

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

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The Honourable George Hickes
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Eighth Legislature

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ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	N.D.P.
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DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
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DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
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more casinos, we need a long-term, economic plan and scrap any idea for building new casinos in Manitoba or in Brandon?

Mr. Speaker: I just want to remind members when referring to ministers, the proper titles are available to all members and it is the honourable Minister for Gaming, not minister for gambling. It is the honourable Minister for Gaming (Mr. Sale). *[interjection]*

Order. If members wish to have titles to ministers or constituencies of members, we will be happy to supply them for any member who is unsure of what the titles or constituencies are for members.

Mr. Doer: I would ask the member again to perhaps do a little homework before he comes into the Chamber and understand the difference between the Minister responsible for the Lotteries Corporation (Mr. Smith) and the Minister responsible for Gaming (Mr. Sale) and the Acting Minister of Gaming. Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, he could address the question to the proper minister in the future.

Point of Order

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

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Official Opposition House Leader): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. It is one thing for the Premier to scold us as to how we pose our questions, but the reality is that we pose the questions to the Government. Recently we have seen that the Premier has taken it upon himself to be the minister of all things and stands up on many issues that are asked of his Government. I suggest that if his minister is not capable of answering the question, then at least he should answer the question and not simply admonish this side of the House.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised—the honourable Government House Leader, on the same point of order?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I just remind the House it is up to the Government to decide who answers questions. That is not a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable Official Opposition House Leader, I would like to take this opportunity to remind all

honourable members that questions, when they are put through the Chair to the Government, it is entirely up to the Government which minister they choose to answer the questions.

Wuskwatim Dam Export Sales

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I table today testimony from Mr. Ken Adams, vice-president of Manitoba Hydro, before the Minnesota State Senate Jobs, Energy and Community Development Committee on March 12 of this year.

He said about Wuskwatim, "In fact, by the time we get this generating station in place, we will not be in a position to sell as much energy throughout our export customers as we do today." Mr. Adams said explicitly that Wuskwatim is not designed for export sales. It is designed solely to address rising energy consumption in Manitoba. I ask the Minister of Energy, Science and Technology (Mr. Sale) to confirm what the vice-president of Manitoba Hydro said with respect to the Wuskwatim dam. Is this dam being built solely for the purpose of the internal needs of Manitoba?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): I will take this specific question as notice. *[interjection]* Well, Mr. Speaker, okay, I apologize because I know you cannot take it as notice and then answer so I will answer it on the next question.

Mr. Speaker: Just a reminder to all members or ministers, when taking a question as notice, you cannot use a preamble or post-amble. When taking a question as notice, there is no preamble to or post-amble after.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Adams' testimony in Minnesota was quite clear. He talked about correcting what he referred to as the misconception that Manitoba has plans to sell new power to the United States. But, strangely, Mr. Speaker, three days later, he testified before Manitoba's Clean Environment Commission to say that Wuskwatim dam is being primarily built for the export market to increase exports of Manitoba electricity to the United States.

I would ask the Premier, which is it. Is Wuskwatim dam being built for the internal market of Manitoba or for the export market?

Mr. Doer: Just in general terms, first of all, we are pleased that all the opposition to the second Northern States Power deal, the Xcel agreement, have now been cleared and we have confirmation of the \$1.7-billion sale to Minnesota. I am pleased the member has raised that because that is truly very important news for Manitoba. Secondly, Mr. Speaker, the Northern States Power sale, which was opposed by members opposite, and the Limestone Dam had a component of the construction dedicated to export sales to the United States and a portion of the sale to deal with increased demand in Manitoba.

There have been three measures to deal with demand in Manitoba initiated by the hydro utility. Mr. Speaker, one has been the conservation measure for the 250 megawatts, the virtual dam that has conserved energy. The second measure is to introduce more renewable energy such as wind power, which has not quite concluded. Thirdly, the Wuskwatim dam will equal one third of that, one third of the total 750 megawatts to deal with the future needs of Manitoba.

It will mean that the gap of exports and domestic use will not be reduced in terms of domestic use as demand goes up.

Mr. Gerrard: I table further transcripts and testimony, Mr. Speaker, showing very clearly that Mr. Adams was saying one thing on March 12, and he was saying completely the opposite on March 15. I would ask the Premier, given that we are in the middle of the Wuskwatim dam review right now, that this is a critical process very important to the province of Manitoba, how can this process have integrity when the chief spokesperson for Manitoba Hydro before the Clean Environment Commission is saying so diametrically opposing opinions so close together.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to the member opposite that the matter of Wuskwatim is before a quasi-judicial body. It is not the practice of a member of this Legislature to necessarily take views that the quasi-judicial body has been charged with taking. We have been very careful in our answers since the matter has gone to the panel not to prejudice the findings.

I think the Clean Environment Commission and the lawyers, there are lots of lawyers at the Clean Environment Commission hired by lots of people

who are opposed to Wuskwatim and in favour of Wuskwatim, will be able to identify in testimony, in cross-examination, the point raised by the member opposite. I understand what the two issues are in terms of domestic versus export sales because I understand it is the issue of, over the next 10 years, what the gap will be between domestic sales and export sales. I am sure that the Clean Environment Commission and the quasi-judicial body which is made up of members from the PUB will be equipped to deal with it.

I am surprised the member opposite would have so little respect for a quasi-judicial body that he feels he has to turn this Legislature into that forum.

* (14:40)

Red River Floodway Expansion Impact of Ground Water

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Water Stewardship. Recently I raised in this House constituent concerns regarding the potential effects a deeper floodway channel could have on ground water in the areas of St. Clements, Springfield and East St. Paul.

My question is to the minister: Will the minister update the House regarding the design of the floodway that will address these concerns?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Water Stewardship): This is a very important question. I credit the Member for Selkirk for having raised it.

When the original floodway was built, there were significant impacts on ground water. When we announced the floodway, in fact, when the Premier (Mr. Doer) made the announcement, we made it very clear that, in addition to focussing on improved flood protection for Winnipeg and parts of the Red River Valley, Mr. Speaker, we would give prime focus to protecting against potential ground water impacts and mitigating against them.

I am pleased to report to the House that the design now from the engineers indicates that we may not have to go more than two feet deep if at all. That is going to have a very significant benefit in terms of minimizing impact on ground water. We will also be setting up a mitigation fund through the Floodway Authority.