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CLEAN ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION

Wuskwatim Dam

Consultations—Manitoba Métis Federation Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier with respect to the Wuskwatim dam. It is my understanding that the Manitoba Métis Federation is indicating that, to date, there has been no meaningful and proper consultation, nor accommodation, nor agreements with the Métis nation.

The approach the Government is taking is totally contrary to the recommendation in the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry commission report. I ask the Premier to indicate why he and his Government have failed to consult with the Manitoba Métis Federation in regard to the Wuskwatim dam.

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Well, your question is wrong. We have been consulting with the Métis Federation. The question is completely wrong. Consultation does not mean that whatever people ask for, demand or request, we can agree to.

I understand there were various proposals, financial proposals, in place. I understand a significant amount of money has been assigned for training of Métis people for that project. I am not sure whether we have agreement or not. I will let the minister respond, but we were very close as I understand it. The statement that we did not consult is absolutely, patently wrong.

That does not mean to say when you consult with people that you agree to everything that they request or propose. We have a responsibility on the other side to make sure we are spending wisely, but we want to spend fairly with Métis people. I am confident we will do that.

Mr. Gerrard: Discussion about some training dollars does not represent full consultation. I have on good authority from the president of the Manitoba Métis Federation, both in his comments at the forum on February 23 and his personal comments to me yesterday, that the Manitoba Métis Federation has not been fully consulted.

The AJIC says specifically that any future major natural resource developments not proceed unless and until agreements are reached with the Aboriginal people in communities in the region, including the Manitoba Métis Federation and its locals and regionals. I ask the Premier why he has failed to engage in full and proper consultations with the Manitoba Métis Federation.

Mr. Doer: Our ministers have had full consultations with the Métis Federation. That does not mean, Mr. Speaker, that there is a full agreement. We have a responsibility to make sure that we are spending money fairly. If there is a discrepancy between what we have proposed, which is significant, and what people have proposed to us, which might be more significant, we will try to close that gap. We are now in the process of trying to close that gap.

Consultation to us, and I am not talking about the Métis, but it does not mean to us, it might mean to the member opposite that you go to a meeting and whatever people demand or propose, that you say yes to it immediately, even if you cannot afford it. That is not consultation. We are closing the gap, but we will do it in a fair way for the Métis people, and we will do it in a fair way for the people of Manitoba.

Mr. Gerrard: The president of the Manitoba Métis Federation has made it quite clear that what has taken place today does no way fulfil the requirements of the AJIC recommendations. There have been numerous problems already with the environmental assessment of the Wuskwatim dam. The process has been changed several times. There has been inadequate process in terms of not including a federal panel.

I would ask the Premier why he is proceeding in this fashion. Why is he failing to handle the whole process in an adequate fashion which recognizes groups like the Manitoba Métis Federation? Why has he failed,

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and why does he put at risk the Wuskwatim dam process and puts in place a procedure which may result in delays because of court challenges and legal challenges because he has not done his job properly?

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, I know the Liberals are opposed to any development of Hydro. Of course, they called Limestone, which produced some \$3 billion in revenue with the new agreement that has been reached, they call it lemonstone, and of course, that is why they have done so well in the North.

Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is that we have consulted with all organizations. I ask the member to be very careful. There is a quasi-judicial process in place and the member can stand up here and say this may happen, that may happen, this may happen. He used "may" three times in his question.

Let us let the quasi-judicial body make the definite decisions as they are entitled to do under the law. The member opposite should stop interfering in that quasi-judicial process.

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