



First Session - Thirty-Seventh Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

DEBATES

and

PROCEEDINGS

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable George Hickes
Speaker*



Vol. L No. 17A - 10 a.m., Thursday, April 27, 2000

ISSN 0542-5492

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Seventh Legislature

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ASPER, Linda	Riel	N.D.P.
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, April 27, 2000

The House met at 10 a.m.

PRAYERS

Committee Changes

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, I want to make some committee changes. I move, seconded by the Member for Brandon West (Mr. Smith), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments be amended as follows: Riel (Ms. Asper) for The Maples (Mr. Aglugub); Inkster (Ms. Barrett) for Thompson (Mr. Ashton).

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Dewar: I move, seconded by the Member for Brandon West (Mr. Smith), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Rules of the House be amended as follows: Wellington (Mr. Santos) for Interlake (Mr. Nevakshonoff); Rossmere (Mr. Schellenberg) for Transcona (Mr. Reid).

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Dewar: I move, seconded by the Member for Brandon West (Mr. Smith), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be amended as follows: Wellington (Mr. Santos) for Fort Rouge (Mr. Sale).

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, would you please call debate on second reading of Bill 5.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 5—The Wildlife Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Conservation (Mr.

Lathlin), Bill 5, The Wildlife Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur la conservation de la faune), standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns).

Some Honourable Members: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Stand? Is there leave for the bill to remain standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Lakeside? *[Agreed]*

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Just to clarify, Mr. Speaker, there are, I understand, individuals on this side that wish to speak to it, and we are prepared to allow the debate to remain standing in the name of the honourable member.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed? The bill will remain standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Lakeside? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin-Roblin): It is a pleasure today to stand and speak on Bill 5, The Wildlife Amendment Act. I want to begin by congratulating the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin) for bringing this legislation forward for our consideration here in the Legislature this morning. The legislation, which is enabling legislation, will be followed by public consultation, as the Minister pointed out yesterday. I think that it is very important for us to recognize that, emphasize the fact that the public will be consulted thoroughly on this issue.

I want to point out that specifically what The Wildlife Amendment Act deals with is penned hunting or canned hunting. A number of different terms have been used to describe this disgusting practice that is present in a number of jurisdictions in North America which as far as I am concerned should not be present in the jurisdiction of the province of Manitoba.

This is a topic which did produce some controversy, some debate, discussion, previous to the last election. I am sure if members opposite have consulted with Hansard from

question periods gone by, they will remember the terms that I used in terms of describing penned hunting, and they were not very flattering. It is definitely not a concept which I agree with, so you can determine that I believe that the legislation is good legislation to ban or outlaw this practice.

The practice, I think, is disgusting. The practice of releasing an animal into an enclosed pen, into an enclosed parcel of land and then allowing a "hunter" to track down this animal and shoot it, I believe, should not be allowed in Manitoba. It does not matter to me if you define the animal as native to Manitoba or exotic. You can put whatever term you like on that animal; I still say that it is absolutely wrong to conduct such a practice in this province.

Now, you will hear a lot of arguments from different people of why we should be going ahead with this. You will hear the argument that it is value-added, that we are adding value to a practice already established in Manitoba, and why not? Why should we not get as much as we can from wildlife in this province? Why should we not be capturing wild animals, releasing them into pens and then shooting them if there are people out there willing to pay good money for that?

Well, Mr. Speaker, I just do not accept that argument. I do not think it is right for us to take hostage wild animals, enclose them for anything, let alone penned hunts. It was my position that the practice of capturing elk, that the previous government began just over four years ago, I believe that practice to be wrong. It is my absolute conviction that wild animals should be left in the wild. To take a wild animal, enclose it and shoot it for money is even worse than just simply enclosing an animal.

The one thing that I want to make absolutely clear is that this legislation being brought forward by our minister does not have grave consequences for the elk-ranching industry that has been set up by the previous government, because I have been approached by people whose argument it is that somehow this legislation, specifically the changing of the definition of wildlife, is somehow going to harm that industry.

Mr. Speaker, that is not the intent of this legislation. It is not the intent of this legislation—and any attempt to misconstrue the intent of this legislation would not be an honest approach by anyone who is concerned with Bill 5, would not be an honest approach by anyone who wants to partake in the discussion of The Wildlife Amendment Act. As we pointed out before, there will be many opportunities to partake in a discussion of the pros and the cons and the impact of this legislation, because our Minister has, in fact, stated that the public will be consulted, that people who want to have a chance to speak towards this legislation will certainly have their chance to do that in the upcoming weeks and months.

* (10:10)

Mr. Speaker, my thinking on this bill is guided by one principle, a principle that I think is very important. That principle is that Manitoba's public resources are there for all Manitobans. Not what we have seen from the previous government where they believed it was okay to privatize parts of our natural resources for the enjoyment and for the benefit of the very few, which is exactly the approach that the former government took.

That approach really bothered me, and I think it bothered a lot of Manitobans. That former government during the election that took place last fall actually changed its position under the pressure of groups of Manitobans who were concerned about this legislation and also just general citizens of the province of Manitoba. That government changed its position, flip-flopped in the middle of the last election purely for crass political purposes. They could not take the pressure of taking a stand and defending it. They had to change in the middle of that last election.

You know, Mr. Speaker, you could take the approach that the government finally saw the light. In a positive, upbeat, optimistic moment, I thought, well, that is good. They have finally seen that penned hunting is, in fact, a disgusting concept. It is a disgusting practice, and it should be outlawed in Manitoba. Well, I think that is now the position of the former government. I think the members in Opposition have now

adopted the correct position on this. So, I am going to assume that the former government is being honest today, was being honest back in the election and has, in fact, taken the position that penned hunting should be disallowed, should be banned in this province.

I congratulate the members opposite for taking that stand. I know that it is hard sometimes to climb down from positions that you have defended in the past. I think it takes real courage to do that, and I say congratulations to the members opposite for seeing the light on this issue. I think on this issue, given what I believe to be the all-party position of consensus on the issue of penned hunting, I believe that since we have achieved that consensus, we as a Legislature can move forward to ensuring that this disgusting practice does, in fact, go the way of so many other species in this province and around the world. They can be extinct in Manitoba. My goal is that penned hunting becomes extinct, and I am glad that the members opposite are with us in that respect.

I do though want to point out from the perspective of this side of the House that we have been absolutely consistent on this issue. Before the election, we said that penned hunting was a disgusting practice, and we asked questions in the House over and over again of the former Minister of Natural Resources.

Our position was clear. We went into the election last fall with a clear, concise position on penned hunting. We said no. We said no before the election, we said no during the election, and today we are saying no again. Today we are coming through with the promises that we made a number of months ago.

That is something that I am very proud of, that we can take a position, we can stick to that position, put it to the people of Manitoba, and then in government, one of the first pieces of legislation that we bring forward for consideration in this House deals with the promise that we made to ban penned hunting. I think that is the kind of model that any government should use. That is the kind of model that we intend to use on this side of the House, not just for this legislation, but with others. I think that is an honest, straightforward approach to this.

If there are people out there who do not like what we are doing with this legislation, they have every opportunity and every right to disagree with us, but those people know where we stand on this issue. There is no doubt about that. If we have a good, old-fashioned, honest debate on it and we have a good, old-fashioned, honest disagreement, so be it. I mean, not everybody in the province is going to agree on everything all the time. That is the essence of democracy.

An Honourable Member: What is good about old-fashioned?

Mr. Struthers: Well, the right member is asking about what is good about old-fashioned. I say there are lots of things good about old-fashioned, especially the old-fashioned, long-standing reputation, long-standing tradition that we like, on this side, to abide by, that we like, on this side, to strive towards, and that is of being totally up-front with the people that we represent.

I want to talk a little bit about an area that the provincial government and many others are very much concerned about and very much I think optimistic about, and that is the possibilities in this province for ecotourism. Because one of the things that we will hear from the opponents of Bill 5 is going to be that what we are doing is we are limiting the ecotourism dollars that will flow into this province by taking away an opportunity to shoot an animal in a pen.

Now, again, if this is what ecotourism is all about, if that is the best we can come up with in terms of ecotourism, then I think we have got a pretty sad and sorry state in this province, but I am optimistic enough to believe that ecotourism is a lot more than the disgusting practice of shooting animals in a pen. I think there are huge opportunities for ecotourism in Manitoba without having to resort to the abuse of wildlife that has been apparent in parts of this province and evident in other jurisdictions.

Instead of shooting wildlife in pens, the Honourable Member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) would suggest, I am sure, that you should shoot them with a camera. Now, the last thing you want in the middle of a picture of an

elk or a bison or any other animal is a fence post and barbed wire. You want to be able to go out into some of the beautiful areas of Manitoba with your camera in hand and snap some pictures of real animals out in Mother Nature's backyard, something that is worth something. Anybody can go and take a picture of a penned animal. Anybody can shoot a penned animal. You do not have to be a great hunter to do that.

What this province needs to do, I believe, is encourage people to come to visit us, encourage our own Manitobans to participate in Mother Nature's beauty, to go out and partake in activities that are sustainable in our environment and not have to destroy something along the way. It does not matter to me, if you have a hundred dollars in your pocket or, if you have a thousand dollars in your pocket or ten thousand dollars, it should not make any difference. I do not care how much money you have in your pocket to come and shoot an animal. I think what we ought to do is outlaw this disgusting practice and capitalize on those ecotourism opportunities that I think exist in Manitoba.

* (10:20)

Mr. Conrad Santos, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

We have—and I have tested this out when I can—some fantastic canoe routes throughout Manitoba. Fairly recently, some friends of mine and I travelled down the Manigotagan River. We saw wildlife along the Manigotagan River. Amazingly, not one of us thought that we should take any of that wildlife and put it in a pen and shoot it. It was a great trip. The Grassy River, the one part of that Grassy River that I have been on from Wekusko Falls near Snow Lake right east to Setting Lake at the town of Ponton, that is a beautiful trip if anybody ever wants to take it. We need to be showing those off. That is ecotourism. Penned hunting is not.

I also want to deal with a tradition in this province that I think is an important aspect to Manitoba living. That is the tradition of hunting, good old-fashioned hunting that is very prevalent in the Parkland area, part of which I represent. Many of my relatives were hunters. My grandfather ran a trapline in the Swan River

Valley. I have many of my family members who go out and they hope to get their name drawn for elk. They hope to get out there and shoot an animal to be put into their freezers to feed their families. I have a 15-year-old nephew who was the proudest guy in the world not long ago when he shot his first deer.

Now, there may be an argument. Some people, I understand, are not fans of hunting, but you compare hunting to penned hunting, and there is a big difference. There is a huge difference. There is nothing wrong, in my way of thinking for a Manitoban, or somebody from outside of the province, to partake in what is a way of life, especially in rural Manitoba. Many people who homesteaded in the Dauphin and Roblin areas, in the Swan River area, other areas of the province fed their families by hunting, fed their families by taking from nature food to feed themselves. There is nothing wrong with that, absolutely nothing wrong with hunting. There is an argument to be made that it is a management tool that we have to undertake in order to keep populations of certain species under control. There is nothing wrong with that. It is a lot different than what penned hunting entails.

One of the reasons I think that bringing forward this legislation is a good step is we can now make an attempt to get rid of some of the grey areas that are involved with the legislation, with the regulations, with our approach to penned hunting, grey areas having to deal with definitions. What we are doing is this enabling legislation is allowing us to work together with all MLAs working together on suggesting regulations that need to be brought forward to erase those grey areas having to do with penned hunting.

The other grey area that I have noticed in this province has to do with the ethical question of the ethical standards for wildlife in our province of Manitoba. I think we have to be clear on what we as legislators believe is ethically acceptable in our province when it comes to hunting. I do not want to have legitimate hunters in this province to be painted with the same brush as those individuals who would shoot a half-tame animal within a penned situation, within a penned enclosure. I do not want that to look poorly, I do not want people to

look poorly on hunters just because some hunters, so-called hunters, would shoot an animal within a fence.

Part of the grey area, I mentioned there were grey areas in terms of definitions, has to do with the definition of penned hunting itself. I am glad that the Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Fauschou) agrees with me on that. I am sure that he is keen to distil the definitions, to make clear some of the definitions involved with this whole concept, because everybody can agree that what we have to do in this whole process is make it fair and we have to make things straightforward and right in front of people so that they know what we are dealing with, so that they know that it does not matter what size the pen is that you put an animal in, it is still a pen.

If you put animals into a pen and feed them, then you can imagine—let us take an elk, for example, a very social animal, you feed him a few times, he is in the pen. There is no way the animal is going to take off when you drive in in a half-ton and your rifle. He is more apt to come towards you than run away from you. If he is penned and he is fed, like so many are, that is not fair, that is not a sport, that is not sportsmanship, that is greed.

So one of the definitions that I want to deal with is this idea, the myth that if you make the pen big enough, if you have enough acres of land that somehow that does not constitute a penned hunt. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it does. Where is the animal going to go? He is not going to run off into the wild and get away. It might take you a few more minutes to track the animal down, but he is not going to get away. He is in a pen. That is penned hunting. As I stated before, if he is half-tame, he is not going to be prone to run away in the first place. It is a pretty easy kill.

* (10:30)

When I was thinking about the words that I was going to say this morning, I think back to a tough situation that the former Government found itself in because, on the one hand, the former Government did not want to come out and fully support penned hunts because they knew that the people of Manitoba would take them to task for that. On the one hand, when

they were asked questions in the House, they were agreeing, oh, it is a bad thing, it is a disgusting sport. They had all the rhetoric down and the minister of the time knew all the right things to say on that superficial level of the headline in the media, or the first story in the media.

But while the minister was saying that it was a disgusting thing to do, that it was terrible and that we would never allow this and our government would never allow this to happen, at the same time that government was advertising on the Explore Manitoba website a penned hunt. Now, that was a little bit tough for the former Minister to try to explain, that on the one hand they did not like this penned hunting but, at the same time, they were advertising a ranch, a location where penned hunts do actually occur.

It was right there for everybody to see. All you had to do was click on Explore Manitoba and go surfing on the Net a little bit, one of the advancements of technology. What the former government found out was that these advances in technology sometimes allow the public a pretty close look at what the government is doing, and it is still there.

Our government is faced with the same thing. We have to be up-front and honest about this, and if we say we are not supporting penned hunts and that we are going to ban them, then we had better not be doing the same kind of thing.

But the government had a tough situation. On the one hand they had to look like they were tough on penned hunts but, on the other hand, they had made some commitments. The government had, at that time, moved along the elk ranching path, and I remember in this House being ridiculed by some of the members opposite, some who are here today, some who have gone on to other things. I remember being howled at because I stood across the way when I was in opposition and I said this will lead to penned hunts, elk ranching will lead to penned hunts. It has in all the states that have gone into it in the U.S. It has gone this route in jurisdictions in Canada. I said it would go from elk ranching, when you catch your elk for the purposes of elk-ranching, it is going to carry naturally into penned hunting. The members

opposite were indignant. The members opposite did not want to hear that, because I think they knew it was coming as well.

Anybody looking at this whole situation with some common sense would understand that when the elk is finished, it has spent its time on the elk ranch, what are you going to do with it? What are the producers going to do? Just going to let the elk go back up into the Duck Mountains, where it was captured from in the first place? Just going to put it back in the Riding Mountains, where this former government lured them out in the first place and caught them near McCreary somewhere? That is not going to happen.

Of course it is going to lead to penned hunting. Of course this former government understood where it was going on this. But as I said before, I am very pleased to see that the former Government, now the present-day Opposition, has in fact seen that, has in fact changed its position, unless it has changed its position again from the election. I guess that kind of remains to be seen. Maybe the members opposite will stand and explain that to us today. I am certain that they will. I have every faith that the members opposite have seen the light on this issue and that they will support our government in its quest to ban penned hunting, because it does make sense.

It is what the people of Manitoba want. The hunting community wants this legislation. The Manitoba Wildlife Federation did not like the moves that the former Government were making several years ago. The Manitoba Wildlife Federation understood that this would lead to penned hunting.

Now, my understanding is that the Bison Association, the Elk Association, these groups understand this as well. These are groups who understand that the intent of this legislation is not to cause damage to the elk-ranching industry. It is not designed to cause damage to the bison industry. It is specifically designed to keep penned hunting out of this province.

I will be greatly disappointed if members opposite misconstrue this legislation to be anything other than that, because that would not

be an honest approach to this legislation. I would be very disappointed if other groups outside of this Legislature try to do that. I do understand, though, the arguments that many Manitobans have made to me. Have come to me who are owners of elk, owners of buffalo, bison, they have come to me and they have said we are worried about this legislation because we are worried about the definition of domestic and exotic.

I appreciate that questioning. If I was an owner, I would be asking, too, because I understand that that is a livelihood we are talking about. It is not the intent of this government to cause hardship for those people who are raising bison. It is not the intent of this government to cause hardship for people who are raising elk. As I have said before, the Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Fauschou) asked a very good question. There will be thorough public consultations on this bill. There will be regulations brought forward. Because this is enabling legislation, there will be regulations brought forward.

An Honourable Member: The most dangerous kind.

Mr. Struthers: Well, the former minister, who was absolutely caught in the middle of this dilemma on behalf of his government, who kind of got his knees taken out from under him. I guess, in the middle of the last election, just points out that this is the most dangerous kind of regulation. Well, I will point out that there is a different government over here that may treat regulations a little differently than the former one. I appreciate the minister speaking from experience on that matter, but there is a better way of doing things than sneaking stuff in later, like we sort of got used to with the former government.

I want to also make it absolutely clear—

An Honourable Member: Perfectly clear.

Mr. Struthers: Perfectly clear that we on this side of the House have no intention of causing hardship to some of my constituents who are into the growing of bison in the Dauphin-Roblin area. That is not the intent of this legislation.

I have in my riding people who have bison farms. They contribute to our local economy. They have families whose livelihoods are based on the farming of bison. There is no point in this or any other government taking on a legitimate operation like the one I am thinking of located just on the outside, the west side of the community of Gilbert Plains. It makes no sense for that. That is not going to happen.

The basis for the concern from farmers who are working in the area of raising elk and raising bison in this province comes from a definition. This is a grey area that I mentioned earlier that we would like to make crystal-clear through this legislation and through the public consultations that our minister has agreed to do and through the passing of regulation to make those sorts of important details absolutely clear for the people involved in the bison industry and the elk industry, certainly, in other endeavours that the industrious people in Manitoba are putting forward, that other people are thinking of. A lot of planning had gone into building farms based on the ranching of bison and elk and other animals, whether they be domestic or native to Manitoba or whether they are defined and considered as exotic.

* (10:40)

This legislation is not intended to affect anything else other than the penned hunting of animals. I cannot stress that enough. I want to make it clear that once this bill receives Royal Assent, should it be passed through the regular processes of the bill proceedings through this House, at some point after receiving Royal Assent, what I would hope would happen is that we would prohibit only the hunting of captive, native and exotic wildlife. A person who possesses exotic wildlife who does not intend to hunt them will not be affected.

Now, that, I think, should provide a lot of reassurance to people who are nervous about this bill proceeding. That in itself should provide assurance for people who may be under the misconception that we have some plan to provide a hardship for people who are legitimately ranching, legitimately farming, even those who are legitimately hunting in our province.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am very glad to be able to speak to this bill today. I think it was a bill that was in the process for a long time. I would hope it would be a bill that the opposition would support. I am a little disappointed that it took this long for a bill like this to come forward, but I am very glad that our minister, the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin), had the foresight to bring it forward here before Christmas in our session there in the fall and also to be able to meet with a number of groups before the bill was introduced and since it has been introduced. It is his intent to meet with as many groups on this as he can and to consult with the public thoroughly.

Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this this morning.

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Interlake): Good morning, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I rise today with great interest and eagerness to speak on Bill 5, The Wildlife Amendment Act. It is a matter of great interest to me as I am a member of a rural constituency, a great hunting constituency as well, I might add. There are many, many outfitters in the Interlake that are good friends of mine. It is on their behalf, as well, that I rise to speak today.

I am also a hunter myself, which is another reason that this is so interesting to me. At risk of possibly offending some of the members here or people in general who might take a moral stand against hunting, I would just like to briefly describe to you what I see as the meaning of hunting and what I think it should stand for.

First of all, I think I would like to state that hunting to me first and foremost means the joy and the pleasure that I get in spending time in the forest, the outdoor experience, the fresh air, the exercise, the camaraderie with friends, fellow hunters that like to do this. I think that I would like to take it also to a higher level. I think a person can experience this without hunting, but I think hunting takes you to the highest level of experiencing the great outdoors. It is the challenge that it entails. When you pit yourself against the animals in the forest, the natural inhabitants of the forest, this is the true test, I think, of how well you have adapted to the forest

and how compatible you are with it. So I think that is something I would like to mention.

Now, myself, when I started to hunt, I started with a rifle. After I had made my first two or three kills, at that point I was satisfied that I had developed the skills. Then I began to realize that the kill is not the highlight of the hunt. It was anticlimactic to me. Quite frankly, I was a little saddened at the death of the animal, but that was part of it. So to make it a little more difficult, I put the rifle down, and I switched to the bow and arrow. Now as often as I can I get into the forest and I like to hunt elk with the bow instead, which I find is even more challenging and more rewarding and more exciting in that you have to get in so close to the animal. You learn so much more about that individual animal by having to be that much closer, and I think that is a very rewarding experience.

The actual kill becomes even more secondary, I think, especially since I have not managed to take one with the bow and arrow yet, but it has really made the point to me that it is the pursuit itself, not the actual kill that is what counts here. It is the sense of fair play that I get from this. I think it can honestly and legitimately be referred to as a sport in the sense that there is a sense of fair play inherent in hunting, that the bottom line to the whole procedure is that essentially the animal has a chance to escape. That is what makes it sportsman-like. Once you start putting walls around it, once you eliminate the opportunity for this animal to escape, as far as I am concerned it is no longer classified as hunting. It is something entirely different.

For those who have to stoop to this level, to hunt within a pen, I would suggest that there is a plausible alternative to this. There are numerous computer games, for example, one called *The Deer Hunter*, as a matter of fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if they want virtual reality hunting, which essentially is what penned hunting is, then do it the bloodless way, I suggest, and go with the computer game. It is a lot fairer.

* (10:50)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when it comes to the actual kill, I would like to say that taking the life

of an animal is not a game. It is very serious business here. This is a God-given gift that God gives to ourselves, human beings, and to animals as well. It is a very serious thing, a very serious step when you decide to take the life of an animal. You should have very serious intentions and reasons for doing so when this occurs. As I alluded to earlier, it is not fun when you walk up to the animal that is lying dead on the ground. This is an act that you have committed. At that point you better have, I think, very good reasons for doing so. Your intentions should be to utilize that animal completely: eating it. It is not just a trophy that you are after here. It is much more than that.

Personally, when I make a kill, I feel remorse, but I continue to do so because I believe in the value of wild meat. I think it is pure. There are no additives to it. Quite frankly, every winter I like to have a lot of wild meat in my freezer, from geese and ducks to at least one deer and hopefully some elk meat in the days to come.

An Honourable Member: Within a limit.

Mr. Nevakshonoff: Within a limit, certainly. One a year, that is my limit. I am not used to being heckled from my own side of the House here. I did not anticipate that.

Just to finish up on the killing within the pen here, I think that people who focus on pen hunting, they are principally interested in killing. Mr. Deputy Speaker. That is the bottom line to them. They take pleasure in the act of killing. As far as I am concerned, taking pleasure in the act of killing, that means you are no better than a beast yourself. You are no better than the animals that you hunt. You are a feral beast, to be precise, if you take pleasure in the actual kill. Quite frankly, I do not understand it. To trivialize the death of an animal, to trivialize it, to make a game out of it, as is the case with the penned hunt, I think, is truly a despicable act. That is my opinion on it.

Now, death is part of life. It surrounds us. It is inevitable. We face it every day. Witness the fact that over the past couple of days here the first thing that this House addressed were issues relating to death. We debated The Holocaust

Bill, which was a prime example of that. The second thing we debated were the horrors of breast cancer. the pain and the fear that women and their families have to go through in that respect. There is nothing light-hearted about death, and I think the death of an animal should be given some consideration in that respect.

Now, myself, I am an outfitter. I run a fishing business up in northern Manitoba. In this business for 30 years—it was my father's and then passed on to myself—over 30 years of being a fishing guide, I have witnessed first-hand man's capacity for cruelty. Sometimes it boggles the mind. You wish that a fish had a voice, that he could actually scream, and then that might draw people's attention to what is taking place here. I will give you an example. We took the stringer into the fish-cleaning shed one day, and my guest was a man of the cloth, he was a minister. He put these fish onto the table and these fish were still alive. He proceeded to fillet a living animal, cut the flesh off this living animal. You could see it spasming in agony, and it meant virtually nothing to him. Like, myself, when I catch a fish, I bring it up, the first thing I do is I knock it over the head. I kill it, it is dead in the boat. fine. It was a quick, clean, humane kill.

As far as hunting goes, a quick humane kill in the forest is legitimate. I wish I could maybe hit a few of my, you know. I know my dad was in the fish-cleaning shed that morning and he watched this. He is a man of Doukhabour ancestry, and they took very seriously the death of anything, not just a human being but animals as well. He was abhorred by this sight of the pain and suffering inflicted on this animal. It was very traumatic for him.

Now, as far as respect for living things go. I could even take it a step further, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I have some Aboriginal ancestry. Some of my English ancestors who came over to Canada here in the 18th century all married Indian wives, and as a result I have some Aboriginal blood in me. I was in the forest one day with my brother up at the fishing lodge. We were cutting some big trees down, big spruce trees that we were using for stringers for our cabins, and we also cut stringers for our docks and so on and so forth. My brother filled me in on aboriginal practice where when the

Aboriginals would take a life of an animal, for instance, or even a tree, one of the first things they would do is they would thank the animal for its contribution. They would explain to its spirit why it was killed and how it would be used by their family to keep their families alive and so on and so forth. This shows proper respect for the things that we find in nature. We do not rule this earth, we are not gods of this earth. There is somebody above us who we have to answer for in the end. I think that how much we respect nature and the land that we live on, I think, is going to count when it comes to facing our Maker there.

I will get off this topic, I see it has stirred up the Opposition quite a bit here. I would like to speak for a moment on the established hunting industry in the Interlake and throughout Manitoba as well. This is a well-entrenched industry in our province. It has been in operation for decades now. I know that it has given an opportunity for many people in my constituency, ordinary people, the opportunity to expand their operations and live a better life as a result of it. It is a good industry for the province in that it brings in foreign currency at little cost to the province itself. So, in terms of our balance of payments, it is a classic example. It is a form of tourism which is of great benefit to us.

* (11:00)

Now, as far as the hunting side of it goes, you have to ask yourself what makes Manitoba so attractive a place to come for these hunters. My personal opinion is that it is the superior genetic stock that we have here in the province. Living so far up into the North, the rigid, hostile environment that these animals have to live in has strengthened their stock to the point where I would say that the stock here in Manitoba is second to none. It is some of the best stock in the world.

You take the elk, for instance. I do not know if everybody is aware of it, but in Manitoba here we are dealing with our own unique subspecies. It is called the manitobensis subspecies of elk. In comparison to the Rocky Mountain elk, for instance, or the Roosevelt elk, it is very limited in number, and yet in comparison to these other subspecies it scores very high. The world's

largest elk ever killed was a manitobensis. It was shot right here in Manitoba I think in the Gilbert Plains area. It scored in excess of 450 points, and it was the largest bull ever taken, which is a good indicator of the stock here in Manitoba.

Now, proponents of penned hunting might say that, well, there is no non-resident elk hunting at this point in time, which is true, but proponents of the penned hunt will also state that what they want to diversify into next is the white-tailed deer. That is the next animal on the progression, right? So, on that front, there is non-resident hunting in this province, a well-established industry. The biggest problem I have with penned hunting is when you start to trap these animals the next thing you know you are starting to trade these animals, to sell them into Saskatchewan, into North Dakota, into California, wherever. If we release our monopoly on this very strong gene pool that we have up in northern Manitoba, it is going to be a direct disincentive to these very hunters that have been coming to Manitoba till now. If they can raise the stock themselves on their own hunting preserves down in the United States, what benefit is that to us? None whatsoever, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So, quite frankly, I think on that front that it is too late for the elk, but we should take steps to ensure that the white-tailed population does not become the next on the pecking order here. When you talk of white-tails, for example—and I mentioned that the largest bull ever taken was in Manitoba. You just have to look across the border into Saskatchewan and the Hanson buck that was taken in Biggar, Saskatchewan, a few years ago scored 213 typical points and broke a record that had stood for over 80 years, which is an indicator of the strength of our stock in northern Manitoba here. So I think we should think long and hard before we sacrifice what we have established here just for the sake of some investors or entrepreneurs who see another opportunity to capitalize at the expense of the entrenched established outfitting industry.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have been reading in the newspapers here how people have been saying that the Humane Society—I think the Opposition might have mentioned them—groups like People for the Ethical Treatment of

Animals, that they are setting our agenda on this, that they are pulling our strings, so to speak, that they are dictating to us and effectively that they have dictated to us this bill in opposition to penned hunting.

I take exception to that. I disagree with that totally. This originated in our caucus. It is our initiative. We are not succumbing to pressures from any outside lobby groups on this front whatsoever. I will give you a prime example of this. It was no longer than a week ago that our Premier, Gary Doer, came out publicly and stated that Manitoba would not be doing away with the spring bear hunt. That says it all, I think. He stated it very well.

I, as a rural individual and a hunter, see that he has an understanding of this, a good understanding of it in that he makes the very obvious point that in terms of killing the females, the cub-bearing sows, the laws are already in place. The laws are written there. It is against the law to kill a sow. The hunter has a responsibility to determine whether or not that bear that he is targeting has cubs or not. If he makes a mistake, he is in direct contravention and violation of the law and will pay the price accordingly. The law is there. The hunt is legitimate. We have made that decision to stand by it.

Now, there are a lot of bears. There is no shortage of bears, to be honest with you. As man expands as well, inevitably the two of us overlap to the point where there is conflict. Farmers, for instance, bee farmers, the honey farmers, they have lots of problems with bears. They kill hundreds of them every year because they are threatening their livelihood.

Go to any garbage dump, for instance, at night and shine your headlights around, you will probably see 10 or 12 bears in there.

Myself, as a lodge owner, I have to deal with bears every year. They come into the lodge. Fish guts are a prime attractant for bears, coolers with food, for instance, garbage, so on and so forth. So yearly I have to deal with bears. There are not too many alternatives, quite frankly. I give them a chance. The first couple of times I will shoot over the top of their heads, and if they

get the message, as they usually do, they will depart. But if they are a problem bear then they have to be dealt with, and that usually means the death of that animal, unfortunately for it, but that is the way it is.

The last bear I shot, for instance, was in the process of crawling through my brother's front window. He was in his cabin. He has two young children, 3 years and 6 years of age. This bear was attempting to crawl through the front window. So, I am sorry, but that one had to die. So inevitably man overlaps with bears. If they can be taken legitimately in a hunt, then, as far as I am concerned, that is okay.

Now, when I am speaking of bears, I would like to make a point, a very valid point, I think, and this is the fact that a lot of bears are being poached now, and they are being poached for something as simple as their gall bladders. Now, this is where we are crossing the line. This is a travesty. This is a crime, I think, to kill something for its gall bladder. It is a good indicator to us of a very odious practice. This is the trade in wild animal parts that I am personally opposed to and I think all of society looks down upon in general.

For example, I think it was in the Duck mountains a couple of years ago or in Riding Mountain, the largest bear in Manitoba, probably in Canada, a bear in excess of 900 pounds was shot and killed, and all that was taken was its gall bladder, a real travesty, as far as I am concerned.

* (11:10)

Now, this trade in wild animal parts, we have seen numerous examples of it in Canada and around the world. They kill elephants. They make wastepaper baskets out of an elephant's foot, for example, or they will kill a silverback gorilla, an endangered species, and cut his hand off and make an ashtray out of this gorilla's hand. If that is not despicable, I do not know what is. The tigers in western Siberia and the Bengal tigers in India are on the verge of extinction now because they grind their bones up for some medicinal value.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is what has brought us to our current situation here in

Manitoba. This is why we started trapping elk in the first place, was for their velvet. Supposedly, it has some characteristics as an aphrodisiac. How trivial can you be to go after something like this? Especially in the days when we have Viagra now, why do we have to go after the elk?

If it is for the meat, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have no problems whatsoever with farming elk if it is for the meat. That is the definition of agriculture, is it not? The creation of food essentially. If it is on that front, I do not have a problem with it. On that front, you can also take into consideration the Manitoba Bison Association with whom I have met. I had a good discussion with them, and they had concerns with this bill as well. I assured them that as long as they are in the production of meat, there was no problem whatsoever with Bill 5 and their industry.

I have a document here, their position paper, as a matter of fact. For anybody who is interested, I could give them a copy, and I quote here: "The primary purpose of our bison industry is the production of high quality meat." Pure and simple. That says it all. If it is meat, we do not have a problem with it. Putting it into the cage and making a joke out of its death, then this government has a problem with it.

The bison are a very good stock animal, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a prime example of a good previously wild animal that can be captured and raised and used in the production of food on an agricultural front. It is a classic example of such an animal. For example, they need no assistance whatsoever in calving. Out on the range by themselves, they will calve. They need no assistance which, as many cattle producers will tell you, that would be a big load off their mind. They can be pastured 365 days out of the year on the pasture. They do not have to be brought into enclosures. They do not have to be watered. Nobody watered the buffalo a thousand years ago here in North America. They ate snow. They require less food than cattle. There are no steroids, no growth hormones. They require very, very few drugs and antibiotics which makes it that much cleaner and purer a meat for consumers. Quite frankly, they are very tasty as well, as I found out that night when I met with the bison producers.

So I do not have a problem with the bison producers. I think they understand our position, and I would not be surprised if they fully endorsed our Bill 5 on that front as well. Before I close on bison, I would just like to thank Ken Overby and Dave Giesbrecht of the Manitoba Bison Association for filling me in, for educating me on the virtues of this animal.

As far as the marketing of this animal, as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they have done a wonderful thing. They have created a classic new generation co-op where they control not only the production, but the marketing and sale and processing of their meat as well, which is exactly the kind of agriculture that we want here in Manitoba.

You know, farmers have to diversify. If they can set up this type of a marketing co-op and have control over their stock, this is the way we want to go. It is unfortunate that the previous administration had not set the hog industry up in this mode, you know. By doing away with the single desk, they have basically handed control over to the large processors, who are now vertically integrating down through the system and basically pushing out the small farmers, making this market inaccessible to them. So that was very unfortunate. This is something that we have inherited in our Government, and it is going to be a big problem for us. So I applaud the bison producers in Manitoba for pre-empting this, for learning from that experience and setting this industry up the way it should be set up.

Now, in my opinion, there has been a lot of disinformation coming out about this penned hunting. People keep saying that we are inhibiting the farmers, that we are preventing farmers from diversifying, and I take exception to this. Everything that takes place in rural Manitoba, just because it is not done in the city, just because it is in rural Manitoba does not mean that it is farming. It does not mean it is farming. Why? Just because it is done in the country? That does not make sense to me. It is an expensive industry to get involved in. I think I read somewhere that it could cost up to a quarter of a million dollars just to set up as an elk farmer today. This is not an option open to a struggling farmer who is grasping for ways to

diversify. If he had a quarter of a million dollars in excess change lying around, you know, I do not think he would be in that much difficulty.

So I would just like to make the point that it is not necessarily farming we are talking about. This is investment capital. This is people coming in from who-knows-where investing in this industry, not necessarily farmers. So I think we should make this distinction.

I can give you a good example, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In the production of cannabis, I think it is, you can look at it in two ways, right. The person who is growing cannabis to make hemp out of it, to make rope out of it basically or is growing it for the seed to make oil, that is agriculture. That is a legitimate business. But you take the same plant and you want to start growing marijuana out of it and making hash oil out of it instead, now you are a drug trafficker, right? Now you are a criminal because this is against the law. This is the same product with two diametrically opposed uses to this product.

It is the same with elk. You can either hunt them in the wild. This penned hunting is at the opposite end of the spectrum, as far as I am concerned. That is just an example of some of the disinformation that the public has to deal with in terms of this industry.

Another argument that has been made is that other jurisdictions are doing it. They are doing it in Saskatchewan; they are doing it in North Dakota. Therefore, why are we not doing it here in Manitoba? Right? Well, does that make sense? Just because somebody else does something, you know, that does not make it right. Two wrongs do not make a right. If I jumped off a cliff, would you follow me? Obviously not, because it is stupid. Just because somebody else does it does not mean that we have to do it here in Manitoba. If we always go and shoot for the lowest common denominator in dealing with an issue like this, there will be no law. We will be dealing with anarchy here instead. Government has to take responsibility on something like this. Although it might be unattractive to some people, it is going to be done because it has to be done, quite frankly.

The determination of law should not be based on business principles. Just because it is

economically viable to do something does not mean that the law should be based on that front. Economic viability is not always necessarily the best thing for our society. Now, on that front, the law is necessary. That is our responsibility here in this Chamber, right?

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Now, on an agricultural front, let us go back there. You take drainage, for instance. Recently the Court of Appeal ruled that the Province has no jurisdiction, has no business regulating drainage, and there are a select few out there that might endorse this. But I think that, if you asked nine out of ten farmers, they would say, oh no, hold on here. Maybe it is not such a bad idea that the Province maintain control over drainage because, what is to prevent some guy upstream from running all the water off his land onto your property and you are flooded?

If this man does not have recourse, if he cannot go to the Province for protection, then we get back to the state of anarchy that we have to avoid in this province. We have the International Boundary Waters Treaty between Canada and the United States. If you can regulate drainage between states, then certainly between individuals it is warranted.

One of the final points I would like to make, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the threat to the environment that this practice of penned hunting and the bringing in of non-indigenous species into the province to do so, the threat that it poses to the environment. We are stepping on a slippery slope here. It has happened numerous times in the past. Go to Australia. Some guy got the bright idea to introduce rabbits there. Now they are overrunning the country. In Manitoba here we are dealing with a similar catastrophe and I am not saying—this is not just theoretical. It is taking place now in dealing with wild boar. A lot of them have escaped. You go into the La Broquerie area; they are running around free in the woods now and are causing a significant problem. They are not easy to kill. They are very intelligent, they are very destructive, and they are very dangerous also. Somebody eventually could die because of this attempt to diversify into boars, so this is something we should be careful with. What next? Are we going to be

introducing Siberian tigers into Manitoba for penned hunt?

I am going to wrap up, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I would just like to close by stating that, quite frankly, the previous administration sat on their hands and tacitly approved of this practice. We are moving towards penned hunting. I am afraid, if they had won the election, it would be a fait accompli; it would be here in Manitoba. The New Democratic Party promised to fix this if we were elected. We were elected. Bill 5 is on the table. We are going to fix this penned hunting industry.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): I am interested in joining this debate here today dealing with Bill 5, dealing with an issue related to wildlife and an amendment to the Wildlife Act, dealing with issues around biodiversity, dealing with—I think after listening to some of the speeches by some of my colleagues—issues around ethics and values.

It is interesting, and I think it is good to hear people talking in this House about ethics and about values. I think that that is part of the basis of this legislation that we are seeing here today. I am anxious to hear some comments on the record on this issue from members opposite particularly, given the fact that under their government they said that pen hunting was already illegal. Then, later on, as I will get into more detail, they said, oops, oh, it is not; we made a mistake. That is why we are here today fulfilling an election promise and bringing in Bill 5 which is a specific amendment to The Wildlife Act to alleviate a loophole. It is amending the definition of wildlife to include exotic animals that are wild in other parts of the world that are being brought here, enclosed, raised up and then offered up to hunters for a fee for the purpose of often trophy hunting or perhaps for meat.

I was hoping to have with me today a copy of the wildlife policy that the then-Minister for Natural Resources, the Member for the Interlake (Mr. Enns), signed, which has a very clear definition of wildlife. Unfortunately, I do not have that document here with me today, but I

know from reading it in the past that it really is a good example and it is a very strong policy on wildlife. I would suggest that in a number of areas, even though the former government signed on to that policy, in a number of areas they have not in the past had Manitoba live by that policy.

It is interesting to know, after listening to the comments by my colleague, the way that wildlife is defined in the legislation to include only species that are indigenous to Manitoba. The Member for the Interlake (Mr. Nevakshonoff) suggested maybe we will have Bengal tigers next that are being brought here and being hunted. But I do not understand something else about what is happening.

Currently, as I understand it, the penned hunt would include bison as well as species of deer. Now, maybe some of those species are not indigenous to Manitoba, but certainly bison and buffalo are. So that is one of the things about the current way that the definition is being followed that I do not understand and I think needs some clarification and explanation. Because I understand some of the animals that we are talking about for these penned hunts are wild boars, elk, some species of deer, as well as bison.

I know that there are a lot of issues facing rural Manitoba, facing different areas of the province, and a number of the proponents of penned hunting will say that there is a need for diversification in the economy in those areas, that this is a great opportunity. I am going to get into some of the profits or the value that it is being marketed with this practice. They will talk about it as value-added and a way to supplement the income for farmers or other seasonal workers. We also, though, have to look at some of the very practical problems with it.

The problems of escapes, apparently we have a huge problem in the province. I was just interested in reading that there have at times been more than 200 boars loose in one municipality, in the Municipality of Brokenhead. So what happens is boars that are captured either just for pure farms that are not going to be penned hunts, they are just being raised as wild meat, those can escape, but also animals that are

raised in captivity for the purpose of penned hunts, those can escape.

So not only, as I read from the Free Press in October 1998, can this be a problem in some municipalities—where they have the Crocus Grove Nudist Resort, there was a concern that they were having 200 nudists and there was going to be 200 wild boars there at the same time—but also it is a concern to all of us because the problem with raising animals in captivity and then having them escape and go into the wild is the intermixing of disease and potentially also interbreeding, and that causes all sorts of other issues when you are talking about wild species. I know that that has also been a concern with the practice of elk ranching and similarly with penned hunts, including elk as well as other deer and those kinds of species.

But what I wanted to talk about a little bit besides just those very sort of biological and concrete practical concerns about this practice is more the philosophical and some of the other issues related to the ethics and the values that this raises. We live in a culture where I think that violence and perhaps even hunting is very deeply rooted in our culture. In Canada we are part of a predominantly Judeo-Christian ethic, and we can look at how deeply these kinds of values are rooted in our society, even through a variety of areas, whether it is mythical beliefs, whether it is more cultural things related to the kinds of foods that we eat but even when you look at mythological stories like the creation story of Adam and Eve, which from the very beginning suggests that we were created to be lord and master over all of nature.

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We know that other cultures do not share this. If you look at Hindu cultures or Bahai or Buddhist or many indigenous cultures including First Nations here in our part of the planet, they do not share that view. They share more a view that we are not the lord and masters, that we are part of a web of life, that we are interdependent amongst all the other species not only biological but botanical, and that we have to respect that. We have to recognize that we share the planet with all these species and that they too have similar, I would not say the same but similar,

kinds of rights that we do. The kind of Eurocentric view that I was explaining earlier, I think, is though very deeply rooted in our society and perhaps in all of us.

I know from a personal example, even though I know of very many good reasons, for example, to give up eating meat, I have not been able to do that. I know of all the reasons, whether they are health, whether they are sort of political reasons, whether they are other sort of issues, it is such a part of my upbringing and my culture. Even though I am concerned about the hormones and the antibiotics and all the other issues related to eating mass-produced meats that you buy at any grocery store, I must confess that I still do that and I have not been able to make that change. I am using that as one example of, I think, the way that we can look at some of these kind of issues that we are dealing with today that are part of Bill 5 and how difficult it is.

Other people might suggest though that this is also an issue of violence, and violence is entertainment. We live in a culture where everything from violent movies, murder mysteries, war toys—and you cannot put this type of penned hunting, and other hunting for that matter, for recreational purposes into that same umbrella where we do things that are very violent by nature as part of entertainment or recreation. I think that we can question all of that. I think part of us as a conscious civilization is to step back and try to look at what we are doing.

I, many of the members know now, have a two-year old daughter. She certainly makes me step back and take a look at what I am doing. I am always struck by how important animals are to little kids. We all know every childhood nursery rhyme and every childhood story includes either three little pigs and a big bad wolf and three bears and goats and billy goat's gruff. They are all related to animals, and we must realize that those early stories are creating a view of the position and place of animals in our lives and in our society and our world for children from the very moment that they are born, and they get that small teddy bear.

I am always, on a personal note, very conscious to not just talk about the Big Bad

Wolf with my daughter, Mira. She has pictures of wolves howling in her bedroom and one of the things she likes to do at night is play wolf howls. So we howl at the wolves that are in her bedroom. She has some pictures of wild horses running and she has a picture of a bald eagle flying.

I think all of those kinds of things that we can do with small children are going to create a value where they see the fascination and the beauty and appreciate animals in the wild. I think to try to recognize as well that when we read stories like Red Riding Hood and the Big Bad Wolf that we can convey the certain kind of attitude and I would even say prejudice towards animals to suggest that they are only to be viewed from the relationship to us in that sort of predator or even problem kind of mode.

I think that when we are talking about the kind of ethics and values that we bring to this Legislature and we must base a lot of our debate on, we can look at all of those kinds of issues I have just talked about and how ingrained they are in our society, in our families. It goes all the way from children's toys and literature right through teens, the kind of practices now that teens have with video games where they get points for how many people they can shoot in the video game, and perhaps there is also some in there, I would think, for shooting animals as well, right up to when people become adults and they then can partake in practices like penned hunting.

It is interesting to note that there are organizations like the Humane Society. I bet we would all remember a very dramatic and effective campaign that they had that made the connection between human behaviour and the way that we treat animals and then human behaviour and the way that we will treat other people. They had a very striking pamphlet, the Humane Society did, that on one side had half the face of a dog and on the other side had half the face of a child. There have been studies done that show that people who are willing and have a propensity to abuse animals will also be having a higher propensity to abuse children and other people.

I think that we have to be cognizant of the kinds of practices that we condone and the kinds

of things that we encourage through legislation. That is why I am really pleased that our Government made a commitment to eliminate the practice of penned hunting and now we are following through on it.

As I did a little bit of research on just what happens in a penned hunt and to realize what we are talking about, we can have in some cases, some forms I have read that have this practice have 500- to 700-acre treed areas. The animal can be raised and then it is actually killed and hunted in that same pen. On the other hand, I have heard that there are penned hunt areas that can be as small as 40 acres, which is approximately the size not much bigger than the grounds for this Legislature, and there are a mile-by-a mile pens.

What essentially is going to happen is the animal is going to get cornered. To me it ends up being more like an execution than a hunt, the animal getting cornered. You have to think of it, this is an animal that was likely raised in that same enclosed area, perhaps became familiar with the very captors that are now then authorizing and even partaking in the hunt. According to my colleague from Selkirk, they may even have such familiarity and comfort, even though they are wild animals, with their captor or the farmer that has been raising them that they would show not a lot of fear of that particular person and may willingly just let them in the pen and stand there. That is why I would liken it more to an execution, in a way, than a hunt. *[interjection]* The Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) seems to suggest that those are strong words, but I am trying to picture this in my mind what it is like to have an animal in an enclosed area.

The other concern that I have about this, what is going to happen with this legislation is that animals will be raised in captivity specifically for the purpose of hunting. These will be wild animals; then they will be released, and then they will be hunted. I do not know if that practice is already occurring and if there are going to be regulations that are going to deal with that. But that is one of the concerns that I have, that there will still be the room for a similar kind of practice to occur.

* (11:40)

When we are talking about penned hunting and we are talking about the planned hunting of species like wild boar or bison, we can also consider some of the other practices, the trade in animal parts that goes on. One of the other things that I do not quite understand is why, on the one hand, there has been a lot of attention to ban the trade in certain animal parts like bear gall bladders, bear paws and other parts, but, at the same time, things like the removal of elk antlers and the sale of elk antler velvet which is very lucrative is allowed to go ahead.

I guess one of the differences, as I think about it, is that if you are going to take a bear's gall bladder out, it is going to be dead. The elk that are going to have their antlers taken off are not. There are other examples like that, where there seem to be certain animals that the standard is different as compared to other animals.

One of the other issues, for example, is the problem of using strychnine to kill wolves. Again, that is supposed to be prohibited in the province of Manitoba. Of course, it is a very dangerous practice to bury such a poisonous chemical in the ground, then hoping that the wolf would eat it. Of course, it is there, exposed, and it has the potential, and usually the result is that it will poison many other animals as well and could leach into groundwater and surface water. There are all sorts of problems with that. So it is another example of the kind of approach that is being used to try to deal with wildlife.

One of the other things that I was interested in looking at when I was looking at other practices related to penned hunting is the whole issue of elk ranching. I know that has also been a matter of debate here in the province. You look at the fact that, along with the velvet sales which fetch between \$80 to \$100 per pound last year, the antlers which weigh 20 to 25 pounds can fetch as much as \$1,000 per acre, net.

I think that when you look, too, at the fact that the breeding market is strong with a cow on the average costing \$15,000 to \$20,000 and a velvet-producing bull \$2,500 to \$4,000, the value of the animals inflated due to supply and

demand—I am reading from an article here. I wanted to see how much money basically was potentially to be made from the initial investment. I cannot find the page. Anyway, I guess the point that I am coming to is that the purpose and the whole job of the now Department of Conservation is to protect and regulate industries for wildlife. It is not there to sort of encourage wildlife to become industrialized.

I think that, when you look at issues like the way the former government expanded the elk capture for elk ranching in one year, they expanded it dramatically in one year because previously there had been an unsuccessful capture. There had been a few deaths, but there were so many animals captured the next year, which was a threat to the entire population. The result of those large numbers of elk being captured and not being managed very well was that there were a number of elk that died in the capture because, particularly, the bulls were so traumatized and were so aggressive when they were captured that they ended up getting into fights and there were a number of injuries.

Again, to think of placing a wild animal in that kind of situation, an animal that has never been captured before, to be put in that situation with a number of other animals, particularly animals that they usually are not in close contact with—I would think that bucks are not usually in close contact with other bucks—to have that kind of a situation that is so not in keeping with the natural way that these animals would interact, I think that is a real cause for concern. Again, to do that as a way simply of trying to turn wild animals into a profit-making venture and actually have them farmed, I have a lot of concerns about that.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

That is why I was making the point that the job of the department of natural resources is to protect wildlife, to regulate legal hunting and to ensure there is not poaching, and those kinds of things. It is not to industrialize wildlife and create the further sort of industrialization and further exploitation of wildlife.

I want to go back to the point I made at the beginning, which was that the former

government for over a year maintained that penned hunting in Manitoba was illegal. I am curious to know what happened. I am curious to understand what happened.

An Honourable Member: Well, we thought it was, but we were not quite sure.

Ms. Cerilli: I am wondering, as the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) is saying, that they thought it was, but they were not quite sure. What happened? They went and got a legal opinion?

Did you have lawyers take a year to actually review the legislation? What was it that showed that there was this problem with The Wildlife Act and that, as long as species were not indigenous to Manitoba, you could capture them and have them raised and hunted in this fashion?

An Honourable Member: Well, for one thing, a species like bison was never listed as wildlife.

Ms. Cerilli: I think that is important, and I am interested to hear that the Member for Lakeside is saying that species like bison were never listed as wildlife. I said earlier, it amazes me that that has been one of the main species that has been involved in these penned hunts. Now, with this exemption, I would think for sure that is not going to be allowed, but even previous to that, bison are the provincial symbol. They were here long before any of us were, our ancestors, or even our species. I would think that they certainly are indigenous to Manitoba, and I do not quite understand why they have ever been able to be included as one of the species that are involved in penned hunts.

But I want to go back to this point of having a government go for that period of time saying that something is illegal, having the practice continue and flourish, and then having to come back and say, well, there is this grey area. I hope that we will hear from the members opposite and will get some explanation of how that occurred and why we are in this situation where we are having to bring in Bill 5 to close that loophole and to do something that in government the members opposite said that they did not support, said was illegal, but did expand and grow and continue on here in the province.

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if you could let me know how much time I have left?

Mr. Speaker: Fifteen minutes.

* (11:50)

Ms. Cerilli: Okay. The other thing that has been raised with me in terms of Bill 5 by some of my constituents was the concern that with wildlife including now in its definition "exotic animals" that they no longer were going to be able to have pets and similar reptiles or other creatures as pets. I know that we had to look at this, and we have been assured that unless they are going to have people over to their house to hunt those animals that they can enjoy their pets. They can keep their parrots.

It is interesting to note though that parrots often can live to be a hundred years old. So, people who have exotic birds like that should make plans to will those birds to children or even grandchildren, because parrots live for an awful long time. Similarly, other exotic pets that are kept in Manitoba are not going to be affected by this legislation. I know that has been one of the concerns that has been brought up with the Minister.

I think it is interesting to learn about the number of different kinds of organizations that have responded to the introduction to this legislation. I do not know if I knew before this legislation that there was a parrot owners association in Manitoba and a number of other groups. I guess, we will hear from some of them at the public consultation on this bill and will hear any concerns that they have. I imagine that we will also hear from the penned hunt owners, the operators of these type of farms at the public hearings.

I do not know if I will be on the committee for this particular bill, but I am interested in this type of issues and look forward to them having the opportunity to present their case. I think it is important that we did notify people during the election that we were going to make this change, realizing that it will affect a small percentage of people in Manitoba very directly.

With those comments, I will conclude my remarks and look forward to seeing this bill become enacted. Thank you.

Mr. Harry Schellenberg (Rossmere): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on Bill 5, The Wildlife Amendment Act. I take great interest in this act because I grew up in rural Manitoba, and therefore I appreciate hunting and the outdoors. People who grew up in the Prairies have an appreciation and respect for wildlife and enjoy the outdoors and enjoy hunting. Hunting is an activity that man has depended on for his livelihood over the centuries. In Manitoba, hunting was the livelihood of the First Nations people and the early settlers.

However, the meaning of "hunting" was based on fair play and animals had a chance to escape. Placing animals in a cage and shooting them is not hunting. Hunting in captivity is very disgusting. In fact, if animals are in a pen or a cage, the hunter knows where the animals are and the hunter does not have to hunt for his prize. This is not hunting by my definition of the word. This also does not show respect for wildlife and simply is unethical treatment of wildlife species.

During the last provincial election we were committed to ending the practice of penned hunting, because it exceeds the legitimate agricultural and commercial use of wildlife. Penned hunting runs counter to our approach to sustaining and enhancing wildlife population in Manitoba. We will continue to support legitimate hunting activities, and we will enhance opportunities for wildlife species to thrive and grow. This can be done through greater protection of the natural habitat and greater conservation of the resources that our wildlife population depend on, so our approach is quite different here. Our approach is to move away from penned hunting and support the natural habitat of our wildlife.

During the election we were committed to developing an ecotourism strategy that would bring economic development and environmental education together in a sustainable way. We realize that wildlife population with a strong habitat is important to tourism and economic development. We support a hunting industry but not a penned hunting industry, though. That is where we vary. We feel hunting wildlife is very important to our tourism, to industry, to sports

and so forth, therefore we have great support for wildlife hunting.

I realize that the Opposition members do not seem to be prepared to speak on this bill, on this issue. They are very silent at this point. No one has said that but just an observation. The Opposition is not speaking on the bill. I would like to hear what they have to say on this issue. I appreciate what the Member for Interlake (Mr. Nevakshonoff) said here, the Member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) said, from Dauphin-Roblin (Mr. Struthers), it is very educational, but I would like to hear what the members opposite have to say on this bill. Why are they not speaking on this bill?

The former government seemed to look the other way when penned hunting was mentioned and they did their best, it seemed that way, to avoid the penned hunting issue. In fact, I am informed penned hunting was allowed to flourish under the former government; however, I hear they have changed their policy. At the present time it seemed they support Bill 5. The passing of this bill will respect the values and traditions of Manitoba and also respect wildlife.

I would like to address some of the concerns of exotic animal owners. There is a concern that the government will use the opportunity to impose additional regulation on exotic animals. Some of my constituents have shown concern about that, but the bill will not affect exotic animals that are not hunted as has been pointed out this morning. There is no fear there. The bill will only prohibit the hunting of captive, native, exotic wildlife. A person who possesses exotic wildlife and who is not or does not intend to hunt them will not be affected.

Ranching is another issue that has come forward recently. The question: Will this

legislation affect ranching such as elk ranching, or you could say elk farming? Well, apparently Bill 5 will not affect it at all. There are other concerns about elk ranching that have been pointed out to me. Some of these elk farms or elk ranches where the animals are semi-domesticated, there could be diseases there and these could be passed on to the elks that live in the wild, that are free.

So there are all kinds of concerns about wildlife. How will this affect wildlife? What will it be like 10, 20 years down the road? Whenever we interfere with Mother Nature, we must be very, very careful. There could be devastating effects down the road.

I would like to point out that ranching will not be affected by this legislation. Only penned hunting will be affected. That is what we want to change; that is what we said in our last election. That was a commitment we made, and we feel it is disgusting to have penned hunting in our province. This penned hunting does not show respect to wildlife or to Mother Nature, and that is what many environmentalists, many people in our province have pointed out to us. It should not just be profits. We should look at the values and traditions of Manitobans' respect for wildlife, respect for nature. That is the whole key of Bill 5.

I would in conclusion just say that I would like to hear members opposite.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the Honourable Member will have 32 minutes remaining.

The hour being 12 p.m., I am leaving the Chair with the understanding that the House will reconvene at 1:30 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, April 27, 2000

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