

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

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Eighth Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, June 2, 2005

The House met at 10 a.m.

PRAYERS

Point of Order

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, can I request a quorum count, please?

Mr. Speaker: A quorum count?

Mr. Lamoureux: Yes, please.

Mr. Speaker: Clerk, could you please do a quorum count.

Please rise in your place so you can be counted.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Honourable Mr. Ashton, Honourable Mr. Smith, Honourable Mr. Caldwell, Honourable Mr. Lemieux, Mr. Maloway, Mr. Martindale, Ms. Korzeniowski, Honourable Mr. Rondeau, Ms. Brick, Mr. Jha, Ms. Irvin-Ross, Mr. Swan, Mr. Derkach, Mr. Cummings, Mr. Murray, Mrs. Driedger, Mr. Reimer, Mr. Maguire, Mrs. Stefanson, Mr. Hawranik, Mr. Dyck, Mr. Loewen, Honourable Mr. Gerrard, Mr. Jennissen, Mr. Dewar, Mrs. Rowat, Mr. Cullen, Mr. Lamoureux, Mr. Schellenberg, Honourable Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Speaker: There is a quorum.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Before we proceed into Orders of the Day, I would like to introduce some guests.

Seated in the gallery we have 44 visitors under the direction of Ms. Kathy Hamilton, and they are the guests of the honourable Member for Fort Garry (Ms. Irvin-Ross).

Also in the public gallery, from Henry G. Izatt Middle School, we have 57 Grade 5 students under the direction of Mrs. JoAnn Eliuk and Miss Kristin Wyant. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Loewen).

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

House Business

Hon. Steve Ashton (Deputy Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, after a discussion between House leaders, there was some interest in changing the order, by leave, to call 209 and 210.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave to bring forward, to do Bills 209 and 210 first? Is there leave? [*Agreed*]

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 209—The Firefighters Compensation Act (Workers Compensation Act Amended)

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Turtle Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from Minnedosa that Bill 209, The Firefighters Compensation Act, be now read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The next item before the House is Bill 209, The Firefighters Compensation Act (Workers Compensation Act Amended). As some members may be aware, there is some duplication in subject matter between this bill and Bill 25, The Workers Compensation Amendment Act, a bill which has recently gone through the stages of second reading in the House.

There are certain provisions in *Beauchesne*, as well as Manitoba rules and practices, which come into play when there are two bills in the same session that have similar content and intent.

Beauchesne Citation 624(3) provides that "There is no rule or custom which restrains the presentation of two or more bills relating to the same subject and containing similar provisions. But if a decision of the House has been taken on one such bill, for example, if the bill has been given or refused second reading, the other is not proceeded with if it contains substantially the same provisions and such a bill could not have been introduced on a motion for

leave. But if a bill is withdrawn, after having made progress, another bill with the same objects may be proceeded with."

Our Rule 41 states, "No Member shall revive a debate already concluded during the session or anticipate a matter appointed for consideration of which notice has been given."

In addition, there are five rulings from Speaker Rocan from 1990 which indicate that it is procedurally improper to proceed with a bill on the Order Paper if a bill with a similar subject matter and intent has already been dealt with by the House.

I am raising this because of apparent similarities between Bill 209 and Bill 25, which has completed second reading in the House. In addition, consultation has been undertaken with the Clerk's office and with the Legislative Counsel office to further verify whether the bills have similar content. It was determined that, yes, the bills do have similar content, particularly regarding presumption regarding cancer and firefighters. Therefore, it is procedurally improper to permit debate on Bill 209.

The honourable Member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Cullen) has two courses of action open to him. Bill 209 can remain on the Order Paper and not be proceeded with further. Alternatively, he may seek the unanimous consent of the House to withdraw it.

The honourable Official Opposition House Leader, on a point of order.

Point of Order

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Official Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, Bill 25 deals with some of the content that is in Bill 209, but we have indicated to the government that we are more than supportive of The Firefighters Compensation Act. Unfortunately, what the government has done, Mr. Speaker, is it has included this part that we are in favour of with another aspect of The Workers Compensation Act that has some concerns that have been raised by citizens of Manitoba.

So therefore, this has been a manipulation, if you like, by government to try to include something that a lot of people would be in favour of with a fairly

negative aspect of The Workers Compensation Act as viewed by many citizens of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, it is for this reason that the Member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Cullen) tried to separate the issues so that indeed it would be viewed as an appropriate approach to passing legislation that citizens of Manitoba want.

* (10:10)

Mr. Speaker, this is something that firefighters, people who work for the good and safety of people in Manitoba, should have as protection and as compensation for the risks that they take. But it is inappropriate for this kind of sensitive legislation to be mixed in with legislation that is perhaps negative in many connotations or has many negative connotations to it, as viewed by some Manitobans. So it is for that reason the member from Turtle Mountain thought it was prudent to introduce The Firefighters Compensation Act as a stand-alone bill, giving it the kind of prominence, the kind of recognition and the kind of respect, if you like, that it deserves by us as legislators.

But, Mr. Speaker, we do acknowledge that this is a duplication from a part of Bill 25, and if there were leave in this Chamber, I am sure that we could deal with this legislation as well. With that, I end my point of order.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Deputy Government House Leader): On the point of order, Mr. Speaker, your ruling indeed is quite correct. There is a very good reason why one of the key elements of the parliamentary process is avoiding duplication of bills because members opposite do have the ability with any bill that is brought before this House to amend that bill. There is a bill dealing with workers compensation. If there are sections of that act that members do not support, they can either attempt to amend the act or they can vote against it.

There is indeed an irony with this because in 1989 when I, as workers compensation critic for the New Democratic caucus at the time, attempted to reinstate coverage for firefighters, at that time it was members of the then-Conservative government that blocked that, Mr. Speaker. This was 1989 when presumptive coverage could have been brought back into the province through legislation at the time that

dealt with workers compensation in an amendment that was moved that the Conservatives blocked.

So, Mr. Speaker, your ruling is not only correct, I would remind the members opposite that they have every opportunity with the bill to vote against any and every section of the bill. Indeed, I think many Manitobans would be very interested to see which sections that improve workers compensation coverage for Manitoba workers members opposite would actually vote against, which sections that improve governance that members would vote against.

So your ruling is quite correct, and if the members opposite disagree with sections of Bill 25, they should deal with Bill 25. This bill is indeed redundant and I sort of give the member credit for moving the bill. I am glad to see that all members in this House now accept presumptive coverage.

Dare I say the member is a new member, but I do take some interest in the fact that there is nothing like a convert in terms of members opposite who sat in power in the government for 11 years and blocked presumptive coverage, including in 1989 when a bill was before the Legislature and they said the bill would not pass, that it had presumptive coverage. They were prepared to kill the entire bill. So not only is there a history to that with the members opposite, history with sections of Bill 25, they can deal with that, but let us focus on Bill 25, Mr. Speaker, and the fact that your ruling was quite correct.

This is a redundant resolution, Mr. Speaker, and indeed should either remain on the Order Paper or should be withdrawn. I would be interested to hear what the Member for Turtle Mountain's (Mr. Cullen) preference is in terms of those two options.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised, before I rule on that, I just want to make something very clear to all members. The reason I was lenient and allowed a point of order to be heard is because to me this is a unique situation. I am sure all members in the House are fully aware that the Speaker's rulings are not up for debate. If members disagree, the option members have is to challenge it. They are not up for debate. But I was very lenient today because I know this is a unique situation, and I wanted the opportunity for both sides to be heard.

The honourable Member for Russell or the Official Opposition House Leader does not have a point of order.

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Russell, on a new point of order.

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Mr. Speaker, just simply to indicate that I thank you for giving me the opportunity to put those comments on the record with respect to Bill 209. We certainly respect your ruling and we can proceed. I think we will leave this bill as it is on the Order Paper for the time being.

Mr. Speaker: I thank the honourable member for that. So Bill 209 will remain on the Order Paper.

Bill 210—The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Bicycle Helmets)

Mr. Speaker: Now we will move on to Bill 210, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Bicycle Helmets).

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the MLA for Inkster, that Bill 210, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Bicycle Helmets); Loi modifiant le Code de la route (casques de bicyclettes), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Member for River Heights, seconded by the honourable Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), that Bill 210, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Bicycle Helmets), be now read a second time and be referred to committee of this House.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to Bill 210. Put very simply, this bill is about saving lives and about saving dollars. Both of these two are particularly important for Manitoba. We are heading into the summer season where a lot of people will be bicycling. There is an opportunity for this Legislature to act and to pass this legislation before we recess on June 9, and I hope there will be co-operation from members on all sides of the House in saving lives and in saving dollars.

Mr. Speaker, first of all, let us be very clear that the evidence is substantial and the evidence speaks volumes. There are now many provinces which have such legislation, which would provide for the mandatory wearing of helmets when people are riding bicycles. A very careful comparison was made

between the provinces where there is mandatory bicycle helmet legislation and those provinces, like Manitoba, which do not have such legislation. What was found was, No. 1, that the rates of helmet use were much higher where there was mandatory helmet legislation; No. 2, that the rate of injury requiring hospitalization was much higher in provinces where there was no mandatory bicycle helmet legislation compared to provinces where there was mandatory bicycle helmet legislation. In other words, this legislation can save lives and reduce the number of injuries that require hospitalization as a result of people not having and wearing helmets when they are riding a bicycle.

There is also a clear difference in terms of the number of deaths, that there were fewer deaths, on a proportional basis to population, in provinces with mandatory bicycle helmet legislation compared to those provinces which do not have mandatory bicycle helmet legislation. The evidence is clear: passing this bill will save lives and it will save injuries. That is why we should move on this.

As the Speaker and all the members know, there is a big push at the moment, so we are told by this government, for better wellness, for preventing people from becoming sick or injured. Here is a golden opportunity to do something about it. We are presenting this to all members of the House to act, and we hope that all members will act in concert to move this legislation forward.

I think it is important to note that we are not only saving lives and not only saving injuries, but the majority of the serious injuries on a bicycle for people who do not have helmets are head injuries. A head injury in a child can lead to lifelong difficulties and problems. I was told by a friend who is a physician of a child who he looked after, had such a bicycle injury, and he took a year to recover, but it was never a full recovery and there were lifelong impacts.

*(10:20)

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, as I have said at the beginning, this is about saving lives and about saving dollars, and the saving dollars is very important because one child prevented from having a serious head injury will save our health care system and our

public taxpayer a million to a million and a half dollars over the course of the lifetime of that child. That is a very significant saving and cumulatively when we add that up with the number of people who come in with head injuries, and I do not have the number for head injuries specifically, but there were 170 people on average the last several years who have come in with injuries to hospitals in Manitoba, and of those it is about 100 who are children. We have used in this bill coverage for all ages because it is important that adults are modeling for children, and the experience in other provinces which have all-age legislation shows that it is much more effective.

Mr. Speaker, the time is now to act on this legislation. For many years this government and the previous government have said we can do this by education. Well, the fact is that education alone has not worked. In Manitoba at the moment only about 28 percent of bicycle riders are using helmets. It is not good enough. In provinces where there is legislation requiring mandatory wearing of helmets when riding bicycles, 80 to 90 percent of bicycle riders are wearing helmets, and it is saving lives and it is saving dollars. We would like in Manitoba to be saving lives and saving dollars, and it is very important that we have an opportunity to do this right now. We have an opportunity to take this forward by June 9 and make this law, and we can have an impact this summer. If we do not act now, if the members collectively choose not to act now, then it will be at least next summer before this law is in effect and before we can start saving lives and saving dollars. We all know that in our health care system, there are far too many other areas that need dollars, that need attention, for us to be wasting dollars because we have unnecessary head injuries for children in our province, in Manitoba. It is time to put the children of this province first. It is time to start saving lives and to start saving dollars.

The effect of helmets is very clear from many, many statistics that helmets save and protect from serious head injury and they can make a difference. Mr. Speaker, this is like the seat belt legislation that we already have in Manitoba. It is like a number of other areas. Some people may be concerned about this being, you know, government interfering, but the reality is that once seat belt legislation was passed, it became the normal behaviour. Once this legislation is passed, it will be normally accepted practices, as it is in most other provinces, that people who are riding bicycles will be wearing helmets. So I urge the other

members of this Legislature to come on board, to support this legislation and do what we can to pass this legislation by June 9 so that we can be saving lives and saving dollars for people in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): I move, seconded by the Member for Fort Garry (Ms. Irvin-Ross), that debate be now adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS— PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 200—The Personal Information Protection Act

Mr. Speaker: Resume debate on second readings of public bills, Bill 200, The Personal Information Protection Act, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale). What is the will of the House?

Some Honourable Members: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Stand? Is there agreement for the bill to remain standing? *[Agreed]*

Bill 201—The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: Bill 201, The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck).

What is the will of the House? Stand? *[Agreed]*

Bill 202—The Health Services Amendment and Health Services Insurance Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: Bill 202, The Health Services Amendment and Health Services Insurance Amendment Act, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Minto (Mr. Swan).

What is the will of the House? Stand in the name of the honourable Member for Minto (Mr. Swan)? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Bidhu Jha (Radisson): I would like to speak on Bill 202, putting some of my points on record. We

fully support the principles of the Canada Health Act, which is unique and remains one of the most valued identities of being a Canadian.

Mr. Speaker, whenever the topic of health care debate comes, my emotions flare up. I witnessed in this Chamber some awful debates from the members opposite. It does bother me to see the desire and the hidden agenda from the members opposite to bring Americanization of Canadian medicine.

Let me put this on record, Mr. Speaker, my own experience and sufferings on the agenda of health care, which is being proposed or in an indirect way promoted by the opposition, to have a private health care in Manitoba or in Canada. I am saddened again to share with members here that in the mid-nineties I had suffered a lot. One of the reasons I decided to come and fight the election is because of my passion and requirement for protecting health care.

My brother, who was a professor of sociology, died in 1995 waiting for his heart surgery. Because there was a shortage of doctors, there was a shortage of nurses and there was a shortage of health care professionals, the waiting list was too long. I would like to say this, that my family would have sent my brother to the U.S. for his surgery but he, being a total social democrat, in a matter of principle he said, "No, I would not like to leave Canada and I would like to wait here." So we did not send him to the U.S. for treatment in private care, and we lost him because, you know, he passed away, even though one of my very close friends was a surgeon, but the waiting line was too long.

Now, I am very proud to see that we have, this government has, implemented some of the recommendations by Doctor Koshal, and the wait time for radiation therapy has been reduced only by one week. I think that the number of MRIs performed in Manitoba has more than tripled. The number of CT scans has more than doubled. I think the wait time for cardiac surgery has been reduced to half.

I am very happy to see, Mr. Speaker, that we have not only increased the number of doctors' enrolment in the province, which was not seen properly during that period that they were trying to reduce the number of doctors. I do not know what was the conspiracy, what were the hidden motives behind it, but I must say it takes 10 years, a good 10

years, to train doctors. It takes a lot of time to train nurses.

I would also like to share my own personal losses of my family's enjoyment in this province. My daughter, she was a radiologist and was trained here, a well-trained doctor. She is doing extremely well now in Washington, D.C., in Georgetown University. She is an associate professor and also a Bachelor of MRI. As she told me in '95-96 when she was graduating, there were, I believe, four or five radiology residents and there were only three positions, so she said if she would have stayed here, she would have been an unemployed doctor.

* (10:30)

So the situation in that period of time, Mr. Speaker, was very, very bad. To see that positions were shortened, and naturally there was a hidden agenda to see if that thing would continue, people would prefer to have private health care. That is a fact. The members opposite are really smiling, but that is what happens if you do not have doctors, if you do not have nurses, if you reduce facilities, close hospitals, it takes time to build. It takes 10 years, a good 10 years to train a doctor to come and practise, particularly in a specialist, like radiologist, it might take a little more. I think that I have seen this kind of thing happening, and when I now see the trend being changed, where more doctors are being trained, rural hospitals are being recruited, statements have been made there are more doctors practising in Manitoba than those periods.

I think that this is very important, Mr. Speaker, for us to understand that private health care does not give what is normally believed in desperate situations and promoted by members opposite. I will also give examples of—maybe the members would like to listen to this. My own family, my sister lives in Hartford, Connecticut. They are having a private medical system there and it is strange for me to share the story of my own sister, that her daughter, when she was pregnant and she was to deliver a baby, her insurance would give a policy that was okay if she would have delivered the baby in a normal time. It was a premature baby, so the doctor said after three days you go home and the baby stays there, because that is the insurance system.

Now, imagine the irony and agony with my sister's daughter, that she was forced to leave the

hospital because it was not the decision by the doctors, it was not the decision by the hospital. It was the decision taken by the insurance company that dictates rules how you make the health care work. That kind of system we do not need in this country.

So I think that her comments were, "I wish that my daughter was in Canada, not in U.S.A." At that time, if they would have stayed, it would have cost them arms and legs, a huge amount of money for her to stay in a hospital. So, to leave a premature baby in hospital, she had to go home. This is the irony, this is the tragedy of a private health care that does not see the human element. All it sees is profit. All it sees is money, and this is how it happens.

So, I think, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that we have seen things happening in this state, Manitoba, that have been very, very good for the future. Ten years from now people will thank us and will understand that the style of new management that we are seeing in the health care will make the difference.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to make here the discussions on for-profit health care is less efficient than not-for-profit health care. Quality of care is lower in for-profit facilities than in not-for-profit. For-profit health care does not guarantee access and is prone to cream-skimming. There are serious accountability issues with for-profit health care. These are some of the findings that one can go and look at in the academic results and academic findings, that private health care is not the only alternative that we can think.

Now I would also like to read a couple of points that I have been given in a note that is very obvious, and I would not, perhaps, repeat things that have already been said about the effect of private health care in society in terms of the delivery of services, quality of services, and the cost.

So I think the bottom line is here, Mr. Speaker, that if we need a society to prosper and live in a quality of life, the health care services are absolutely universal. It should not see the differences of who is poor, who is not poor. It should not see the differences of which class of people get service and society looks after and which class of people do not. So I think that the whole idea of trying to develop a parallel system that will destroy the health care,

which is the only thing that Canadians feel very unique in the world today, that should not be destroyed.

The bottom line again, as I spoke, Mr. Speaker, is what we are doing now. Ten years, fifteen years from now the future generation will understand. If the trend goes, we will be able to sustain health care, universal health care policies and protect the Canada Health Act. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Any other speakers?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: Okay. When this matter is again before the House, it will remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Minto (Mr. Swan).

Bill 203—The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: Bill 203, The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Rossmere (Mr. Schellenberg). What is the will of the House? Stand? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Turtle Mountain): Mr. Speaker, it certainly will be a pleasure to put some words on the record this morning in regard to Bill 203, an amendment to the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation. This is a very important piece of legislation which has been brought forward by the member from River East, and I think it is imperative that the government take notice of this very important piece of legislation. It does pertain to probably only a very few Manitobans, but I think it is a very beneficial piece to those particular individuals who can be impacted by certain claims that arise under the Personal Injury Protection Program.

As a person, as an individual who sold the Manitoba Public Insurance product, or Autopac as we know it in Manitoba, Manitobans have come to realize that it is certainly our only option in Manitoba. We certainly agree that the way the program works, it certainly can be beneficial for Manitobans in terms of keeping the rates in line. Clearly, though, the onus is on the government of the day to ensure that Manitobans are treated fairly when it comes to the claim process. I think that is the important part about Manitoba Public Insurance and

the government's kind of control, if I will, of the Crown corporation, that all Manitobans are treated fairly when it comes to the claim situation.

When we sell this particular product to Manitobans, we hope that we have the trust in that particular product that we are selling, that when a need arises for someone in Manitoba that has a situation develop, that the corporation will be there to benefit Manitobans when they do have a situation arise. So what this particular piece of legislation does, it looks at specific incidents where the Crown corporation, Manitoba Public Insurance, actually claws back some of the benefits that are provided.

So in this particular case, it was a married individual and the individual became disabled and was also receiving a Canada Pension upon disability. After the accident, she was compensated through Manitoba Public Insurance for her disability. After that, of course, there was a split-up in the marriage. Of course, after that fact, then there was a clawback taken back from Manitoba Public Insurance. So it is a situation that is not going to arise a lot in Manitoba, but when it does it certainly can impact Manitobans in a very negative way. In this particular case, it was only in the amount of about \$164 per month, but again, when an individual is living on their own, \$164 certainly can be substantial.

So we think, from our side of the House, it is imperative that Manitobans are treated with respect when it comes to claims. Obviously, through the Personal Injury Protection Program, they expect to be compensated adequately. Clearly, there is a bit of a flaw in the current legislation that allows this clawback to take place. So we think this is clearly a very, very important piece of legislation. I know my colleagues, as insurance brokers across the province who sell this particular product, really want to have the trust and the faith in the system that will develop and provide a very fair and equitable insurance product to Manitobans.

* (10:40)

I think the onus is on the corporation and the Province to make sure that these individuals are treated in a fair manner and, certainly, I am glad that the member from River East was able to bring this very important legislation forward. Again, it will only impact a certain number, a very few number, of people throughout Manitoba, but it can have a very significant impact on their situation.

So it really is, I think, Mr. Speaker, a justice issue, and Bill 203 really, really deals with a fundamental right of all Manitobans to be properly insured against, and I think when it comes to resolving claims Manitoba Public Insurance really has an onus to resolve claims fairly to all Manitobans and we certainly hope that this bill will help address one of the flaws in the current legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask for your consent to move Bill 203 forward. Hopefully, we can move this bill to committee directly, and if we can have consent from the opposite side of the House to move this bill forward to the committee stage, I think it would be a benefit for all Manitobans. So we certainly would like to see this bill moved forward to committee. Thank you very much.

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, if I might, I want to put a few words on the record in agreement with the Member for Turtle Mountain and his comments about the benefits of public ownership of certain programs here in the province. I am glad to see that he now supports public ownership of the automobile insurance industry. As the Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) said, he likes to remind us, of course, in the seventies, when the program was introduced, the Conservatives at the time, I believe even the Liberals, were strongly opposed to the ownership, the public ownership, and the delivery of the auto insurance in the province.

I just wish the member was here when the Manitoba Telephone System was sold off, Mr. Speaker. He could have given a similar speech and talk about the values and the benefits of public ownership of another Crown corporation. I am reminded that recently in Saskatchewan, where the telephone system is still owned by the people of the province of Saskatchewan, the publicly owned telephone system in Saskatchewan recently paid a dividend to the province of \$88 million, \$88 million, that went back into the Treasury of the Government of Saskatchewan, which would help pay for each of the promises that these Conservatives are standing up every day in this House and demanding.

Every day they stand up in this House, one after another, and they say, "Spend more money on this, spend more money on that, pave this road, pave that road, build this high school, build this underpass." Every single one. They stand up every day in this House and they demand. But what if we still had

dividends from the Crown corporations like they do in Saskatchewan, \$88 million? Perhaps we could fulfil some of the demands that these Conservatives place upon this government every day in this Chamber.

Regrettably, Mr. Speaker, I received a letter from Bonnie Staples-Lyon, about a month ago, informing me, as the MLA for Selkirk, that the Manitoba Telephone System is removing another 25 jobs from Selkirk and putting those jobs in Winnipeg. So once again, the fallout from the sale of MTS continues and continues. It is one of those things that keeps giving and giving and giving, unfortunately in a negative way.

So I am glad we are able to talk today about the value of the public ownership of certain services provided to Manitobans, Mr. Speaker. I encourage members opposite, when they stand up to speak to this bill, that they also speak about MTS and the scandal that that was with the sale of MTS. Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker: Any other speakers? Okay? When this matter is again before the House, it will remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Rossmere (Mr. Schellenberg).

Bill 204—The Audiologists and Speech Language Pathologists Act

Mr. Speaker: We will move on to Bill 204, The Audiologists and Speech Language Pathologists Act, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Arthur-Virden, who has five minutes remaining.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): It is my privilege to put a few more words in regard to Bill 204 on the record here today, The Audiologists and Speech Language Pathologists Act, that I began speaking on last week, Mr. Speaker, and unfortunately was cut off by the clock in regard to our procedures.

Mr. Speaker, I was just mentioning at that time that the Legislative Counsel of Manitoba had done considerable work on behalf of the association and me to make sure that the wording was clear on this bill and it was written correctly as other professional bills have been done in this House before. I have made the comment that this bill parallels legislation that has been brought forward on other professional

bills and the extreme work that had been done by the Manitoba Speech and Hearing Association, particularly Miss Lori McKietuik, chairperson of the college initiative.

I want to just say that I hope that as we move forward on this bill that it can be a unanimous vote, Mr. Speaker, that it gets that kind of support because this association has done its due diligence in regard to first contacting the government in '03 in regard to bringing this type of legislation forward. Miss McKietuik indicated to the government in '04 that after it was not put on that agenda, she was disappointed that it might have to wait until the fall of '04.

A letter from the deputy minister himself at that time addressed to Miss McKietuik indicated that, and I will just quote it, "I am writing to advise that due to the volume of proposed legislation from across the government, your proposal that is to appeal and replace The Manitoba Speech and Hearing Association Act is among a number of proposals from the department that have not been approved to proceed in 2003-4 legislative session. Manitoba Health will submit your legislative proposal for consideration for the 2004-5 legislative agenda. If approved to proceed, the proposed amendments would not likely be considered by the Legislature before spring 2005." End of the letter to her, Mr. Speaker, by the Deputy Minister, Mr. Sussman, at the time.

So I only bring that to the attention of the Speaker and the House because, of course, for some reason, as I mentioned earlier, it may have been an oversight by this government, they did not bring this legislation forward. That is very clearly a type of legislation that is parallel to many other professional conduct acts throughout the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, I want to—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The honourable Member for Arthur-Virden has the floor.

Mr. Maguire: Mr. Speaker, I guess the only request that I would have then of this House is that in order to move this bill forward, I would certainly like to see this bill moved on to committee to hear from those in Manitoba who would wish to make

presentation on it. I believe that the association itself is the only body that is listed to speak at it, and I am sure that they are being in favour of it, I could ask the House's unanimous support. We could pass this bill right now.

So I would request the House that would it be possible to pass this bill and bring forward unanimous support for this legislation on behalf of the Manitoba Speech and Hearing Association in the province of Manitoba. With that I will end my comments and hope that perhaps, Mr. Speaker, you could call a vote on this particular bill at this time and just pass it on unanimously so that they could implement their professional conduct act. Thank you.

* (10:50)

Mr. Harry Schellenberg (Rossmere): I move, seconded by the Member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar), that debate be now adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 205—The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act (Set Date Elections)

Mr. Speaker: Bill 205, The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act (Set Date Elections), standing in the name of the honourable Member for Interlake (Mr. Nevakshonoff). What is the will of the House? Stand? *[Agreed]*

It will remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Interlake.

Bill 207—The Medical Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: Okay, we will move on to Bill 207, The Medical Amendment Act, standing in the name of the honourable Member for St. James (Ms. Korzeniowski). What is the will of the House? Stand? *[Agreed]*

Bill 208—The Child and Family Services Amendment Act (Grandparent Access)

Mr. Speaker: Bill 208, The Child and Family Services Amendment Act (Grandparent Access), standing in the name of the honourable Member for Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell), who has eight minutes remaining. It is denied? Okay, it is denied.

Mr. Jack Reimer (Southdale): Mr. Speaker, I just want to put some words on the record in regard to the

recommendation that we move this on to committee. It is Bill 208, The Child and Family Services Amendment Act, that was brought forth by the member for Minnedosa (Mrs. Rowat).

Mr. Speaker, the reason for bringing forth the bill was that the member and other members in caucus have been lobbied by grandparents because of the unfortunate situation that does sometime occur where grandparents are denied access to see their grandchildren. I think that in general terms I think everybody would sympathize with that situation because of the fact that the family unit is very, very important. I think that the family unit is something that both sides of the House respect and have advanced in a sense of trying to get this cleared so that there is access to the grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes there are unfortunate situations that happen in families, whether it is family break-up or the unfortunate loss of a loved one or mother or father, and the children are left with the other spouse. Situations overtake the family where some of the grandparents, they may be shuffled off to the side, if you want to call it, in a sense, because of a new direction that the family takes in the upbringing of the children, and the grandparents are then denied the access to see their grandchildren. They want to have the ability to see them, to have contact with them and to share a lot of the love that they still have for their grandchildren. So it becomes very, very difficult at times for the grandparents to have access.

I know there have been other speakers on this bill that have talked about the bill. In fact, members of the government have spoken on this bill, and in general terms I think that they have indicated that they are of the similar opinion that having access is very, very important. They have talked about maybe reintroducing the bill under their purview.

Mr. Speaker, I think that we have the opportunity now with this bill to look at it in a very serious manner. The government has had the time to look at the bill, to study the bill. I understand that even one of the members, the Member for Minto (Mr. Swan), had an opportunity to meet with the grandparents. He has expressed a concern because of not only his involvement as a member of the Legislature but as to his profession of being involved with the family courts as a lawyer and his exposure to a lot of the things that unfortunately happen with

families where you have family break-up and you have family situations that sometimes tear families apart. The children are left sometimes, unfortunately, as pawns. That is a very crude word to use in a sense, but they are used sometimes in settlements and in directions, and grandparents are the ones that unfortunately have to bear the brunt of not being able to have access to their children. It becomes a burden on them to, you know, see them.

As I mentioned, the Member for Minnedosa (Mrs. Rowat) has done a lot of research and consultation with grandparents' groups. We have met with them. We have had the opportunity to share some of their concerns and some of the stories, Mr. Speaker, really are very touching and sometimes very hard to listen to because of the concerns that grandparents have had in not being able to access their children. They are asking for the courts to give them that ability. We agree with that. We think that it is important that there is a vehicle or an access program available for them to get to see their grandchildren.

So, Mr. Speaker, we are of the opinion that this bill should be passed on to committee. We believe that, with the proposal of possibly rising in the next short while, we do have the opportunity to have the ability to take this to committee, to hear presenters, to bring it back and to pass it so that we do have the ability before the summer break and the summertime activities so that there can be ability to visit.

So, with those words, Mr. Speaker, I would recommend that this bill now go to committee. Thank you very much.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, I am speaking on this amendment because it is an issue with which I am familiar. When I was the official opposition critic for Family Services I met with the GRAND organization and with individual grandparents who were denied access to their grandchildren. I heard many sad stories from grandparents who could no longer visit or even have contact with their grandchildren.

We need to ask why does this happen. Why are grandparents denied access to their grandchildren? I believe that most often it is because the son or daughter of the grandparents is involved in an access dispute or possibly a maintenance dispute. The result is that access is denied to the ex-partner or ex-

spouse. In my view, these former partners are using their children to try to punish their former partner. The grandparents are then dragged into this situation in the same way and are also denied visiting rights.

I have a personal history of involvement in this issue. I think it is interesting and instructive and so I am going to share it in some detail. My summer appointment by the United Church in 1974 was as assistant chaplain at juvenile and family court in Toronto. The chaplain, the United Church minister, had a very successful program running which I continued when he was on holidays.

In summary, the program was to arrange supervised visits or access for children of estranged parents who could not work out their own arrangements. Social workers or lawyers or others who knew about this program would refer estranged parents to us. We would begin by asking one parent how many hours a week of access they desired. Then we would phone the ex-partner and ask that person, usually the custodial parent, how many hours a week he or she would agree to. This required numerous phone calls back and forth until a compromise was reached.

Frequently, the issue of maintenance would come up. The custodial parent would say that she, for example, did not want to allow any visits because her ex-partner was not paying maintenance for his children. We would reply that the two were not linked and that the father had a legal right to access or visits to his children. In fact, we would say that if she allowed access, then that would take away his rationale for not making maintenance payments.

Similarly, when we spoke to the children's father, he would say that he was not paying maintenance because he was denied access. We would tell him that he had a legal obligation to pay maintenance regardless of access, but if he paid maintenance, then his ex-wife could not use that as an excuse to deny access. Sometimes these suggestions were followed and sometimes they were not.

Once we had achieved agreement between the former partners on the number of hours and times of access, we would inform their lawyers. The reaction of the lawyers was typically, "My client agreed to what?" Then we would explain that this was a compromise and that both parties had agreed. The lawyers usually came on board fairly quickly

because this is a practice of law which is very difficult and time consuming. Family law lawyers frequently get phone calls when the access, if it existed in the first place, broke down because access was denied or a visit lasted too long and the children were not returned when they were supposed to. So the lawyers knew that if the new arrangement worked out, they would not be getting any phone calls, and this they appreciated. Once the lawyers agreed, I wrote up the agreement, and the estranged parents and I went to family court and presented it—

* (11:00)

Mr. Speaker: Order. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable Member for Burrows will have 12 minutes remaining.

The hour being 11 a.m., we will now move on to resolutions.

RESOLUTIONS—DRAW SELECTION

Res. 2—Wind Energy

Mr. Speaker: Resolution No. 2, in the name of the honourable Member for Brandon East on wind energy.

Mr. Drew Caldwell (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Radisson (Mr. Jha), the bill on wind energy. I am proud to speak for a few moments to this bill. The entire resolution I will read.

WHEREAS promoting and facilitating the orderly development of energy resources, I move, seconded by—[interjection] I have already done that—the Member for Radisson. [interjection] That is right.

I move, seconded by the Member for Radisson (Mr. Jha),

WHEREAS promoting and facilitating the orderly development of energy resources, ensuring a reliable and low cost supply of energy to consumers, and promoting conservation and efficient energy use in accordance with sustainable development principles are the objectives of the Province of Manitoba; and

WHEREAS the investment into a diversification of energy production—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Caldwell: Dispense?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Caldwell: –will ensure that these principles are upheld; and

WHEREAS the production of wind energy is one means whereby the diversification of energy will be ensured as it builds upon the province's current means of energy production, that is hydroelectricity; and

WHEREAS producing and utilizing wind energy in Manitoba is characterized as being both clean and renewable energy source and therefore in accordance with sustainable development principles; and

WHEREAS using wind energy requires new technologies, products and services could provide economic opportunities for Manitoba companies and new high-technology jobs and potentially enhance Manitoba's economic development; and

WHEREAS preliminary assessments are currently being conducted by Manitoba Hydro, so as to identify ideal sites to locate potential wind turbines for generating electricity.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to consider continuing to promote and facilitate the orderly development of energy resources by the investment in research, specifically research regarding wind energy production, so as to diversify the energy production in Manitoba in accordance with sustainable development principles.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Member for Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell), seconded by the honourable Member for Radisson (Mr. Jha),

WHEREAS promoting–

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of—okay, I will read it. *[interjection]* Order.

WHEREAS promoting and facilitating the orderly development of energy resources, ensuring a reliable and low cost supply of energy to consumers, and promoting conservation and efficient energy use in accordance with sustainable development principles are the objectives of the province of Manitoba;

WHEREAS the investment into a diversification of energy production will ensure that these principles are upheld; and

WHEREAS the production of wind energy is one means whereby the diversification of energy will be ensured as—*[interjection]* Order. You asked it to be read. You should be able to listen to it. *[interjection]* Order.

–it builds upon the province's current means of energy production, that is hydroelectricity; and *[interjection]* Order.

WHEREAS producing and utilizing wind energy in Manitoba is characterized as being both clean and renewable energy source and therefore in accordance with sustainable development principles; and

WHEREAS using wind energy requires new technologies, products and services could provide economic opportunities for Manitoba companies and new high-technology jobs and potentially enhance Manitoba's economic development; and

WHEREAS preliminary assessments are currently being conducted by Manitoba Hydro, so as to identify ideal sites to locate potential wind turbines for generating electricity. *[interjection]* Order.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to consider continuing to promote and facilitate the orderly development of energy resources by the investment in research, specifically research regarding wind energy production, so as to diversify the energy production in Manitoba in accordance with sustainable development principles.

Mr. Caldwell: Mr. Speaker, I think after that very eloquent restating of the bill, it really speaks for

itself. So I know that there are other colleagues of mine who wish to speak on this bill. I am very proud to be part of this resolution. I am proud to be a member of a government that is investing in alternative forms of energy. It is something that is very important for economic development in the province. It is something that is very important for keeping Hydro as being a leader in the world in terms of electricity provision. It assists in what I think is one of the greatest legacies and contributing to one of the greatest legacies in this province for all Manitobans, and that is our energy resources which far into the future will benefit all Manitobans.

Before I sit down I should remind everybody in this House as well as Manitobans that another resource that would have helped us at the dawn of the information technology age, at the beginning of a new revolution in telecommunications, something that was historically of benefit to all Manitobans and which is now lost to all Manitobans, the Manitoba Telecom system was sold off by members opposite in one of the most shameful acts that has ever taken place in this Chamber, Mr. Speaker.

So, with those words, with the restating, Mr. Speaker, of the resolution by yourself, with my initial stating of it, I will thank Jason Woywada for giving me the opportunity to do this resolution and allow my colleagues to speak. Thank you.

Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): I welcome the opportunity to put some comments on the record regarding this resolution, but I think we need to look at the track record and the past history of this government when it comes to energy in the province of Manitoba. We have seen many, many examples of how this government has mismanaged the energy resources that presently exist today, and I only have to make reference to Manitoba Hydro and the increase of Hydro rates by 10 percent in this last year under this government's watch.

Madam Acting Chair, we need to go back to the whole issue of the dividend that this government took from Manitoba Hydro and look at what the end result of that raid on Manitoba Hydro was. We have a government that was so desperate for money despite the significant increases in transfers that they

have received from the federal government, over a billion dollars more, and yet they forced and demanded that Manitoba Hydro turn over to them over \$200 million in order to satisfy their spending addiction. We saw as a result of that that Manitoba Hydro was forced to borrow the money to pay the government and on top of the \$203 million that they raided from Manitoba Hydro coffers, Madam Acting Speaker, they also doubled the water rental rates and the debt guarantee fee. We saw, as a result, Manitoba Hydro having to borrow over \$400 million and pay interest on that money so that this government could spend, and continue to spend, out of control.

* (11:10)

Well, we know, also, that when they took that dividend, the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro (Mr. Chomiak), the Premier (Mr. Doer), the head of Manitoba Hydro stood up and said, "We will not need to increase rates." And even though there was the threat of a drought at that time, Madam Acting Speaker, this government stood time after time after time in this House and indicated that they would not have to raise rates as a result of a drought, that Manitoba Hydro was always prepared and there would be no increase in rates as a result of a drought and that Hydro could manage this raid.

Well, Madam Acting Speaker, what happened? What happened? We went through a very significant drought, and we found then that Manitoba Hydro said, "Oops, we do not have enough money to cover the results of the devastating drought. We are going to have to go to the Public Utilities Board and raise Hydro rates."

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Korzeniowski): Order, please. I am sure that the honourable member is going to come around to a little more relevancy to the—I trust that you are going to work this back, I think.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Well, Madam Acting Speaker, this is very relevant to the resolution that is in front of us, because the resolution, in its first WHEREAS, indicates "WHEREAS promoting and facilitating the orderly development of energy resources, ensuring a reliable and low-cost supply of energy to consumers and promoting conservation and efficient energy use in accordance with sustainable development principles are the objectives of the province of Manitoba."

Well, Madam Acting Speaker, when we talk about promoting and facilitating the orderly development of energy resources, ensuring a reliable and low-cost supply of energy to consumers, we have not seen the reliable and low-cost supply of energy to consumers over the past under this government. When they arbitrarily raided Manitoba Hydro and forced the cost of energy to the ratepayers in the province of Manitoba to increase by 10 percent over one year.

Madam Acting Speaker, this is very relevant to the first WHEREAS in the resolution that has been put forward today. We had many warnings that this government and its wrong-headed policy to take money from Manitoba Hydro has led to what we are seeing today. No longer is the cost of hydro as low as it should be, but we are seeing people on fixed incomes today having to pay 10% more on their Hydro bills as a direct result of actions that this government has taken and policies that they have implemented that have harmed the bottom line of our public utility, which is Manitoba Hydro.

Madam Acting Chair, there were many, many articles in the paper, many, many questions asked of this government, but they pushed ahead and did what they thought they should be doing, and as an end result, Manitoba Hydro ratepayers are having to take more money out of their pockets to feed the spending habits of this out-of-control government, this mismanaged government.

I believe that Manitobans will remember the way they have been treated. Also, when we talk about sustainability and we talk about environmentally friendly development of our energy resources, we only have to go back to what happened with previous Hydro development in the North.

I have had the opportunity to speak to people in the North who have indicated very clearly that they have concerns on how this government is pressing ahead with Hydro development in the North when they have not addressed the issues from the devastation that those communities faced as a result of former Hydro development.

Madam Acting Chair, many, many in those communities are saying that Hydro and the government today have not addressed the issues that we have. They are looking to force and move ahead

without consultation, without addressing the issues that have been raised by many northerners.

I know members of the New Democratic Party, those that are sitting on the government side of the House today, may laugh at the plight of those that are living in communities where there is 90% unemployment, where they do not have the ability to provide for their families on a day-to-day basis as a result of the devastation that they faced through previous Hydro development. It is not a laughing matter. It is a very serious issue. These people feel disenfranchised. They do not believe that this government is listening to what they are saying. They do not believe that their issues have been addressed.

We have many, many individuals living in poverty today as a result of the significant flooding which changed their ability to work and to make a living and to provide food on the table for their families. Madam Acting Chair, this is a very serious issue. It is an issue that many, many northerners and many communities have raised with this government. They do not believe that the process that is being followed on new energy development—

Point of Order

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): On a point of order, the member should know that this resolution is about wind development and should recognize that the good wind farm development sites are in southern Manitoba. There are no good ones up north that we are aware of at this point. If she could confine her comments to relevant issues here like the development of wind power in Manitoba where the best sites are in southern Manitoba in Tory constituencies, actually.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Korzeniowski): The Member for River East, on the same point of order.

Mrs. Mitchelson: On the same point of order, again, this shows the arrogance of a government who, because of past Hydro development under their watch, many, many Manitobans are feeling like their concerns have not been addressed.

When we talk about future energy development and we talk about this government's plans and initiatives, we have to look to the past and we have

to discuss seriously what Manitobans have said about the direction that—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Korzeniowski): Order. It is my opinion that the member from Elmwood did have a point of order, and I would again encourage the Member for River East to please keep her comments more relevant to the issue.

* * *

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Korzeniowski): The Member for Inkster, on the same point of order.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Deputy Speaker, I was listening fairly closely to what the member from River East was talking about in debate, and I do believe that she was relevant. She was talking about energy, and this whole resolution is about energy, Madam Deputy Speaker.

* (11:20)

I guess I would challenge the ruling of the Chair that she has made because I believe that she was absolutely relevant.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Korzeniowski): The Chair has been challenged.

Voice Vote

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Korzeniowski): All those in favour of the ruling of the Chair, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Korzeniowski): All those against, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Korzeniowski): In my view, the Yeas have it.

* * *

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Korzeniowski): The honourable Member for River East, to continue her remarks.

Formal Vote

Mrs. Mitchelson (River East): Thank you, Madam Chair, but with all due respect, I would like to challenge your ruling.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Korzeniowski): The ruling of the Chair has been challenged and sustained.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I would like a recorded vote, please.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Korzeniowski): A recorded vote has been requested. Call in the members.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

Mr. Speaker: Order. A division has been called, and under our Manitoba rules for private members' hour, I just wanted to read the rule out to all honourable members, which is 23(4): "A division requested during a Private Members' Hour must be deferred to the next private members' hour. At that time, it will be the first item of business."

So we will defer this vote to the next private members' hour and the honourable Member for River East has the floor and she has three minutes remaining.

* (11:30)

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, I just want to read some comments into the record that have been made by those individuals who have felt that Manitoba Hydro and the government have not properly addressed past damages from the Churchill River Diversion. They are using tactics that are distasteful to claimants who are looking for just claim payment from this government and from Manitoba Hydro. They have stated very clearly that they do not believe that this government, when it comes to energy development in the province, takes into consideration the needs of those who have been disenfranchised.

Mr. Speaker, I listened very carefully to those who told their stories about what devastation has happened as a result of this government's unwillingness to deal in a fair and appropriate fashion with them and with their communities. We have many today in Manitoba that as a result of this government's energy policies are unemployed, have lost hope for any opportunity in the future. Unless this government comes to the table along with Manitoba Hydro in a fair and appropriate way to deal with the issues of these individuals, they will, in fact, not be

able to move forward with their lives to be able to have the opportunity that they have been denied as a result of the lack of negotiations, the lack of ability for this government to sit down with people in those communities and make amends.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to indicate that we have seen a disaster by this government when it comes to policy on energy and energy development. I know that those who are involved in the wind farming initiatives that could do very good things for communities within our province, we will have to watch very carefully as they negotiate and work with this government because we have seen the track record of this government. Thank you.

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): I would like to put a few words on record regarding the resolution from the Member for Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell) on the wind farm in St. Leon and the wind energy development process in this province that we are espousing.

I would like to take exception to some of the words, though, as spoken by the member from River East, particularly when she suggests that there is widespread disagreement with our energy policy in northern Manitoba. I would point out, Mr. Speaker, that there were some negatives of the Churchill Diversion. There is no doubt about it. There was fallout, and there was not total agreement with the Northern Flood Agreement.

But I would point out that the proposed high-level dam under the Tories before Schreyer was elected would have created much, much, much more damage. Mr. Schreyer, in fact, can be quoted as saying, "I was halfway up the mountain when I was elected in 1969. I had a choice to go with the Tories high-level dam which would have created enormous damage or go with a much lower-level dam which is eventually what we did."

So I think, in fact, that the Member for River East is not being entirely correct when she says that we are responsible for major damage as if they would not have created major damage. Their damage would have been much, much worse. I am not trying to whitewash this. There were some and there still are some problems.

I am actually quite happy that the member from River East is concerned about the job rate in northern

Manitoba. There are communities where 90 percent of the people are unemployed, and that is why we are building the Wuskwatim Dam, partially to help northern people. That is why we are trying to reach an agreement with Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation, Nelson House. That is why they have a share in the dam, so that northern people, Aboriginal people can have a stake in that economy, in that creation of energy.

I do not understand why the Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) would suggest that that is a negative. It would be very positive for Aboriginal people and northern people in the North. It creates jobs, but, back to the point of the resolution. I was listening to an environmental engineer that was on the Discovery channel the other day. Her name was Dr. Cristina Archer. She is an environmental engineer at Stanford University. They were doing an interview with her and she apparently had done some major research on the availability of wind power, globally. She was rather surprised because she thought that when she was checking out whether or not there was enough wind power globally to make a difference to the system, in other words, if we needed wind power, would it supply half of what we need or a quarter of what we need, which is what she anticipated.

She came to the startling conclusion that there is 35 times as much wind power out there as we actually can use right now, which was rather a startling discovery. We could harness that if we were to be very aggressive in using that wind power, using present-day technology. Mr. Speaker, I have seen a number of wind power turbines in Belgium, and I have seen them in Holland and in Germany. They are very workable, they are state of the art, and they are getting better all the time. As the technology improves, the cost per unit goes down.

Also, I would like to point out that they used to have half-a-megawatt turbines. Now, they are up to, I think, at least two megawatt turbines, or even three, an honourable member says. It is clean energy, it is green energy, it is environmentally friendly energy, it is renewable energy, and I think that this province is very blessed to have that kind of availability of free power.

Now I know that, because we are also blessed with lots of water, usually, our hydro power is cheaper, and that is why we are building Wuskwatim

and Keeyask and, eventually, Conawapa, but it is useful to have a back-up system, to have the insurance, and we do have that insurance when we have wind power. Sometimes you have dry years, and wind power could help us out. Even if the years are not that dry, it is still good to have that insurance, that back-up. We know that water usually flows, unless it is a very, very dry year, whereas wind does not always blow. In fact, Doctor Archer said on average wind blows 13 percent of the time. So if you wanted wind power to be more effective, you would have to hook up different wind farms, so when the wind blows in one region, you could use it when it is not blowing in another region. So that is one way you could get around the problem of the unreliability of wind, the fact that it does not always blow when you want it to blow.

Anyway, this province is very blessed to have both wind power, and, in fact, we are one of the best in Canada for wind power, and also to have hydro power. The 99-megawatt project at St. Leon is a huge project. It is actually half of what the proposed Wuskwatim Dam will eventually deliver, and that is kind of interesting. In other words, if we build two St. Leons, it will be the equivalent of a dam.

Sixty-three Vesta wind turbines are slated to be built. Some of them are already built at 1.65 megawatts per unit. It is an exciting project. It expands our renewable energy portfolio. It diversifies our energy mix and thus our financial risks are also diminished, particularly in dry years. It puts dollars into rural Manitoba, not only in construction and in maintenance and employment, but also the farmers that rent the land and so on.

As I said before, it is clean. It is renewable energy. Manitoba is becoming a leader in this field, and I commend our government for taking this direction. I commend the member from Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell) for bringing forth this resolution and I urge all members in this House to support it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

* (11:40)

Mr. Glen Cummings (Ste. Rose): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I want to put a few comments on the record around this resolution. My concern is based on the fact that I am all in favour of looking at alternative energy sources, but I do believe—if I were my friends from the NDP caucus, I would hold my

applause, because there is an honesty factor that the public, I think, believes that we should consider. That is, right now, we are in an enviable position in terms of expenditure of dollars. Under the Kyoto initiative, we can attract dollars from federal investment into this province, and I say fine. If the federal government wishes to put investment in that area, that is appropriate or that is in their choice. But there is I am afraid an awful lot of people out there who do not truly understand or perhaps they do not care that it does require a fair bit of intervention to put wind power in conjunction with electrical power.

Mr. Conrad Santos, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

I will not forget that when I asked the current president of Manitoba Hydro how it would be that seeing as how hydro power had a history, or pardon me, wind power had a history of being a little bit more expensive in terms of when you finally get it in place and you have the switching capacity and so on, how it would be that Hydro would go down that route, he said, "Don't worry, I'll be signing the deal," the implication being that he would not sign a bad deal for Manitoba Hydro. I accept his word although "trust me" leaves me feeling a little cold, Mr. Deputy Chair.

So let us have some up-front discussion about investments of this nature. It seems to me that nuclear energy has been examined and thrown out and re-examined and thrown out and considered many different times, particularly again in this province. Manitoba seems to be the beacon and/or the lightning rod, if you will, for choices around energy. That is probably because we have Manitoba Hydro and because we have all of the available, already developed and future development opportunities for electricity generated by water power.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as we move into what is predicted to be, and I think undoubtedly will be, an energy shortage future on the North American continent, looking at these alternatives is worthwhile. But the government of the day needs to be called to attention, not only on the matter that I just raised but on a second matter of policy. It is directly related to a lot of the type of land that people in the area I represent have to live and work with and that is Crown lands. Government needs to have a policy in what it is doing around Crown lands because if it truly is looking to expand opportunities in this area, some of the significant opportunity lands on Crown

land and some of it lands on Crown land that is already under lease. There are people who have now and are second- and third-generation leaseholders of these Crown properties that are excellent generation sites for wind power.

I am assured by the government that they are working on this, but I think it bears and I will use this opportunity to put it on the record, that they need to move expeditiously in this area or the very opportunities that they are promoting and are supporting may be lost. I look to the government, and I say that one of the things that is available out there is a compromise, is that yes, you must not be setting precedent because someone has a lease on a piece of property that it may benefit from capital expenditure. On the other hand, if we truly believe in the developmental opportunity in this province, perhaps we need to be more generous with the sales of Crown land. I find that the sales of Crown land under this government have just about dried up. I find that really troubling, but that in itself is not the issue. The issue is where some of the Crown lands are situated and have wind power generating potential because of their locations.

The government has the final say. The public certainly will acknowledge that, but I want to say on behalf of my constituents that those who are holders of leases on those Crown lands, in some cases back to homesteader days, they never had an incentive to buy the land when they could lease it, but it is very much part of their ongoing operations. It is very much an important part of their lifestyle. So they start to take an ownership protective approach to how they manage that land. That is good for wildlife; it is good for resources. But if the government cannot develop a policy that recognizes in some fashion that they have a fiduciary feeling of responsibility about this land, it may be more difficult than it should be for the government to develop some of this potential power.

I promised my colleagues I would keep my comments short, Mr. Speaker, and I will leave it there.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am very pleased to speak to this resolution brought forward by the Member for Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell).

I want to say at the outset that in this particular project in St. Leon, we have a group who are

spending \$190 million in construction on this project. There are 280 construction jobs, there are 25 long-term operational jobs. There are local farmers, the Member for Carman's (Mr. Rocan) local farmers are going to earn \$10 million in rents for the turbines.

You know, when we opened the site a few months ago, it was a very windy day in southern Manitoba, very appropriate, and there was snow on the ground. The Member for Carman, he was beaming like an expectant father. He was rushing up the hill. You know they had the opening ceremony at the top of a hill and he was up there so fast, I did not think he could run that fast. He was up there for the announcement and the pictures. This was his day in the sun. There is a member who deserves a longer term than maybe his party is going to allow him as an MLA because he is in tune with his residents. He is working for his constituents.

The members are up here criticizing the government, criticizing the member for a resolution that, in fact, benefits their constituencies. If you understand the wind power studies, you know that the good sites are in southern Manitoba. There are no good sites that I am aware of in northern Manitoba. They are all in the south. They are in the members' constituencies so the members should pay attention to that I think.

I would like to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this is a very good project and I think that we should be supporting local development. We should be supporting wind power. Wind power is a developing energy source and it is something that you see widely now in Europe. You see in Alberta where they have 50 percent of the capacity mainly around the Pincher Creek area. As a matter of fact, they had an early development in there in the 1990s. Where was the Manitoba government in those days? No, they were too busy selling off Manitoba Hydro—*[interjection]* Sorry, Manitoba Telephone System and trying to ensure their re-election rather than developing wind farms at that time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we could have been 10 years ahead of where we are now. The St. Leon's development could have been opened 10 years ago under the Tories, but it was not. It was opened under our minister, under our government. The members also do not recognize that, in fact, this is the first time Manitoba Hydro has agreed to buy a significant amount of power from a private company. This

project is not being developed by Manitoba Hydro. This is being developed by a private consortium. Where are the members? The members should be standing up touting the fact that we have private development in this province, but they are not doing that.

Manitoba Hydro is developing, is putting forward the services to identify the sites, to test the wind, to run the power poles to the site. It is doing its part and the private sector are involved here developing this. Now I personally would encourage Manitoba Hydro for future developments to be doing them themselves, but I recognize that they want to take advantage of expertise in the area and they have developed a private partnership in this particular situation.

But I can tell you that in Alberta where you have deregulated power, power there sells for as high as \$72 a kilowatt hour. I saw a site last year in Pincher Creek where, in fact, the private owner, the private farmer has got an eight-year payout. So his turbine which cost a million dollars, a one-point-megawatt turbine is going to be paid out in eight years, a million dollar payout in eight years, and this turbine is going to last 20, 25 years. So this guy is going to be a millionaire on his wind power alone.

* (11:50)

So I think the economics are there, even though the cost of power is, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, only in the \$5 and \$6 range, but the point is that this power can be sold internationally at much higher rates than we are getting here. So I like the economics of the wind industry. I want to also tell you, too, that we should be developing the construction of the components right here in Manitoba.

In Saskatchewan, in their Gull Lake project, their 99-kilowatt hour project that is being developed right now, the same size as the one we are developing, they are actually building the towers in, I believe, Saskatoon. Hitachi is doing it, and in our case we are still importing all the product from Denmark, the blades, and I think we are getting the towers maybe from North or South Dakota. But we should be looking forward to developing that right here, you know, in Portage la Prairie, or Brandon, or somewhere. We should be developing the capacity here, because who knows where we can go with this at the end of the day. I think there are only three

sites, good sites, been identified at the moment, but I am sure that, if we work at it, over time we will develop better, more sites and, as the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen) said, the technology has drastically improved.

We are now up to three-megawatt machines, but I think the ones that are up now, are usually about one and a half megawatts. I was in one, through one last year in Edgeley, South Dakota and Highmore, and they had the big ones there. They had the 1.5 megawatt, the million-dollar machine sites, not the little guys that you still see in Pincher Creek in a lot of areas, but the technology, you know, has developed a lot over the years and the fact is that I can say now that it is there. There is no question about it now.

The price of power is not going to go down. Long term, the price of power is not going to go down, it is only going to go up and so this is an area that I think we have wasted a little too much time. The Tories wasted 11 years, we played catch up here. We are in the field and they should be supporting these developments. They should follow the Member for Carman (Mr. Rocan) and start working in their own areas to get more of these sites, not standing here criticizing what we are doing and just making negative comments about the government.

Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): I find it interesting, listening to the members opposite regarding their own resolution. First of all, it appears that they are filibustering their own resolution. However, I think I want to look at the resolution here. What I find interesting is that they are talking about, in their WHEREAS, the second sentence there, or line, rather, is "low cost supply of energy."

Now, I could speak for a long time about that one, where this was a government who said that they would not raise the price of hydro. What did they do? First of all, they stole, it sort of reminds me a little bit of the Gomery, very close to same amount of money, around \$260 million from Manitoba Hydro, they took out of there—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Dyck: Well, okay, it hits a little bit of a sore nerve, does it not? But that is the point, taking

money out of Manitoba Hydro, then they have a resolution here that is going to stay low cost.

What is happening to the Hydro rates? Under this government, what is happening to Hydro rates? The Hydro rates are going up, sort of the same promise that was made towards tuition freeze, right? What happened there? You do not fund. My goodness, and then you have got to eat your words. Well, you would not want to use that term, would you?

The other comment I wanted to make, and I want to allow the Member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Cullen) to make a few comments as well, but the other comment I want to make is I am actually interested in the fact that we have a government here who will allow and will partner with private business. This is very interesting. In fact, the member who just spoke from Elmwood indicated that they were preparing to sell Manitoba Hydro. He said it was a slip of the tongue. It just shows what is in the minds of the members opposite.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do, though, want to talk about the benefits of wind energy and especially the fact that there are a number of these windmills that are being put up in my constituency in Pembina. In fact, it is the reeve of the R.M. of Pembina, or he is currently the reeve, but they are putting up several of these wind farms on his property. Certainly, as an individual, he is benefiting by that, as is the R.M.

But the other correction that we need to put on the record is the fact that this government is not putting money into these wind farms. This is all private money that is going into there. So they are trying to honour the fact that they are the ones that were the big initiators on this. It was these companies who were out there doing all the research. So, is it good that they are buying the energy, that Manitoba Hydro is buying the energy from these wind farms? Absolutely. But we need to have the correct information on the record.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just want to conclude by saying that, certainly, when we can look at other sources of energy, that is positive. We need to do that.

However, I just thought of one other point I need to put on the record, and that is the ethanol, the way

this government continued to tout ethanol. Where is it at? Tell me, where are all the new projects they were going to have? *[interjection]* Well, yes, another press announcement. I cannot believe it. So, anyway, they keep going on and on. There is a lot of wind that is being exerted by some of the comments that are being put on the record by the members opposite. However, I believe that we need to look at other sources of energy. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Turtle Mountain): I too just want to put a couple of comments on the record. I certainly echo some of the sentiments from my colleague from Pembina. Clearly, the \$200-million investment is from private sources, and we certainly were happy that the government at least did recognize that there can be some significant developments in rural Manitoba in partnering with some of these private companies.

Our hope is that the government of the day does not stand in the road of future developments with this particular industry. We do believe that there is certainly opportunity for further development in wind energy. I know I have people in my particular constituency who are looking at development. Now, we do know that there is money there. We do have private companies who are willing to come to invest in Manitoba again. The point of the day is let us hope that Manitoba Hydro and the Manitoba government do not impede that development.

We do believe it can be a great economic benefit for rural Manitoba. Again, the important thing is that the government does not impede that particular process. We think it is important.

Of course, part of this whole process with Manitoba Hydro is some kind of a secretive deal was made with the private corporations. To our knowledge, we have not seen the contract for the purchase of this hydro. If we would just know what kind of a deal was struck with Manitoba Hydro and some of these private individuals, it might give some more private companies a chance to do some expansion in terms of economic activity in Manitoba. So we think it is very important that these discussions take place.

We do have some concern about the mismanagement of this government. Obviously, we are seeing that on a daily basis. We have so many

issues to raise with the government of the day. Again, we are really concerned that the government of the day will stand in the road of economic progress in Manitoba.

Clearly, I know the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) is coming through the growing pains of reorganizing her department. We do want to see some economic development options take place in rural Manitoba. We hope that she will move forward. It has been a very painful and long process in terms of getting people in place for this new program. Clearly, we do agree with economic development in rural Manitoba. But let us get the people and the staff in place to make that work. Obviously, the wind energy technologies can certainly play a big role in what we think is a good economic development in Manitoba.

Again, Mr. Speaker, the member from Pembina also talked about the ethanol activity. We have had many promises over the years on ethanol, and it just has not come to fruition yet. So, again, we encourage

the government to look at all types of energy options for Manitoba.

* (12:00)

Mr. Speaker, I think it would be wonderful for the government to really review what they have got here on paper and actually take it to heart and make some progress in that regard. We talked about energy rates in Manitoba. Just last night we met with Healthy Kids. There was a 10% increase in Hydro rates, and they were significantly impacting rural communities in terms of their recreation facilities. So it is very important that we keep competitive rates in Manitoba and look at some resources—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is next before the House, the honourable Member for Turtle Mountain will have 12 minutes remaining.

The hour being twelve noon, this Deputy Speaker is leaving the Chair with the understanding that the House will reconvene at 1:30 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday June 2, 2005

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