal Minister of Environment, after Manitoba, back in December of '87, following the November meeting, the Minister, John Plohma, wrote to the Honourable Joe Clark indicating that we were agreed to the process that was set up, and that we wanted to cooperate fully with Ottawa's lead to make the necessary environmental studies.

Not only that, the Minister, the now-Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey), and I hope he gets up and puts his face on the table, who even was so concerned about the impacts of this project, he called a public meeting in Melita, invited U.S. officials, invited Manitoba officials. I have not heard him; I have not heard a peep from the Member for Arthur (Mr. Downey).

Where does he stand? Is he in agreement for his Ministers now to sit mum on the subject? After he, in '86, spoke out so loudly and raised his concerns about this project, in fact, advocated the International Joint Commission to review and rule on this project.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Deputy Speaker, we will be waiting to see the remarks of the Member for Arthur (Mr. Downey) on this issue, how one can twist and turn from the position he took in '86. That is, in essence, the weakness of the Government. You are in Opposition; you take one road. You are in Government; well, you have friends in Ottawa that you do not want to embarrass and do not want to push, so you sit quiet. Ottawa has left them out to dry; they have hung them out to dry. They have poured water over them, water that they say they needed, they have got it. They have got it right over their heads, yet they will not say anything. It is almost like Chinese torture. How long will it take the Conservative Government to react to water being dumped on their head and speak out on this issue and say "hold back this licence, hold back this licence until the necessary environmental studies are done"? They are sitting quiet. Is this the same kind of a deal that was cooked up between Ottawa and Saskatchewan prior to the Saskatchewan election to say we will have disaster payments to farmers?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is clear that the Premier of Saskatchewan has more clout than the Government of Manitoba. This clearly shows the weakness of the Government. I asked the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) to stand up for Manitobans and shout from the Golden Boy to say—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member for St. Norbert.

Mr. John Angus (St. Norbert): Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I hope that I can rise to take a different look at the problem from a different perspective. The perspective that I would like to take it from is the responsibilities of Government, the acknowledgment of Government and the tests that Government uses to determine whether or not they have something worth looking at or not. So I suspect, partially because I am in the Opposition and partially because I am not privy to the same information as the Minister has, that I have to go with what I see on the surface as information that is available to me.

I think that it is prudent for politicians to ask themselves whether or not a request such as this, which is a very serious request, does it pass a test of reasonableness? Does this request pass a test of reasonableness? And then, what I think we have to do is look at whether or not, and/or what are the negative impacts of this request? I ask you, and I ask all Members of this House of the Government, of the administration, what are the negatives of looking at this particular project?

Let me put on the record for evidence, the evidence that has come to me. The evidence is in clause one,

is a report from a former deputy director, a lady by the name of Elizabeth May. I do not know this person, I have no axe to grind with her, I have no insider's information, it is simply the information as it was reported to the general public.

It says that Elizabeth May says that Manitoba's interests have been shafted. Now she, I have to assume, is a person who is in a more knowledgeable position than I am, and more privy to more specific information than I am, and so I take what she has to say with interest, and I want to know why what she is alleging, and what sort of personal gain she may have. I find that the indications, and I have no reason to doubt these indications, are that she felt so strongly about this particular concern that she resigned her position. There are not very many people in this country who have \$60,000 a year jobs, who are prepared to give them up on a whim of principle. I think that there is some credibility to a person who is prepared to put her money where her mouth is. So she has credentials, and she has made a quantum leap, a quantum leap based on her belief in the accuracy of what she is saying.

So I go on, and I look at the next reality of information that comes to my attention. That is that we have a federal Minister, Mr. Tom McMillan, who has been accused of trading off a grasslands project for a dam project. Now, I might not be concerned about that trade off because it is loose jargon and loose words when it is reported that an individual has sacrificed something. If the only impact was on Saskatchewan I would be less interested, but when I read on to find that this particular project that has been traded off, to use the words of the information that came to my attention, is going to possibly have an effect on the waters of Manitoba, then I say to myself, well I have a bit more concern.

Let me move on to the specific concerns that I have, and again I am only going from the information on the public record. I am looking at the Souris water quality, and let me suggest that as I go back to Mr. McMillan and his interest in this particular thing, he of course signs the agreements to allow the water transfer to be traded back and forth across the borders. When I see and I read in the continuing article that the quality and quantity of Souris water may be affected, I add another little concern to the specifics that I have been developing. I think that it is important to note that as I build my case on behalf of Manitobans, and my concern as a responsible politician is in their best interest as best I can, I see that the Town of Souris and 20 licensed water users in southern Manitoba rely on the river for municipal, industrial and irrigation water supplies. It has been estimated that it would cost \$1 million to replace its water supply if quantity or quality of the Souris River is downgraded.

* (1610)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, these are not my words. I am not a professional engineer. I am not a water resources person. I am John Q. Public in this particular case, saying that on one hand we have individuals suggesting, and it goes on to report that it is Mr. Connery that is

suggesting—Mr. Connery, the Member for Portage—that the only potential problem with a project could be that the reduction of water flows could harm the flushing effect of the current form of water quality.

Now, I am sitting here as a Liberal Member of this House, as a responsible person, saying to the Government is there something wrong with having a public hearing. I see that it goes on to say in these articles that there is not enough time to have a public hearing. Mr. Deputy Speaker, with respect, what are we potentially sacrificing in relation to what we are getting? If there is nothing to hide, if there is no negative impact, if there is no reason that we should not be paying any attention to this particular problem that is developing in Saskatchewan causing water to flow in a controlled fashion into the United States and then back into Manitoba, then what on earth is the reasonable reason for not having public hearings? Why is it such a dastardly thing to do to ask those technical people, those individuals to set up shop someplace, and put the facts on the table and to look at a project of this nature as it impacts, positively or negatively, on Manitobans?

The very worst that would happen is that we would find out that there is a negative impact. What is the best that would happen? We would find out that we as Manitobans, as elected responsible Members of this Legislature, have been vindicated, that we have been proven that we are absolutely right that there is no negative impact.

Looking at the possible consequences of negative impact, I think that it is only responsible that we look at what those impacts may be. I think that it is important that we look at those people who have done the studies. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers says that you can expect between 45 percent to 100 percent of the water that we are getting now. I mean if we are talking about more than 50 percent of the water flows being reduced in one way, shape or form than we have got right now and we see that the other side of the coin, our Ministers and the other people, say that the Town of Souris will be adversely affected to the tune of \$1 million if the quality or quantity of water is adjusted, it says to me that it forces the issue. It talks specifically to the point of reasonableness. It is not reasonable to not have some form of a public inquiry. Is it going to be an investment? Is it the cost that we are talking about? I do not know. I would like to hear from the Government. Stand up and say these are the reasons why we should not have a public hearing on the negative, positive and/or potential, one way or the other, impact of this particular project.

Let us look at the facts again, just from John Q.'s public perspective. Washington has put up \$41 million to protect Minot from flooding or from something else, I am not sure. There is something in here that says that if we start controlling this water we can release it in flows that will make it less than sort of a bulk rush of water in the spring runoff. That may be very well and good, but those guys who have built the dams are the guys who are going to be able to control the water. What if they decide to turn the water taps off in Saskatchewan so that they do not come through on

into Manitoba? Do you not think that we should be sitting there having had some perspective, having had some insiders information? It does not pass the test of reasonableness. I have not heard one good reason why we should not have public inquiries, public hearings, and/or statements of account on the public record. There is no reason we should not be able to go to the public in a public forum, put the project on the table and hear the facts in an honest to goodness straightforward fashion. Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister of Environment and Workplace Safety and Health): I am indeed pleased to say a few words on this particular subject because it is very near and very dear to my heart. I am very concerned about the Rafferty-Alameda Dam in the sense that it does a lot of good things for Manitoba. We hope that it does not do anything negative.

We have been concerned from the outset. From right after I was made the Minister of Environment, we have had briefing meetings with our staff, with the intergovernmental department to be appraised of what was happening with the Rafferty-Alameda Dam proposal. We were concerned to know that Manitoba's interests were being protected. We are not talking about something that is going to be affecting Manitoba now or Manitoba in the next year or 10 years. We are talking about our children, our grandchildren, and hopefully as long as this world hangs together, this planet hangs together, for many, many other generations. We are dealing with a subject that is very, very important.

The NDP would like us to conduct studies. They have wanted us to conduct studies on just about everything that arises in this province. We do have some competent people in our departments who are doing their job. When public hearings are required, and I am not afraid to call for public hearings as we have seen in the Brandon situation where there was a concern by the people, we called for public hearings to assure that full public input was put there.

It is kind of ironic that right from the very beginning, the proposer of this resolution thought that Manitoba was a signature to the agreement. That is how much he knows about the whole thing. He thought that Manitoba signs. In essence, the agreement is between Canada and the USA. Manitoba and Saskatchewan both have an input into the negotiations in talking with the federal officials to assure that our interests are put forward into this agreement.

The question is, will the money lapse if we do not go ahead with the agreement very quickly? We are not going to push to have it so that it is in place before the money lapses. The money, if it lapses, will be reissued, I am sure. It will be made available once again, the \$41 million, which really, Bismarck is saying they want for flood control. Flood control is a major part of this dam proposal. Part of it is for the Shand Generating Station for cooling of water; part of it is for irrigation.

I am very familiar with the need for irrigation. The Member for Wolseley (Mr. Taylor) maybe sits over there

and laughs and jokes about a very serious issue but it is not. Irrigation for people in southeastern Saskatchewan is a very crucial issue. We should not just say, no, they cannot have water. We want to protect our interest, but I think they have their interest too, as we do in Manitoba with other creeks and rivers. We will fight for Manitoba's interests and we are not too concerned whether it is a Conservative Government in Saskatchewan and Ottawa. The rights and the concerns of Manitobans are first.

Mr. Uruski: The Minister of Environment (Mr. Connery) accused the Member for Wolseley (Mr. Taylor) of laughing on this issue. I am sitting here listening to the Minister of Environment and I also overheard the Member for Wolseley. He was not at all laughing at this issue, and I wish that the Minister of Environment would withdraw those comments and not leave any imputations on a Member of this House by the comments that he has made of the Member for Wolseley (Mr. Taylor).

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Honourable Minister of the Environment, to the point of order.

Mr. Connery: I saw the Member for Wolseley (Mr. Taylor) laughing while we were discussing an important issue. If he is not interested in listening to the debate, then I would suggest that he leave the room. I mean anybody can laugh if he wants, but the issue is too serious to—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I thank all Members of the House for their advice, but the Honourable Member does not have a point of order.

The Honourable Minister of the Environment.

Mr. Connery: Thank you very much.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Government, they say, is not environment conscious. I can tell you that what I inherited from the previous Government was an absolute mess, and as the National Report Card said, that Manitoba was tenth out of 10 provinces. I do not enjoy being in last place, but I look forward to the challenge of bringing Manitoba up so that it will be respectable in the environment issues and in a respectable position within Canada. We are not there, we have got a long way to go, but we will attempt to get there.

* (1620)

We should be discussing the importance of impounding water. With the changing climate and atmosphere, impoundment of water is going to become a very, very major issue. Manitoba itself has to look at the impounding of water in many areas. Some time ago, the Portage diversion went in—I believe it was around 1961 or 1962—to protect the valley along the Assiniboine River from extreme flooding conditions. If we could look back today and do the thing over, I am sure we would have put in the Holland Dam because now that water that we are diverting to Lake Manitoba is so vital and precious to our existence that we need to be impounding it, and there are going to be a lot

more dams going on, and, yes, environmental studies need to be done on them. We will be making sure that the environment is protected in doing so, but if we do not have irrigation and if we do not have drinking water, if we do not have water for cattle, we are not going to have any reason to be here. So we have to protect the interests of Manitobans today and Manitobans in many, many years down the road.

The NDP get up and they talk about the immediacy and the concerns all of a sudden that they have for Rafferty-Alameda. I am told that they would not go to the meetings where they were discussing the issues and the problems, that they shied away. The NDP were a Government of lip service and very little action, and that shows for itself. The Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) said the federal Government should conduct the hearings. Well, they were unloading all of their responsibility onto the federal Government and they really did not do very much.

Our department is meeting on a regular basis. We had a meeting just yesterday with our departments. We met again today. We want it all ongoing. As you know, Mr. Gottleib is going to be in tomorrow and the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner) and I will be speaking with Mr. Gottleib, because, as you know, we have to raise the agreement away from the corps of army engineers into the state so that we can get some proper agreements. These things have to be done. Manitoba officials are meeting on a continuous basis with federal officials to discuss the Rafferty-Alameda project and to ensure that Manitoba's interests are done.

It was quite interesting to listen to the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) who said he played it low key. Well, yes, the NDP environmental concerns were low key. There was not much of an environment department. Being last place environmentally shows you what was going on. They raise issues now that they did not have the intestinal fortitude to deal with when they were in Government. We can look at the Flin Flon situation where they complain about material that came in under their regime and then blame another department.

Look at the Member for Wolseley (Mr. Taylor) who knew about the PCBs and for two weeks did not say anything about it; who went to our department, over in Building 2 in Tuxedo, and said: How are PCBs supposed to be contained and handled safely? They said: Do you know about any PCBs? And he would not tell them that there were PCBs in Transcona. It was not until a tragic fire in St. Basile le Grande, and all of a sudden there was an interest, a public interest. All of a sudden the environmentalists came out of the wall and ran to the press to make a big scene. The Member for Niakwa (Mr. Herold Driedger) knew about it since last year. I think it was April 7 or 8, '87, that he knew about that car in Transcona.

So when we listen to the environmental concerns of the Members of the Liberal Party, I think their record shows that they are a sham—you know, "Taylor-made" stories by the Member for Wolseley (Mr. Taylor). It is quite obvious that the Liberal Party does not have much of a research department. If they do, they are not doing much, because they are following the press. You see

people people that chase fire trucks; well, the Members of the Liberal Party are chasing newspapers and taking their research and ideas out of it. I have not seen anything novel or new or far-reaching come out of the Members of the Liberal Party, or the N.D. Party, but their track record is there and the people of Manitoba condemned them for their conduct.

The ball is in our court. We are prepared to work and we are doing it. We will make sure that the environment is well-looked after in Manitoba, not like it was in the last, because we have a lot more work to do.

There are some good aspects to this project. We can see that as Minot needs flood control, we need flood control on the Souris River for the towns and the farmers along that river, and we think that is one of the good aspects of this project. Also, we will have the controlled release of water, and that is where it is important that we be involved in the management part of it so that we have the release of water when it is to the best interests of Manitoba and the towns along the river.

Once again, I want to remind Members opposite, while they look at Rafferty-Alameda as being the big issue, it is not the big issue. The big issue is the international agreement between Canada and United States because that is where 90 percent of our water comes from. It originates in North Dakota.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you are signalling for me to wrap up. I thank you for this opportunity and I can assure you that environment is No. 1 in my department and it is No. 1 in the minds of the Government of Manitoba.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): I am pleased to add my words on this important debate in this House. I think, hopefully, the debate will emphasize to the Government the importance to Manitoba of this project and the potential impact on this province.

I was extremely disappointed when I heard on June 21 that the federal Minister would not, indeed, proceed with an environmental impact study. We could not figure out why a federal Minister of Environment, who is responsible particularly for the environmental damage across the Saskatchewan-Manitoba border, indeed, responsible for international travel of water, would be so passive to this very, very important issue and issue a licence without a federal environmental impact study.

We, certainly, having met with a number of environmentalists in Brandon—I met earlier, prior to the federal Minister's announcement, in Brandon, with a number of interested environmental groups and I hope that someday the Minister of Environment could meet with some of these environmental groups, because they are a very important source of information on the potential impact.

There are technical studies and there is technical data, and there are also the people of Manitoba who have rights. It is not the Government's water, it is not the Government's Souris River, it is not the Opposition's

Souris River, it is not 57 MLAs that have ownership of this water supply and our future environment. It is the public. That is why it is so important that we have a federal environmental impact study.

I was appalled when the federal Minister would not even proceed with the public hearings and the public study. What justification did he have to issue the licence without the federal study?

There were already questions in the House of Commons prior to that decision of the federal Minister of Environment dealing with the potential impact, the boondoggle that was going on in the Province of Saskatchewan, coincidentally close to the Premier's own riding in the province. So there was already notice being given to the Saskatchewan Government, and indeed, I guess the alarm bells should have gone off in a much stronger way in Manitoba prior to the federal Minister of Environment's decision not to have any environmental impact study.

But all this made sense this weekend, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when a courageous public employee, who I thought acted in a very, very non-partisan way; indeed, there was a plague on all three political Parties' houses from the individual, and perhaps we can all take that as he about the many, many challenges we have collectively in this Legislature to be strong in environment and to pass the torch of our environment on to our children and our children's children in a better way than we are receiving it in our world that is too much in a hurry for the advantages of modernization and not prepared to deal with the disadvantages in a much more constructive way.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this weekend we had confirmed from a person who is, as I say, critical on all of us. Why, in her opinion, this project proceeded—and I think it must send shivers of apprehension down the spines of all of us to believe that, in her words, a major national park would receive funding and indeed this project would go ahead to deny the environmental impact study in Manitoba and indeed nationally, because the key is a federal environment study. We have two provinces on international waterways. A Manitoba environmental study is useful because it allows Manitobans—not technicians, not bureaucrats, not experts, but lets Manitobans get involved in this issue. But I say, in my opinion, that is a secondary alternative. It is still the best alternative to have a federal environmental impact study.

* (1630)

I was appalled today when the questions were being asked on environment. They were not being asked on water flow; they were not being asked on this and that. The questions were being asked on environment. Our representative for one million people at the Cabinet table on environment is the Minister of Environment (Mr. Connerly). He is the sole representative in terms of ministerial responsibility at the Cabinet table on our one million person and our future generations' environment. It is absolutely critical that he could account to this House. Here we have a Government that talked on the Speech from the Throne about full

accountability and, when it comes to it, and we see full accountability means making an outrageous statement in the Free Press and then he cannot justify it the next day back in this Legislature. I think that is a very poor demonstration and totally inconsistent with the Speech from the Throne in terms of accountability in terms of this Legislature.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have a serious situation. We must get the federal Environment Minister to proceed again to have the federal environmental impact study that we are entitled to.

I would warn the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner) who talked about our American friends. I have lots of friends that are Americans. We all do. We hope that we have the best relationship possible. But let the Minister of Natural Resources remember that there was not one American group in the United States for years until we got the Audubon organization in the United States involved in terms of the Garrison Diversion Project. Group after group after group in North Dakota would support the position of maintaining the water within North Dakota, within that basin, and Manitoba had to finally develop relationships with the Audubon group.

We had to develop an unholy alliance on the Garrison Diversion between the environmentalists in the United States and some of the right-wing fiscal Conservatives who did not want to spend money. It makes you choke to think about people like Barry Goldwater and the Senator from South Carolina, whose name I will not even repeat in this House, who we had to work on individually to get the vote turned around so they would not expropriate money for that Garrison Diversion and we could work with the American environmental groups.

It took 12 years. Sure, Ministers of Natural Resources years ago, after the IJC Report came down, said, oh, we believe our American friends will be very cooperative with us—very cooperative. Every time a Minister of Natural Resources was saying that, they were damming up gallons of water, forcing species north of the Missouri River system, going into the northern basins with hostile species of fish and other potential problems in terms of silt, in terms of other issues in Manitoba.

We had to fight, Mr. Deputy Speaker, 12 years. Let us not get into this little "cushy" relationship without going into it with our eyes wide open in terms of the potential impact on the Souris River and indeed the water system of Manitoba. I believe that we had letters on record—the Minister who had a sock put into his mouth today at Question Period now chirps from his seat, but we had to ask the federal Minister on continuous occasions to have this environmental study.

I, quite frankly, thought that Mr. McMillan, who is not the worst Tory Minister, I would say, in this House, would come forward with a federal environmental study. I think most environmentalists I talked to prior to June 21—the Member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) and I met with a number of environmentalists—they quite frankly thought that Mr. McMillan would order the study.

I guess we did not know that all these Tories would brag about just picking up the phone. We have Grant

Devine saying I just pick up the phone to the Prime Minister. You have the Prime Minister saying I just pick up the phone to Grant Devine and a billion dollars is on the way. You have the present First Minister talking about picking up the phone and Brian will just come through for us. I did not think that would work on an environmental issue. I am absolutely appalled.

So the first strategy has to be, in my opinion, a federal environmental study. It has to be with the federal environmental contacts in the International Joint Commission, and the second back-up proposal should be for a Manitoba environmental study to use it, to get a federal study if we cannot get it, because the Minister has been tied by the Tory contacts in Saskatchewan—some of whom by the way are involved in one of the biggest boondoggles that has ever gone down the pike in the Province of Saskatchewan.

So I am glad we have got this public debate. Hopefully it will help the present Minister of the Environment (Mr. Connery) stand up at the Cabinet table and stand up to Ottawa on behalf of Manitoba's environment. Thank you very much.

Mrs. Gwen Charles (Selkirk): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am very pleased to speak on this issue because I, of all Members in this Legislature, know what it is like to live downstream from a user who abuses the privileges of being by a water supply.

In 1980 or thereabouts, the Town of Selkirk was rightly forced to put in a sewage treatment plant. It became very ironic to note shortly thereafter that the water we pumped into the Red River was therefore cleaner than the water we took out to drink. To this day, almost a decade later—eight years later at least—people still do not care about the Red River. This Minister of the Environment (Mr. Connery) still does not care about the Red River.

We have people coming forward saying that there has been arsenic, there has been aviation fuel, there has been oil, there has been other hazardous waste pumped down to the sewer systems of Winnipeg and they continue to be because no action has been taken. People do not seem to care until the point where the Town of Selkirk decided to bring a law suit against the City of Winnipeg.

No attention was brought to the fact that there were carcinogens in the Red River, that there are bacteria that are resistant to antibiotics in the Red River, that we do not know what we are growing in the Red River because nobody cared. The past Premier of the province, Mr. Pawley, was not aware that the City of Winnipeg was not under the Clean Environment Commission until the Town of Selkirk brought it to their attention, and it has taken some eight years before it even is considered that Winnipeg in fact does pollute the Red River. It took some hundreds of thousands of dollars by a joint study to say that Winnipeg is guilty, it pollutes the Red River.

The Leader of the N.D. Party (Mr. Doer) made fun of the fact that I was wanting the City of Winnipeg to do something about it during the provincial election and misquoted me by saying that I was promising some

billions of dollars towards it. I think that is what it comes down to, as a discussion between the environment and politics, and unfortunately politics has often been against the environment, and what we are discussing today is how to put politics for the environment.

Members of the Minister's own advisory group, the Manitoba Environment Council, fear the Rafferty-Alameda project. He is supposed to be listening to these people, but of course he has not even met with them yet. They fear the project—

Mr. Connery: Oh, yes, I have.

Mrs. Charles: The full council? You have not even approached the full council.

Mr. Connery: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. I would like the Member for Selkirk (Mrs. Charles) to know that I did meet with the Environment Council. It was a while back. I was supposed to meet with them this Wednesday, but unfortunately I was in Ottawa dealing with the PCB concern that your Member for Wolseley (Mr. Taylor) is very concerned about. I was there.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Honourable Member for Selkirk, to the point of order.

Mrs. Charles: I would just like to point out the Minister met with the executive of the council but not the full council because I, in fact, am a member of that council.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. A dispute over the facts is not a point of order.

Mrs. Charles: Politics is here to serve the people. The environment is the basis of all parts of this world. Just as Selkirk has had to bring to the attention of Manitoba the concerns of the Red River, so today are we discussing the ability of Manitobans to bring to the attention of the politicians in this province, the concerns about Rafferty-Alameda, and there are concerns.

The Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner) points out that we do not know what is real, and the United States Army Corps Engineers Report, and he went on to make fun of the point that wildlife may be affected. He said well, maybe, we do not know in fact whether it will be or not. That is like saying 10 years ago, when we probably said well PCBs may be dangerous, but we do not know if in fact they are so let us go ahead and use them, and now look at the cost it is to all of Canada and all of the world and for the future. We cannot take the maybes, that is what we are talking about today. We have to talk indeed, what is real, and we cannot decide what is real by sitting here and just saying well, the politicians in Ottawa, the politicians in the States and the politicians in Saskatchewan say it is probably good, and we should go ahead with it, because it has been brought to our attention this weekend that the politicians are acting as politicians and not as environmentalists.

If the chief legal advisor for Canada on the environment says it has been a raw deal for Canada,

for Manitoba, why not listen? If there is no rush to go ahead, then why not take the time to have a study on it? What is the Environment Minister here for if not to study environment projects? What is The Environment Act in place for with all these methods of going ahead with environmental hearings? Is it just a sham? Is this Minister a sham? Is the project a sham? These are all questions I have thought of, particularly the middle one. I have lost faith in this Government to deal with the environment. It has sat on every issue it has wanted to; it has made fun of every issue we have brought to its attention. It really is not going ahead on proactive style; it just wants to relate their political stands and save them studying it. They have met on it.

* (1640)

We are not asking for immediate solutions on all the items we have brought forward. We are asking for immediate action. There is a difference. A study is an action. To meet and say we will deal with it some time is not an action; it is a stall. We want to know what this Minister thinks about The Environment Act. Is he willing to support it? The Environment Act is supposed to look into and protect the environment of Manitoba. Why is he sitting, not thinking about putting a study in place to indeed look at this very important concern? I think he should be speaking on behalf of Canadians as well as Manitobans and saying that if in fact this inter-basin transfer of water is the overall plan for this strategy, then we as Manitobans, just as we, as the Opposition in Canada, stand up against Meech Lake, that we as Manitobans should stand up against environment hazards and pollutants across Canada.

We are 10th, as the Minister pointed out, 10th in Canada for environmental standards. What is he doing to bring that up? He is saying we will not have studies. He is saying that there is no immediate action to be taken. He is saying that he is really not concerned with this. After all, it was either the past Government or maybe it is the federal Government or maybe it is the American Government or maybe, indeed, the Saskatchewan ones who we should really trust when it has been brought to our attention that that fact was a political move and not an environmental strategy. He does not seem to care about his portfolio enough to act in a reasonable manner. He is just sitting there. In fact, he allowed the Minister of Natural Resources to answer most of the questions today.

This project has been questioned—the question of quantity and quality of water. That is what water is all about. There are only two major concerns we have other than availability, which I guess indeed quantity, that we have quantity and we have quality of water. Both of these are questions and yet the Minister will not act. He is just going to say it is probably going to be okay. I will not have to work on the dikes in Melita this next spring, so why worry about it?

The Town of Souris, I can relate to very much because, indeed, the Town of Selkirk is in a very similar situation. A million dollars to a small town is very much money. What is he going to do? He is going to wait and depend upon other people to take the solution.

We in this House have to be concerned about the environment. We do not know what the effects are on

this project. That is our duty to find out. As an Opposition, we have had to bring it to this Minister's attention. I would hope that he should be responsible enough to say, let us get together and let us do something on this, but the Government does not seem to want to react. I think it is a shame for the Government and a shame on all Manitobans to be represented in such a manner.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): We live in an age where environmental concern has become increasingly important, I think, both at the provincial level, the national level, and internationally.

We live in an age when there is concern about our ozone layer and the devastating impact the deterioration of our ozone layer can cause in terms of the climates, weather patterns, etc., in this world. We are talking about an age when there is increasing concern over the devastation that is being caused by acid rain across much of North America, much of Europe. We live at a time when there is concern that our oceans are becoming cesspools for industrial waste, for raw sewage. We live in a world where there is supposedly growing concern over the environment. I thought that if there was one issue that could unite people in terms of the true concern in this Legislature, it was the environment.

Day after day, I hear the same tired response from the Minister of the Environment whenever an environmental concern is raised. Instead of treating those concerns as legitimate, the Minister gets up and mentions the word concern and then basically says he is not going to do anything about the problems that have been raised. In fact, what we have seen recently is he is now blaming the Members of the Opposition for not bringing matters to his attention earlier, but where is the Minister and his department? Surely, the Minister should be the one who is concerned about the Flin Flon situation or the PCBs. Surely it should be the Minister and his department who are taking the initiatives. This is an age when those environmental concerns that ignore today will come back to haunt us tomorrow. We are talking about dams today. Let us talk about a dam, for the Minister of Environment (Mr. Connery).

I remember going into Cross Lake recently and talking to people about the impact of another series of dams in terms of Hydro flooding that took place, and you want to talk about expectations. The expectations the people in that community picked up—I talked to many people who were involved in meetings at that time—they were told that there would be more water as a result of the dam and the expectation was that there would be more fish because there was more water. Now I do not know who gave people in that community that idea, but surely it is an indication of how expectations can go ghastly awry because, in the case of Cross Lake, the fishing, the wildlife, the whole habitat in that area, the environment has been devastated by the flooding that took place for hydro development.

I use that as an analogy for this particular case because what we are talking about in the case of the Rafferty-Alameda situation are dams and the impact

on the quantity and the quality of water that is going to be in place here in Manitoba. Right now, probably most Manitobans would not be aware of what Rafferty and Alameda are. I think it is important that we let them know that we are talking about two dams, one located in Rafferty on the Souris River, which is six miles north of Estevan, and a second—the Alameda—on the Moose Mountain Creek north of Oxbow.

I think we also have to explain to the people of Manitoba what the real issue is about. What is the purpose of those dams? There are basically two alleged advantages that will result from it. One is flood control, but the second is that it would supply coolant for a thermal generating—cold generating plant that is going to be built in the riding of the Conservative Premier of Saskatchewan. That is where we start from.

People have said, what are going to be the environmental impacts of this proposal? It has been raised federally; it has been raised in Saskatchewan; it has been raised in Manitoba; it has been raised by political representatives. It has been raised by a coalition that has developed that has raised a very important question. What is going to happen as a result of this development? Where has this Government been in terms of this concern? It was outlined earlier that the previous Government had on numerous occasions stated the concerns, in fact as recently as December of last year and as recently as April of this year, had written to the federal Government calling for a clear analysis, calling for public hearings in terms of the impacts of this particular dam.

Where has this Government been? We saw today with the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Connery) where this Government has been. He got up and talked about the quotes, the good aspects of the project, and he said, well we hope—and this is a direct quote—we hope that there will not be too many negative ones. I could not believe it when I heard it. This is the Minister of the Environment the people of Manitoba look to to be an advocate for the environment, who is now standing up and saying, we hope there will not be too many negative impacts with this proposal. I say that is not good enough. I say the Minister of the Environment for Manitoba should be demanding action by the federal Government, should be demanding studies, should be demanding public hearings to make sure that there are not the negative consequences, not relying on hope and a wing and a prayer, but standing up for Manitobans, standing up for the concern about the environment.

That is what I think should be done. I think that is clear from all Members of the Opposition, but where is this Government? Why have they been so silent on this issue? Even today we have only heard two Members of the Government stand up and speak. We have yet to hear from the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) who two years ago held a public meeting in his constituency to express his concern about this issue. I just want to quote this because I think it is a good quote, and I hope you will forgive me because I think it is the first time I will ever agree with a statement made by that particular Minister. The Minister said that at this particular point it is speculative as to what the

impact will be, and that is not good enough. This was in 1986.

* (1650)

I will quote once again: “I am not saying I am opposed to the project. I am saying, let us know what the impact will be.” Exactly. Why is it now that this Government, two years later, has not listened to the advice of one of its own Member’s two years ago? Where is that Member today saying exactly what we are saying on the Opposition side. I am saying, let us know what the impact will be. That is what we are saying.

What has happened with the federal Government? Have they gone ahead with public hearings? No. In fact, in June of this year, Mr. Deputy Speaker, permission was given by the federal Government for the go ahead. It was issued by the federal Minister, Tom McMillan.

I think, if you care to look at the whole network they have in terms of government regulations federally, I would say it is clear to anyone that will look at the facts on this matter that the federal Government proceeded by ignoring its own guidelines, the guidelines of the Federal Environmental Assessment and Review Office. In fact, questioning in the House of Commons had clearly documented this. So the federal Government has proceeded against its own guidelines. We know that. We know there is a political dimension, let us face it. We have a federal election that is going to be imminent in this country. We know that the greatest benefit is to the Premier of Saskatchewan. Some of us may be cynical and suggest that this is part of the federal election, the political wrangling on the Opposition, but we are not the only ones that are concerned about that. I know an editorial in the Brandon Sun stated exactly that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. If I had the time, I would read it, because I thought it was a good summation of what the issue is.

People are concerned -(Interjection)- Well, if there is leave at the end of my time and the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner) wants me to read it into the record, I would be more than glad to do so. But the bottom line is as follows. We have a major project; there could be serious environmental impacts from it. We do not have the studies, we have not had the public hearings, and yet the federal Government is proceeding, has given permission for the go ahead on that project. I say that is not acceptable. I think the rest of the Opposition is saying that is not acceptable.

What we are saying today is why is the government not saying the same thing? They do not have to oppose the project carte blanche. They have to basically only say that they want to know the impacts—not before they sign documents or whatever—that is not really the issue. It is not the issue whether Manitoba’s signature appears on the bottom of a sheet of paper. The real issue is whether Manitoba’s environment is going to suffer because of this development. So why is this government not standing up now and saying that it is going to raise those concerns? It is going to call for public hearings; call for the referral to the International Joint Commission, if necessary; call for

studies. It might take six months or a year or two years or more before this project is put in place; but surely if one thing we have seen from the environment in the last decade, the last 20 years is that sometimes the time spent now, those extra couple of years, can make all the difference in ensuring there is not an environmental catastrophe down the line.

You can talk to people in Cross Lake about what happened to their community. You can talk to people who are affected by many of the other major developments we have seen in Canada—really, in a lot of cases generations worth of environmental destruction. In fact, in some cases permanent destruction was caused because politicians could not wait those extra six months, that extra year.

I am sorry, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but that is the bottom line. We want this government to act and we want it to act now.

Mr. Allan Patterson (Radisson): I do not have too much to say about this specific project, but I would like to say some things about the environment in general.

First of all, Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me just say that using man as a species—and using the name “man,” I have no sexist connotations; I just mean the species of homo sapiens—I have come to the view in comparably recent years that man is the most destructive creature on the face of the earth. This is not to knock ourselves unduly, particularly here in North America, but when the early Europeans came over here to colonize or discover or steal or exploit North America—choose your word or all of the above—coming from what was then a relatively sparsely populated land and into this virtually unpopulated one, one can understand their utter wonder at the resources throughout North America, speaking both of the United States and Canada and Mexico, too, of course.

So, therefore, Manitoba resources that seemed utterly limitless at the time, what the economists would class as a free good or not cost to it—water, pure air and so on—have come to be used to great advantage, of course, for a great deal of good, but also to be unduly exploited and wasted over the centuries or, more particularly, recent decades, let us say, in this century.

In my lifetime thus far, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which I hope will extend a few more decades or years yet, the population of Canada has tripled, and that of the United States has almost tripled. This is all within the middle years of the 20th Century. So that all of our resources have been, to a large extent, many that we thought had virtually no limit, we can see a limit to them and coming to a close or a crisis situation. What are we going to do about it?

Many say that technology is our salvation in many respects. Technology can help, but we should not look to technology for relatively simple answers to complex problems of the whole balance of life and resources of various kinds on this finite planet Earth.

I note the little handout we just received recently from our environmental critic that this particular project

was initiated for three purposes: to provide irrigation waters for Saskatchewan farm lands; to provide some flood control primarily for North Dakota; and to provide some cooling water for our thermal generating station in Saskatchewan.

To look at the third item, the cooling water for the thermal generating station, using water for cooling obviously means that the water is going to get hot and it will be of a substantially increased temperature when it finally flows back into the river from which it came. This has some very significant impact on the environment in the matter of the life that exists in the particular river and wherever that water goes.

If we look at the thermal generation station itself, a coal-fired generating station near the fields in Estevan, that in itself will have a potentially extremely deleterious effect on the environment. Rather than build this generating station with its implications, both for the emissions from the burning coal and for the cooling water, why could not Saskatchewan tap into our Manitoba Hydro system where we have plentiful and future plentiful resources of relatively cheap and relatively environmentally clean electricity that could be exported within Canada? We do not have to worry about exporting to the United States. From that point of view, we could question the necessity for this particular project.

But as others have brought out, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are concerned here. The benefits for this flow to the Province of Saskatchewan—and there are costs—they do not get any benefits without some costs attached to them. So where do the costs go to? There are no particular benefits in this for Manitoba. We have not requested it. It is Saskatchewan initiation. So, as others have brought out, it behooves us as Manitobans and particularly the Government of Manitoba, what everyone might be in at any particular time, to say let us stop and let us have a good hard look at all of these things before we initial it and put pen to the document that will allow it to go forward.

* (1700)

The costs to a large degree are unknown. We can speculate as to what some of them might be for Manitoba. This has been brought up by previous speakers. It is a whole question of the flow of water and supply of it to towns, the most prominent one of which is Souris, but there are others. There is a whole impact on habitat, wildlife and so on. So why is it necessary that this be pushed right now? As I have mentioned, man as a creature has exploited the environment. We have reached a particular stage now on the development of the country and of the province, or this particular area, and some problems might seem to need some addressing, such as irrigation and flood control; but what is to be lost, I ask, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by holding up a few more months or even a year or two to have thorough studies done on all aspects of such a project before it is moved forward?

We tend, in many of our affairs, both personal and in public life and a business life, we set some artificial target dates or deadlines we would like to have met,

and then treat these as though the world was going to end if they are not met. We have here a date of September 30, this year, when availability of American funding is dependent on concurrence between all parties prior to this particular date. Why do we allow ourselves to be bound by these arbitrarily set dates when things that are of vital importance not only to us but to our children, our grandchildren and our great-grandchildren are under discussion?

How much time do I have left, Mr. Deputy Speaker? -(Interjection)- Two minutes.

I would only like to just reiterate my general philosophy on these matters. It bothers me greatly. As I mentioned before this, what seemed not all that long ago an utterly limitless land of resources, there has been a great bit of it just destroyed in comparatively recent years. One looks at the stripping of mountains in British Columbia, the attack that places like the Queen Charlotte Islands are under, the pollution of the Great lakes and so on and so on. The list is almost endless.

I would very strongly support this thrust to have a thorough cost-benefit impact study, whatever you want to call it, done on the effects of this particular project on Manitobans in particular. Of course, that is or primary concern here, but it really extends to all of Canada. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Ms. Avis Gray (Ellice): I take pleasure in having the opportunity this afternoon to debate this matter of urgent public importance, a matter which affects all of Manitobans; and I find it very, very interesting, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that in over two hours of debate, the Government side of the House has seen fit to only have two of their Members speak on this very important subject.

What we were referring to this afternoon and what we want to discuss are the effects of the Rafferty-Alameda Dam project. We understand that this particular project was initiated for a number of purposes: one of providing irrigation water for Saskatchewan farm lands; one to assist in flood control primarily for North Dakota; also, the dam project was initiated to provide a cooling pond for a generating station which is located near Estevan, Saskatchewan.

We understand that this project was initiated more than two years ago by the Saskatchewan Government, and they have requested our Canadian Government to commence negotiations with the American authorities. We understand, as well, that the federal Minister of the Environment, Mr. Tom McMillan, chose to issue a licence for the project in June of this year. We understand that in order for American funding to be available that their needs—we have a deadline to reach of September 30, 1988.

We can appreciate the fact that now Manitoba is put under tremendous pressure to agree to that proposed dam project and to see that it goes through. So we are in the situation where the Province of Manitoba is under some pressure from the federal Government and the Saskatchewan Government to agree to this particular project.

So the first question that we would ask is, well, what studies and reports do we have? What indications do

we have as to what the impacts are to this project in relation to Manitoba since it is Manitoba that we are primarily concerned about?

We understand that there have been impact studies that have been done by Saskatchewan and one done by the United States as well. Neither of those studies addresses the impact of the project on Manitoba. Therefore, what information do we have from the Government side do we have to assure Manitobans about the impacts of this particular project? The Members on the opposite side of the House have suggested that we trust them. Well, I would suggest that as Opposition Members that we are representing Manitobans here, and unfortunately to trust and to have faith is something which we cannot do at this point in time since the opposite side has been Government. We have not had actions and initiations from the Government that would lead us to trust that Government at all.

The Minister of Environment (Mr. Connery) has indicated in this House that the Alameda-Rafferty project will have significant good implications on Manitoba. The Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner) has indicated that a technical group is studying this now and in fact they are looking at the impacts. Which is it, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Are there conclusions from the Government side of the House that there will be good implications from the dam project or are there still questions and concerns from the Government side of the House?

The Honourable House Leader (Mr. McCrae) on the Government side likes to refer to our Liberal information coming from the Free Press. Well, I certainly take exception to that notion. The Honourable House Leader is certainly reaching in attempting to discredit this side of the House. The Honourable Member for Wolseley (Mr. Taylor) has raised questions in this House repeatedly, on a number of occasions, and has asked for answers from the Environment Minister. To date there have been no answers.

We have a Minister of Environment (Mr. Connery) whose middle name is "concern," but it should be "action," Mr. Deputy Speaker. Today the Minister of the Environment speaks about his "hope," so now we have "Hope and Concern" Connery. It reminds me of when I was a child and of "Hope and Crosby," the road shows. Maybe the Minister of the Environment should take his show on the road, preferably out of province, the road to Rafferty-Alameda, the road to environmental decline.

We are getting somewhat impatient on this side of the House about the Government continually trying to blame the previous administration for lack of inaction on every issue. When is the Government going to take some leadership and show Manitobans that they do take leadership and assume the responsibility for their portfolios? How long can a Government go on and continuously blame the previous administration? That is not being a pro-active Government. That is not being an open Government; that is not being a Government which responds to the people of Manitoba.

* (1710)

The Minister of Environment (Mr. Connery) continually likes to make the comments that we, on this side of the House, are less than responsible, because we do not bring to light various environmental facts earlier in this House. Let me say for the record that the Member for Wolseley (Mr. Taylor) chose to check his facts, both technically, and he went to the site to check his facts, was waiting for information back from various officials. Let me say that if the Member for Wolseley had chosen to ask the question in this House prematurely, he obviously would have been accused from the Government side of fearmongering. I say to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Government cannot have it both ways.

May I also add that the Member for Wolseley (Mr. Taylor) also offered to the Minister of Environment (Mr. Connery) to tour the sites, where there were concerns about PCBs and give a critical opinion and some constructive criticism.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): I believe the rules of relevancy apply to debates under Rule 27. Today the discussion is as per the resolution put down by the Honourable Member for Wolseley (Mr. Taylor) having to do with Rafferty-Alameda, as opposed to PCBs.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Honourable Member for Ellice, to the point of order.

Ms. Gray: I asked for clarification from the Deputy Speaker. I was simply responding to the Minister of Environment's discussions today in his comments to the House regarding the matter of urgent public importance, Rafferty-Alameda.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I would like to thank all Honourable Members for their advice. The discussion that has been raging this afternoon has been wide ranging at times. I would ask that all Members consider the particular rule as cited by the Honourable Government House Leader (Mr. McCrae).

An Honourable Member: Hear, hear!

Ms. Gray: May I remind the Honourable Members on the opposite side that we are talking about certainly a matter of urgent public importance, the Rafferty-Alameda Dam, but the actions or lack of action of this Government in regard to this project certainly comes into question this afternoon. We have a situation where we have a federal Government, who has decided to work out some backroom deals with the Government of Saskatchewan. We have a situation where this Government in Manitoba has chosen to not say anything for fear of, I would assume, repercussions from the federal Government. What has happened to the good, collegial relationship that the First Minister in this House has with the Prime Minister of Canada? Why has he not called the Prime Minister of Canada and expressed his grave concerns about this backroom deal?

In reference to this project, we cannot understand on this side of the House why the Government refuses

to consider the fact that we should be having our own impact analysis on the effects of this project for Manitobans. We have a senior advisor to the federal Minister of Environment in Ottawa who has repeatedly expressed her concerns about this project and the negative impacts on Manitoba, was so concerned that she chose to resign her position as advisor to the federal Minister of Environment because of her concerns and of her principles. When is this Government going to listen to the people of Manitoba and listen to this side of the House and take some constructive advice and look at the impact and the negative implications of this particular dam project?

We talk about the—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The Chair has already added an extra minute to the Honourable Member for Ellice's time and perhaps we could allow her to complete her remarks. Thank you very much.

Ms. Gray: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We know there are a lot of potential impacts, certainly some of them negative on this dam project in relation to the impacts on Manitoba.

The First Minister (Mr. Filmon) tries to make light of the situation and actually tries to tell a joke in the House. I would be pleased at any time to assist the First Minister in how to tell jokes which are witty and humorous. But let me get to the subject.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member would like to conclude her remarks.

Ms. Gray: How many minutes do I have?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Would the Honourable Member please conclude her remarks, and would the House allow her the privilege of concluding her remarks this afternoon?

Ms. Gray: Mr. Deputy Speaker, how many minutes?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Ms. Gray: I would just like to conclude by saying that it is very unfortunate that Governments become complacent and refuse to be proactive in dealing with environmental issues. We are concerned about acid rain. We are concerned about the impacts of this type of project on Manitoba. I would say that this particular matter of urgent public importance shows time and time again that this Government lacks the skills in managing the affairs of the province. It brings into serious question the management and the ability of this particular Government in a number of issues, whether it be the social services, or whether it be the environment as is in this particular case. Thank you.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair.)

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): I suppose there are a number of ways in which one could address this emergency debate. I know that some of my colleagues and other Members on this side of the House have

called the Government to task for what is quite obviously a rather weak and ineffective position they have taken on this matter, and surprisingly, I suppose, a weak position, given that Members on that side represent this area. I am somewhat astounded that the Minister of Northern Affairs, the Member for Arthur (Mr. Downey), has not taken the opportunity to share with us his views on this matter and to call for more direct action as he did quite vocally at one point, Mr. Speaker.

I think it is also becoming apparent that, unlike Premier Devine who seems to actually have a direct line to the First Minister, to the Prime Minister, this First Minister (Mr. Filmon), our First Minister in Manitoba, if he ever did have the First Minister's telephone number, has lost it. In Manitoba we have not received the kind of treatment which an effective Government and effective Premier would have been able to bring to bear on Manitoba's interests.

I think this particular project, the Rafferty and Alameda Dams, is going to have a negative implication for many communities, many major communities, and Souris is not the least of which. It is also, I think, a project which is symptomatic of the disease which infects Conservative Governments from time to time.

This project was triggered—the fact that these dams are being built, was triggered by a political decision in the Government of Saskatchewan to build the Shand power project. That is the reason that Manitoba's water quality in the Souris River is being threatened, not because of anything that was required, not because they were really interested in flood control, not because they were interested in the advantages of the reservoir being used for irrigation or agricultural purposes. We are faced with this problem because the Saskatchewan Government, Mr. Devine in particular, wanted a hydro development project in his constituency, and that gave us the Shand power project.

* (1720)

I want to put on the record as well that Mr. Berntson, the Deputy Premier of Saskatchewan and I have corresponded on this issue. The fact of the matter is that the power the people of Saskatchewan are going to get from this power project is more expensive, less secure than power that could have been made available to Saskatchewan through Manitoba Hydro for a long-term contract.

The Member for Arthur (Mr. Downey) says we blew it. I can tell the Member for Arthur that in no way were negotiations blown. They were offered a power deal which would have saved the people of Saskatchewan millions and millions of dollars. They refused to discuss it because the Premier of Saskatchewan, the Tory Premier had made a decision, a political decision that this project was going to be built in his constituency. The dams were going to be built come what may, regardless of the problems it was going to create for the people downstream, and particularly the problems that we have, or we are going to face, in Saskatchewan.

It is a history of political opportunism from the word "go." It was political opportunism on the part of the Premier (Mr. Filmon), and now we have seen that it is

political opportunism on the part of someone that I am quite surprised would be involved in it. That is the federal Minister of the Environment who I believed had some integrity, although I cannot say the same for his First Minister. I am surprised that what we are witnessing here is a back door deal, a deal which, in effect, sacrifices the interests of Manitoba, the interests of our environment for political expediency both at the federal and provincial Conservative level in Saskatchewan and in the federal Government, a quid pro quo which trades off a national park and some other—and I will emphasize that there are some other elements to this deal which are going to be revealed in the coming days and the coming months which are going to make it patently obvious to anyone that political opportunism is what led us to this position in Manitoba, and that in itself is unfortunate, but it is even more unfortunate that this Government has not had the intestinal, political fortitude to say it is wrong, and that we are going to, notwithstanding the interests of Saskatchewan or the First Minister (Mr. Filmon), stand up and make sure that Manitoba's interests are protected in this.

I know that it has already been pointed out to the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Connery), who was strangely silent, or perhaps not silent but strangely unresponsive today in Question Period when it came to answering questions about areas clearly within his responsibility. It is clear that the decision has been made at another level to take responsibility away from him and to concern ourselves not with the environment but with the politically negotiated deal between Saskatchewan and the federal Government to protect that at any cost and not to be concerned with the real long-term implications for this project on Manitoba.

Anyone who had anything to do with the tremendous political fight that went on in Manitoba and with respect to Garrison knows that it is never a case of there being no implications. When we first heard of Garrison many, many years ago, we received all kinds of assurances that the impact on water quality, the likelihood of transference of flora or fauna or biota from one system to another was being overplayed. The people who are opposing the project were fearmongering.

The same thing is being said today when Members on this side have asked the Government to intercede on behalf of Manitobans to stop this project until we, as individuals, in this Legislature, until the communities can be satisfied that (a) there is going to be a quantity, a quality of water resulting after this project is implemented, and perhaps a follow-up, a further issue which has not been raised to any significant extent. The fact that what the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Connery) has done federally is really give carte blanche to Saskatchewan to transfer, in effect, water from one basin to another.

So we are talking about something that could be potentially more serious, although I am not suggesting that it would not be serious to have a very much restricted water flow through the Souris River, but there is also the question of transference of biological material, biota, from the Saskatchewan River system into the Souris River system if at some point the

Saskatchewan Government decides that they in fact want to live up to their commitment in terms of the reduction of water flow by transferring water from one basin to another.

So there are all kinds of serious questions which I do not think it is unrealistic to expect our elected officials to ask, and it is of grave concern to Members on this side that those questions are not being asked either by the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Connerly) or by the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner). It would be indeed unfortunate if we cannot convince the federal Minister of the Environment to withdraw the permit, to undertake the federal studies, which his own fear of guidelines require him to undertake, to assure Manitobans that all of the questions that need to be asked are asked; and if we cannot move the federal Minister to do his duty as a federal Minister, then we have to use our own resources, to use what is available at hand in Manitoba to do that analysis for ourself.

I think a case can be made, and has been made, that the federal environmental review organization should be undertaking those studies, should be putting up the money to make sure that all of the questions get answered, but if they do not, then the Clean Environment Commission, the Minister has the authority to call them, to do a thorough investigation of this matter, to do the analysis that is required and report to Manitobans. Under no circumstances should there be any complicity on the part of this Government with the Tory Government in Saskatchewan or the Tory Government in Ottawa on this matter.

We should be standing up for the interests of Manitoba and if it is necessary for us to do what will be a rather incomplete study because the project's parameters clearly affect other jurisdictions including North Dakota and Saskatchewan, then we should do that. I think Members on this side would certainly welcome some kind of forthright progressive announcement from this Government on the issues that the Members on this side have put before the Chamber.

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern Affairs): I rise to put a few words on the record today to try and bring, Mr. Speaker, this whole question into a little bit of reasonable perspective and to try and bring into this Chamber some element of reasonable, well-reasoned debate, which has not apparently hit the floor when listening to what I have heard in Question Period.

Mr. Speaker, let us put the whole thing as it should be. The former NDP Government, several years ago and I do not have the exact date, spent several hundreds of thousands of dollars of taxpayers' money in Manitoba along with Saskatchewan, along with the federal Government, to do a Souris River basin study. That was carried out for the people of Manitoba and Canada.

The recommendations following that study, one of the main recommendations by the New Democratic Government, by the federal Government, was to build the Rafferty-Alameda Dams. Let us bring this thing into a full context as to where it should be. (Interjection) Money refunded by the New Democratic Party on behalf of the Souris River basin—that is who recommended

the Rafferty Dam should be built—one of the reasons that it should be built was to control, yes, flooding, because at that particular time we had some major flooding problems in the Souris River valley. The Town of Melita, the Towns of Souris and Hartney and all those communities are impacted because of the water that they have to use for drinking, but also it has a major flood impact.

* (1730)

The City of Minot had proposed, at that particular time, to build a dry dam known as the Burlington Dam. The Burlington Dam was for one purpose and one purpose only. That was to store water during high periods of water in the Spring and release it during the period of a year. They made a commitment and joined with Saskatchewan to build the Burlington Dam which was opposed by our good friend and who led the "Save the Valley Committee," Mr. Orland Hansen. They put enough pressure on the people, on the state legislators at that particular time, to back off the Burlington and help support the Rafferty, to buy Minot some flood protection and to give Minot a supply of water. Again, that came out of funding by the former New Democratic Government—that whole process started.

Let us just take another look at currently where we are at. Currently, we are seeing a proposal to build a water storage plant in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, the Member is totally irresponsible to make any comment about the water quality changing as in comparison to the Garrison proposal. The Garrison proposal was a shift of water from a different drainage basin into the Hudson Bay. The Souris River, before the dam is built, headwaters at Yellow Grass, Saskatchewan, flows into the system, down into the United States, loops back up through Minot and back through into the constituency, in which I represent, of Arthur.

There is not one change of one jurisdiction or water boundary to another, Mr. Speaker. The water comes from the same system as it did before the dam was built.

An Honourable Member: You are missing the point.

Mr. Downey: I am missing the point? Let us look at the facts that are before us. This is totally irresponsible of the Liberal Opposition and of the New Democrats to come in and lay this out as if it is the biggest thing that is going to hurt Manitoba. One of the problems that we have is we have not had enough constructive objective debate when it comes to the whole question of water conservation and water storage in southern Manitoba. My God, we have just come through one of the worst droughts since the 1930s and these people are standing up, I would say, carrying out irresponsible debate when it comes to talking of water conservation and water management. Yes, we are concerned about water quality and water quantity. I made that proposal. I made those concerns known to the committee in Saskatchewan that were having hearings on the Rafferty-Alameda.

The NDP Government of the Day did not have time to do it. They did not have time to put one comment

on the record officially in Saskatchewan as to their objection to what was going on in Saskatchewan or any concerns. In fact, it is on file, many invitations from the Premier of Saskatchewan to the former NDP Premier Howard Pawley to join with them, to join with Governor Sinner in North Dakota, and to meet objectively on an overall Souris River water management plan. We were left out of it because of their neglect and lack of a responsible action on behalf of the people of Manitoba. We have lost and we have lost drastically because of their lack of action on behalf of the people of Manitoba. I say to the Liberals, if they are trying to puppet or to imitate the NDP when it comes to this whole area of being responsible in environmental affairs dealing with meaningful projects, then I say they are on dangerous ground.

To the hearings, Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that I have evidence of the -(Interjection)- communities—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Minister of Northern Affairs.

Mr. Downey: Again, let us deal with some of the communities. Did the Liberal Party check with the communities in Arthur as to what their feelings about the Rafferty-Alameda Dams will do? Did he talk to the Town of Melita, the R.M.s, the Souris River Water Commission? Did he talk to all the people who have traditionally lived along the Souris River basin and have seen it either full of water and flooding their farms and their towns, or too low; where the quality of water is nothing but green slime like it is today? Is that what he wants the people of Arthur to continue on with? Or does he want -(Interjection)- Oh, it is going to get greener. What is going to get green is him because of his irresponsible approach to this whole question of water conservation and proper management.

Let us go back to the hearings. There was support for this project coming from all of those southwest communities to the hearings. Why did the Liberal Party not go out and talk to those communities and see what is going to happen? -(Interjection)- Mr. Speaker, the Member says why do I not read my local papers? Well, there is one paper that has one comment that is in opposition to it. Why does he not talk to the elected people?

I put on the record, and I will put it on very clearly, No. 1, we want to be guaranteed our traditional quantities of water; if we can get an increase, all the better. No. 2, I want to tell you as well that the quality of the water should not only be maintained because I do not want to maintain it at the level that it appears to me, I want the water quality improved. If we were to work cooperatively with Saskatchewan and North Dakota, that may well have happened. I can assure you what will happen now from this irresponsible action, they may just tell us that we can go and do whatever we like because we do not care about progress in their province, that we are taking a one-eyed approach to it, and that is one with a blind eye to improving the conditions between Saskatchewan, North Dakota and Manitoba as it relates to water quality, conservation and the use of that water.

I think the Liberal Party would be well-advised, if they are considering looking for support in the

southwest area of Manitoba, that they should do a little more research than to do it from a disgruntled former Member of the federal Government who is going public with some particular dissatisfaction that they have had.

So I am prepared to go to the people in Arthur, Manitoba, on a responsible way of handling the Souris River, not on the scare tactics, not on the way in which it has been handled by the Liberal Party, supported by the New Democrats here today. I think, if we were to do the right thing, we would have talked with Saskatchewan, North Dakota, Canada and the United States, and we would have planned to build a major structure in Manitoba that would conserve water and give it the kind of input that the people of not only southwest Manitoba deserve, but all the people of Manitoba deserve. That is a top-quality water conservation project and a project in Manitoba supported by Saskatchewan, North Dakota and the rest of the provinces. This is the most absolutely irresponsible approach I have ever heard from any political Party that has come in this Assembly.

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

* (1740)

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the Honourable Member for Arthur (Mr. Downey) has raised the issue of irresponsibility, the issue of negotiation and how that goes about. He says we should trust the people of Saskatchewan and North Dakota, and we would work cooperatively with them. The Premier (Mr. Filmon) said listen to his speech. I listened very closely to that speech, because that speech is largely what I am going to respond to in mine. He is the Member for that area and he should know better than what he spoke of. He is going to, I am afraid, lose credibility in his constituency because of his comments today. He is the one who will have to answer for them. I am confident of that and I am confident that the people in his area will not be pleased with what he has said and what his Government represents because what his Government represents is blind belief in the U.S. Army Corps for the water quality for Manitobans and for the levels of our rivers.

We know in Canada the kind of deals that have been struck. We know about the Columbia River project in B.C. We know what can happen when you do not do your own environmental impact assessments and what happens when you do not do your own research. I am not saying that these people are not worthy of some trust. What I am saying is that, as responsible Manitobans and surely as a responsible Government, you do your own study. You get your own facts, you get your own statistics, so you can go to the table as an equal.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, as the Member for Arthur (Mr. Downey) well knows, "souris" and "Souris" means mouse. It is the mice across the way which are being led by the pied piper into the river, but the river will not even be there. Read the U.S. Army Corps Report and you will see what we are giving up. We are giving

up our rights and we are giving up our right to come up with our own set of statistics.

I want to talk briefly about the facts behind this project, which my honourable friend from Arthur has not cited. This project was initiated for three purposes: firstly, to provide irrigation waters for Saskatchewan farm lands; secondly, to provide flood control primarily for North Dakota; thirdly, to provide a cooling pond for a thermal generating station located near Estevan. It was initiated more than two years ago by the Saskatchewan Government which requested that the federal Government commence negotiations with the U.S. authorities. The federal Minister of the Environment, Mr. McMillan, issued a licence for the project in June of this year.

Mr. Speaker, what we have seen is a very cosy backroom deal between the Government of Saskatchewan and the federal Government. It has worked to both of their advantages.

The remarks of the now resigned Elizabeth May, I think clearly indicate what Manitobans have missed in respect to this deal. We certainly have not been there with equality; we have not been there with the facts that the other two had. We did not do our own study. Surely, that is a first criteria, a first priority for any Government which is going to impact to the level that Manitoba will be by these dams. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the deal with Saskatchewan was tied to a national park. It was further, we are advised by Ms. May, tied to funds from the federal Government to help with the translation of statutes in Manitoba into French.

We can see, therefore, that both Regina and Ottawa got very, very concrete rewards from this deal. Manitoba has not. The Member for Arthur (Mr. Downey) says Manitoba is going to benefit from this. That is pure hypothesis on his part. Where are his statistics? Where are the reports that have been done in Manitoba by Manitobans to prove that? Where are they?

I submit, Mr. Speaker, that he is relying on his Party position, and when he says that the NDP made errors and were not vigilant in their participation in the initial talks, that may be true, but the fact is that the deal has not been made yet and his Government has been in power since April. There are things that can be done and should have been done when this was first raised in this House by the Member for Wolesey (Mr. Taylor), and quite rightly so. It is clear that Manitoba should be taking a strong position, should be taking a position which protects the waters of the Souris River and the people of that part of the province. It is not too late; it is soon going to be.

Mr. Speaker, let us look at the potential impacts of these dam projects. Our information to date tells us that the quantity of water flowing through Manitoba will be reduced, in comparison to current flows, in the following amounts: 100 percent of current flows in wet years; 85 percent of current flows in average years; and a mere 45 percent of current flows in dry years. It is speculated that every third year is projected to be a low-flow year. The quantity of water in the Town of Souris is in jeopardy, which clearly may result in a switch to wells for its water supply at a projected cost of \$1 million.

There are 21 licensed water users in addition to the Town of Souris who will be adversely affected by the low water flows, and the Member for Arthur (Mr. Downey) can confirm this later on. He has had his chance to speak and I will let him confirm them to me privately—I am sure he will. Water quality will be adversely affected with the lower water flows causing increased silting and less dilution of pollutants. We know that discharge from reservoirs will occur from the bottom which may result in the discharge of anoxic water with elevated levels of dissolved metals, phosphorous and ionized ammonia.

Wildlife—we know that wildlife and vegetation will also be adversely affected. Low water flows result in loss of upstream fish and spawning areas. Flooding of wildlife habitat cause loss of the wintering habitat for deer, reduced upland game bird populations, loss of good quality waterfowl production habitat and a general reduction of wildlife population. The natural shelter belts in this area will be destroyed and vegetation reduced. Prolonged flooding may occur at the Canada-U.S. border as the existing channel is unable to handle upstream flows.

Mr. Speaker, how much time do I have remaining?

Mr. Speaker: Two minutes.

Mr. Edwards: Two minutes. My friends across the way say "Too much." I am sure, from their point of view, it has been too much, as indeed this entire debate has been to their handling of this issue. This issue has critical importance for the people of Manitoba. These are the people who represent the rural Manitobans. They are supposed to know about their interests. And what have they done? What have they done? They have come up with words—words like the words for the Natives, words like the words for the visible minorities, their Affirmative Action Minister. These are the guys who say we know what to do best and we are very, very concerned; but actions speak louder than words. Actions are amiss again, yet again. This time, of all people, for these Members, rural Manitobans, it is the Liberal Party who is standing up for rural Manitobans. Today, it is the Liberal Party and that has really hit them where it hurts. I can see that because it has hurt them in their votes. It has hit them right between the eyes, right where it hurts. We know that.

Let me make one last point.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Edwards: I do not want this outburst of resentment to my last remark to cut into my time.

What we have seen from the Environment Minister (Mr. Connery) are very, very pathetic words. We have had words on environmental issues since Day One of this Government that you might be inclined to believe—their "I am concerned, I am doing something, I really care." You would be inclined to believe the guy. The problem is that there is just nothing behind it, there never has been, and in this case there are not even

the words. He will not even answer the questions; he passes the buck. He is not even coming up with the words today. The Government is telling the people of Manitoba that they have protected their interests. They have not even done their own study. I suggest that that fact alone tells the people that what this Government is about.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

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

* (1750)

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): I rise to just make a brief contribution to this debate. I just want to put on the record a couple of brief issues because it seems to me that for a debate of urgent public importance, there has not been a great deal of focused attention on what is presumably a matter of considerable urgency to the Liberal Party.

We have had comments from Members opposite to the effect that they do not know much about this issue, and so they are going to talk about the environment in general on a matter—that is what was said by the Member for Radisson (Mr. Patterson)—that presumably is of such urgent public importance that we are setting aside all the business of the House to speak on that here today.

This is the principled Liberal Party that is doing nothing but trying desperately to raise some public attention to them to make up for the fact that they have been a hopeless failure in this Legislature in this Session. I am embarrassed for the Member for Wolseley (Mr. Taylor), and for his leader, for the fact that they have put the Legislature through this kind of exercise today, because when people examine Hansard and they read the comments of Members such as the Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) or for Selkirk (Mrs. Charles), trying to walk all around the block and talk about issues, personally insulting Members on this side, imputing motives, attempting to suggest that people on this side are not informed, are not aware of what is going on, that is the whole issue that they have debated here today.

They have debated nothing about the valid concerns on Souris and Alameda, on the Rafferty and Alameda Dams on the Souris River. All they have suggested was personal attacks on individuals on this side of the House and trivia about issues that they know very little about. Their morality is showing more than anything else in this debate that we have had here today.

Mr. Speaker, you were right, Sir, and I compliment you on the ruling that you made. This is not a matter of urgent public importance because of the fact that it is being looked after in the course of the responsibility of this administration. We take our responsibilities very, very seriously, unlike the previous administration that would not have an environmental impact study done on this particular project because of the fact that they felt that it was up to the feds to do it.

If it was of such importance to Manitoba, why would they not proceed with it on their own? Why do they

say, well, we think it is important but not important enough to proceed with it and we will let somebody else do it. If somebody else does not do it, then it will not get done. That is really an important issue to the N.D. Party, is it not, Mr. Speaker? The fact of the matter is when they had an opportunity, they did nothing, absolutely nothing.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Dauphin, who was the Natural Resources Minister, says that this project does not deserve support because, let us face it, there is a whole sinister plot out there. Saskatchewan wants to have it because they need it for cooling for their electrical generation project. He says North Dakota, they only want it because it is going to control flooding in Minot. What is the matter with that? Is that such a sinister motive or is that understandable that North Dakota would like to see a project that would control flooding in Minot?

Mr. Speaker, I was in Minot in the spring of 1969, May of 1969, when they had dikes running throughout the city that were 14 feet high. On major thoroughfares throughout the city they were diked all over the place because they had huge water flows throughout the Town of Minot, flooding that was absolutely unbelievable. One-third of the homes in the town were destroyed by flooding. Why should they not want to have protection from their flooding? I think that is reasonable. Why should not we in Manitoba want to have assurances of flows on the Souris River that will improve the ability of the Town of Souris and all of the agricultural users along the way to get guaranteed minimum flows? Mr. Speaker, we have no difficulty with the study, but let us look at a few things.

First and foremost, there is a knowledge of some of the potential downstream effects. One of them is in the environmental impact study that was done by the Americans. The Member for Wolseley (Mr. Taylor) quoted from it saying that study indicated that they have concerns that maybe we will not get the quality and the quantity of water as a result of this dam project. The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that is why we have to ensure that the federal Government upholds and enforces the Boundary Waters Treaty Agreement of 1909. That is where the law is on our side. It is not in terms of Saskatchewan versus Manitoba because the water does not come from Saskatchewan into Manitoba. It is the water coming from the United States, and we happen to have an Act that protects our interests.

So that is why we are putting the pressure on the federal Government; that is why the Minister of Natural Resources wrote to the Honourable Joe Clark and said to him that we have to have certain assurances, and that is exactly where it has to be. That is why the technical groups that are meeting are concentrating on those assurances that we have to get from the Americans, and it is not anything to do with Saskatchewan versus us because Saskatchewan does not have an obligation in law to us. The obligation in law is from the Americans to us. That is why the pressure has been put on the federal-provincial negotiations and discussions because that is where it belongs. That is No. 1, Mr. Speaker.

No. 2, the agreement that was signed, the licence that was issued on June 17 by the federal Government to Saskatchewan, firstly, the Member for Wolseley (Mr. Taylor) said earlier that Saskatchewan was considering—and that was repeated by the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie)—diverting water from other basins into the Souris. It says here the licensee shall not divert water from outside the Souris River drainage basin if such diverted waters would increase the annual flow of the Souris River at the International Boundary above that which would have occurred in the state of nature. They have that in there, part of the licence.

He says that the environmental impact study, and he is right, raises the question as to whether or not the quality and quantity of the water will be preserved. The licence says, and this is Article 10, the licensee shall construct, operate and maintain the improvement in such manner as shall not contravene the International Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909. If these works that they construct contravene that International Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909, then we have legal recourse to ensure that they are stopped from doing it.

That is why we are meeting with the federal Government. That is why informally we have had our Ministers and their staff meet with Saskatchewan, to ensure that they know that we are not going to allow for any deleterious effects of this project, and that we have the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909 as our legal authority to ensure that that does not happen, and we are going to use it to the fullest extent.

That is why we have been meeting and that is why we have been doing the job that the former administration never did. The former administration never once met with Saskatchewan on the project. The Minister would not meet with the Minister on the project or any Saskatchewan Ministers. We are doing that.

Our Minister is also taking the case to the federal Government, to Joe Clark, the Minister of External Affairs, to make sure that all of our authorities are protected under this Act and under this project.

That is why this is being brought forward by the Member for Wolseley (Mr. Taylor). Just simply, it is another one of these many other issues that they want to raise here and try and create some impact for the Liberal Party because they have failed to create any impact. In so doing, all they could do to create an impact was to convince the Member for Springfield (Mr. Roch) that he would be better as a Liberal despite the

fact that politically he is as divergent from them, every one of them. I want them to look themselves in the mirror one of these days and ask what they have done to themselves. I am sure that they will have plenty of opportunity, as the abuse and the criticism continues to heap on them for this opportunistic move they have made.

Now they are going to the next move, which is to bring the Member for Wolseley (Mr. Taylor) a motion of urgent public importance for debate, set aside everything else in this House and deal with this particular issue, and then have the kind of non-speeches that have been delivered by person after person after person on his side of the House to try and support what he says is a matter of such urgency to the people of Manitoba.

The people of Manitoba know that the urgency is to ensure that we protect our interests and our rights and that we go to the Government of Canada and demand that nothing harmful to the downstream users takes place as a result of these projects—

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

The Honourable Member for St. Norbert.

Mr. Angus: Being totally unfamiliar with the Rules of the House, may I have leave to ask the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) to clarify a position in his recent statements? I am not sure—

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable First Minister had 10 minutes and I believe that it has been the understanding around here that had you asked him before—

* (1800)

Mr. Angus: Mr. Speaker, the only reason that I am asking is that I am not absolutely sure of what he said and I wanted to give him an opportunity to clarify.

The question is: Are—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Does the Honourable Member have leave? No.

The Hour being 6 p.m., I am interrupting the proceedings of the House with the understanding that this House will reconvene at eight o'clock tonight.