

Second Session – Forty-First Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
Standing Committee
on
Legislative Affairs

Chairperson
Mrs. Sarah Guillemard
Constituency of Fort Richmond

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I'll just have to write more op-eds to the Free Press.

Mr. Fletcher: The election commitment made by the Conservatives was to look at creating a third-like, another entity. At no time was there an election commitment to create a Crown corporation, but that is—so there is surprise. The—in regard to consultation, don't worry about it. This—I actually worry about it, because this is my first opportunity to speak on this, and I am very grateful for that opportunity. So I share the issue about consultation, especially with the engineering community. One could argue that it was not listening to the engineers in the first place that led to the challenges we have today.

Your main point in your presentation was growing the economy. That is really it. Like, what is the point if we can't grow the economy? Sir, are you aware of any economy in human history that has grown—as we said we would do in our platform, grow the economy—that has reduced its electricity consumption?

Or—and separately, are you aware of any other situation where supply far 'exceeds'—exceeds demand? Usually, you would expect prices to go down, but the cost is going through the roof. The—and here we are adding more cost to run, apparently, a Crown corporation that will fund another Crown corporation to compete with the first Crown corporation. Perhaps it is time to reflect on that legislation.

What's your thoughts?

Mr. Woodford: I don't know any situation that you say, but I do want to say that there's an interesting situation in California where it's getting too much solar and it's causing problems, but that's a different subject and I don't want to discuss it at this stage.

* (19:40)

Madam Chairperson: Thank you very much for your time and your presentation.

That concludes the list of presenters I have before me. Are there any other persons in attendance who wish to make a presentation?

Seeing none, that concludes public presentations.

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Madam Chairperson: In what order does the committee wish to proceed with clause-by-clause consideration of the bills?

Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris): Numerical order.

Madam Chairperson: Is that the will of the committee? *[Agreed]*

During the consideration of a bill, the preamble, the enacting clause and the title are postponed until all other clauses have been considered in their proper order. Also, if there is agreement from the committee, the Chair will call clauses in blocks that conform to pages, with the understanding that we will stop at any particular clause or clauses where members may have comments, questions or amendments to propose.

Is that agreed? *[Agreed]*

We will now proceed with Bill 19. Does the minister responsible for Bill 19 have an opening statement?

Mr. Schuler: Yes, Madam Chair.

Committee members, ladies and gentlemen, I am pleased to be here to discuss Bill 19, The Efficiency Manitoba Act. I would like to thank the presenters for joining us today to share their perspectives and opinions.

Bill 19 will provide the authority to establish a new demand-side management Crown corporation to deliver energy efficiency initiatives in Manitoba. In June 2014, the Public Utilities Board NFAT, or needs-for-and-alternatives-to panel, recommended that Manitoba Hydro be divested of DSM responsibilities and the Government of Manitoba establish an independent, arm's-length entity to deliver government-mandated DSM targets. Adopting these recommendations of the PUB's NFAT panel is part of the mandate provided to me as Minister of Crown Services as outlined in the May 2016 mandate letter from the Premier of Manitoba (Mr. Pallister).

At a very high level, the new DSM Crown corporation, facilitated through The Efficiency Manitoba Act, will be independent of Manitoba Hydro and at arm's length to government. It will be managed by a board of directors consisting of up to nine directors; it will be required to meet legislated savings targets for both natural gas and electricity, and it will be accountable for performance through the Public Utilities Board oversight and would be subject to ongoing financial auditing by the Auditor General.

The focus of Bill 19 is on electricity and natural gas, but contains provisions that allow for the expansion into water and transportation demand-side

management, referred to as DSM, if desired in the future. Once in place, a new, more effective and streamlined DSM corporation with the sole purpose of delivering energy savings to Manitobans will help. It will reduce the impact of future rate increases; it will defer the need for expensive, new energy supplies; it will create new employment and business opportunities and will improve the competitiveness of Manitoba businesses.

Bill 19 will ensure that the new DSM Crown corporation will be driven towards a performance-orientated approach and a culture that can deliver more value to 'manidobans' as we invest in clean growth opportunities.

I look forward to consideration of this important legislation by this committee. Thank you.

Madam Chairperson: We thank the minister.

Does the critic from the official opposition have an opening statement?

Mr. Marcelino: This bill, when it was first introduced on first reading, contains some of the concerns that presenters have identified, which is the creation of another layer of bureaucracy, which is, in a way, a very valid point which I wish the minister would take into account when we do the report stage.

And my colleague also has some amendments to be introduced later on that would suggest that this bill is not perfect as it is now written. And we will vote against it if there are no amendments that are allowed.

And, of course, the problem that I have is that the majority of the government might force this bill to become law and, of course, that will be a tragedy, because there are some good things that Her Majesty's loyal opposition can propose, and there are some amendments that are reasonable enough that will accommodate the concerns of the general public, as it is, and some of the engineers. And we are now beset by time constraints. And I understand that the minister is, of course, trying to pass this bill so that, well, this will be his first in this Legislature after a long while.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Madam Chairperson: We thank the member.

An Honourable Member: Point of order.

Point of Order

Madam Chairperson: The Honourable Mr. Fletcher, on a point of order.

Mr. Fletcher: Madam Speaker, I wonder if all parties could just take a step back and consider what we've been told tonight, and perhaps have some other points of view presented. And, if the government comes back without changes, okay. But at least let the public see the government listening. That is in the government's interest. It's in the Manitoban's interest. This is not going to—the world isn't going to implode if we don't pass it tonight.

We also have the—

Madam Chairperson: I'm going to interrupt at this point.

The points of order are not to be used to debate or to be used as opening statements. It is simply to notify and signal a breach of protocols or procedures.

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Madam Chairperson: So, at this point, we are going to move on to the clause by clause.

An Honourable Member: Madam Speaker, I have another point of order.

Point of Order

Madam Chairperson: The Honourable Mr. Fletcher, on another point of order.

Mr. Fletcher: On procedure, could we take a brief recess to consider a consultative way forward that meets everyone's concerns and needs.

Madam Chairperson: Is it the will of the committee to take a brief recess?

Some Honourable Members: Sure.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Chairperson: Leave has been denied.

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Madam Chairperson: We will now proceed with clause by clause.

Shall clause 1 pass?

Some Honourable Members: Pass.

An Honourable Member: No.

Madam Chairperson: The Honourable Mr. Fletcher.

Mr. Fletcher: Madam Speaker, I have a concern about the—even the opening statement of the bill in that the—in the opening, the purpose of this bill has not been clearly stated. The establishment of a