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of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Fortieth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
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<i>Vacant</i>	Southdale	—

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, December 3, 2015

The House met at 10 a.m.

Mr. Speaker: O Eternal and Almighty God, from Whom all power and wisdom come, we are assembled here before Thee to frame such laws as may tend to the welfare and prosperity of our province. Grant, O merciful God, we pray Thee, that we may desire only that which is in accordance with Thy will, that we may seek it with wisdom and know it with certainty and accomplish it perfectly for the glory and honour of Thy name and for the welfare of all our people. Amen.

Good morning, everyone. Please be seated.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. Speaker: Are we ready to proceed with Bill 200?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: No. Okay. Are we ready to proceed with Bill 215? *[Agreed]*

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS— PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 215—The Prevention of Interpersonal and Family Violence Through Education Act (Public Schools Act and Education Administration Act Amended)

Mr. Speaker: Then debate on second readings of public bills. We'll be calling Bill 215, The Prevention of Interpersonal and Family Violence Through Education Act (Public Schools Act and Education Administration Act Amended), standing in the name of the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Gaudreau), who has three minutes remaining.

Mr. Dave Gaudreau (St. Norbert): I'd like to continue on in the debate about what the Liberal member put forward. I mean, while some of his ideas are good, we see a lot of different ideas from him lately and from the leader of his party talking about things like cutting the payroll tax by \$450 million, which would ensure that some of these students that he's looking to help wouldn't actually be helped because how can we build 12,000 daycare spaces, how can we build schools, and how can we

implement these programs if we're cutting \$450 million from the budget?

So, you know, it's really easy, I guess, to say when you're in opposition like that that you can talk about being able to cut and spend at the same time. But there's really—there's no factual evidence for it, and the member opposite has to realize that. He also is the member that wanted to put labels on wine bottles and on liquor saying that it was detrimental to people, but now his party has decided they want to sell the liquor commission and take away all social responsibility, which would end up hurting the very children that he's trying to talk about to protect in these bills.

So we've seen—what we've seen from the opposition and from the Liberal member is the biggest flip-flop in Manitoba's history. We've seen a complete change in what the member used to stand for, which was social responsibility in this House and in this province on the liquor commission. When we talk about selling it off and letting a private companies have free-for-all and no social responsibility, that doesn't help the children that we're talking about. And when we're talking about cutting \$450 million of payroll tax it takes from Manitobans, from citizens, that's going to make—ensure that we don't have more child-care spaces. It's going to ensure that we don't have the proper schooling and education because we can't afford to do it, because the Liberal Party is talking about massive cuts to our system—\$450 million being taken out of our system.

I'm not quite sure how the Liberal Party's going to reconcile on this, but, you know, I look forward to seeing what they're saying in their platform some more. I mean, you can just pull it up on the—on their website and they talk about how they're going to have a dedicated fund to infrastructure, but they're going to cut \$450 million from the budget, so how is that dedicated fund going to be funded?

So it's one thing to talk about it and it's another thing to implement it, and on this side of the House, we've done that. We've implemented it. We've got lower class sizes. We've got the child care adding 5,000 spaces and adding 12,000 more in our Throne Speech. We're talking about doing, and on our side of the House, we're the party of get 'er done and they're—on the other side of the House, they're the

party of shut 'er down. They do not want to build and they talk about building, but then they put forward a plan of \$450 million worth of cuts. And, sorry, Mr. Speaker, but it's Liberal, Tory, same old story.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The honourable member's time has elapsed.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): I had high hopes of a non-partisan morning, Mr. Speaker. I would've thought that if any topic would have brought out the best in the members opposite in terms of putting away their partisan zeal and their speaking points, I would have thought it would've been the topic of family violence. If it's not the topic of family violence that will cause the government to be serious and to be respectful like Manitobans would expect them to be in this Legislature, I don't know what topic would do it.

Mr. Speaker, you know, it was only a couple of days ago that the government themselves brought forward a bill related to domestic violence, and they all admonished the Legislature to take it seriously, which we did, of course. And when it was brought forward on the first day, we passed it to committee on the first day, because we thought it was important to move it forward so that the people could speak to the bill and bring their experiences and hear the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard). I take him at his word. You know, he wants to bring forward something that might as well reduce violence in families.

And what do we hear from the government, from the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Gaudreau), no less? Rhetoric flourish, Mr. Speaker, talking about cutting and talking about, you know, his speaking points, not—I know that there is an election coming. I understand that. I can see the calendar as much as any member, but I would hope that even on the eve of an election, even with that, that somehow the NDP could muster the decency—could muster the decency—to speak in a way that wasn't so political about an issue that is so important in Manitoba.

If this issue doesn't give them the gravitas to be serious and to really look at something as an idea—not as a Liberal idea or as a Conservative idea or a New Democratic idea but just an idea—just an idea—that maybe Manitobans would say, hey, here's something that could work. Now, look, I mean I—there might be suggestions that would improve this and there might be people who would come to a committee who would say, well, we can do better than this. You know, I think there was an election

recently federally where the prime minister—who this government likes to say that they're snuggled up with—said that in Canada, better is always possible. Well, you know, in legislation, better can always be possible as well, and I don't know why, all of a sudden, the member for St. Norbert came in and decided to make this a grand big political partisan issue. When is family violence a partisan issue, Mr. Speaker?

Now, I'm hopeful now that with a little bit of thought—and maybe the members have sort of calmed themselves a little bit this morning—that they'll look at this a little differently, that they'll look at this idea not as though it's an opposition idea, that it's come from somebody that isn't in their political party, but that it's an idea that's come from a member, an elected member of this Legislature who is representing Manitobans not only in zoned constituencies but, like we all are, we try to bring forward ideas that will help all Manitobans.

I hope the member for St. Norbert will look at it that way, will put aside, take off his partisan blinders for a moment. It won't hurt him. I promise him, it won't hurt him. He can take off those partisan lenses and, you know, in fact, he might even see the world in a different way, Mr. Speaker, maybe in a better way. And if you can't see the world in a better way around this time of the year, near Christmas, near Hanukkah, where all the different celebrations, when could you see the world in a better way?

*(10:10)

So that's a little bit of my challenge to the member for St. Norbert. And all the members because they were all joining him and egging him on and trying to get, you know, get him all wound up into the partisan nature, Mr. Speaker. Even now, even now as I try to implore them to look at something and something of a less of a partisan way, they just can't do it. They just can't do it, and I'm absolutely astounded that on an issue like family violence, that the government just can't put aside their partisan rhetoric for even an hour. It's only an hour. They'll have an opportunity at 11 o'clock to unleash the partisanship. They'll have that opportunity, but I can hear already that my pleas are falling on deaf ears.

And I guess the electorate will have to decide for themselves. The electorate will decide for themselves whether they want a government or elected MLAs who just can't—who can't separate themselves from the politics, to look an idea for what it is, an idea, to

look at it as something that might protect somebody or might save a life or might help a family, Mr. Speaker. Why can't they look at it that way? I don't know why they can't do it. If they can't do it at this time of the year, I can't imagine they could ever do it.

So on this side of the House, we're willing to take the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), to take his idea and say why wouldn't we bring this to committee to discuss it? Why wouldn't we have the public come and give their suggestions on a bill like this? Maybe it can be improved; maybe it can be bettered. I know the member for River Heights. I know him as an individual. I know him as a person. I dare say I know him as a friend, Mr. Speaker, and I know that he would listen. He would listen—*[interjection]* You know, the Minister of Education, the member who's actually responsible for this bill, he yells from his seat. Part of me thinks he can't help himself. You know, maybe he should just, you know, leave the Chamber for a bit and, you know, just breathe the beautiful air that we have outside, this beautiful unseasonably warm day. Take a walk around the Legislature. Maybe it'll calm him, but if he doesn't, that's fine.

But I'm taking the member for River Heights at his word, and I believe that this is a bill that should go to committee. It should go to committee today. We can listen to Manitobans whenever the bill comes to committee. And, as I said, I know that the member for River Heights will listen to people and if they come forward and they say, well, let's change the bill a little bit here, let's change the bill a little bit there, well, then let's do that. Then let's do that, Mr. Speaker. But he won't. *[interjection]* You know, I can hear the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Gaudreau) continue to yell. He won't stop. I don't know what it is that gets him so wound up about trying to help families reduce violence. I don't know what it is. I don't know what it is that would cause him to be so angry, so partisan, so viscerally partisan about a bill that's intended to reduce violence.

I'm at a loss, but all I can do is make a suggestion. That's the only power I have here in the Legislature, and the suggestion that I'm going to make is that we embrace this as an idea that should have further discussion, that should be allowed to go to the public, that can—and, you know, if the member for St. Norbert wants to come to the committee and yell at the top of his lungs like he's yelling here this morning, he can do that. I don't know that the public

will look at him very favourably, but that's his opportunity, I suppose. He can do that.

But we are going to suggest that this bill go to committee. We hear the public. We hear about experiences, and if the government is truly as concerned as they say in press releases—but maybe not right now in the Assembly—about an issue like this, they'll join with us and they'll move this to committee because I believe, Mr. Speaker, that nobody, nobody has a monopoly on a good idea. I've seen good ideas come from the government. I've seen good ideas come from the Liberals. I've seen many good ideas come from this side of the House from the Progressive Conservative caucus, and if that government believes that they have a monopoly on good ideas, then maybe it's time for that government to have a time out.

We're going to suggest that we join with the member for River Heights; move this to committee. Don't make family violence a partisan issue, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Clarence Petterson (Flin Flon): It gives me an honour to say a few words on this. I think the bill itself has some good ideas, but there's some things I think we have to work on. and I'm a little taken back by the member of Steinbach. A lot of times they complain about there's not enough consultation going on and—with us—and yet he's ready to jump into the team with the Liberals without any consultation. I think we've got to look at—we have to look at different things that we already have. Let's not just say that we're going to do this without checking with the teachers, with the social workers, how we can make this even better, because family violence, like the member from Steinbach says, is something that is important to all of us.

And I want to give you a little example because I think, in many ways, we're all touched by family violence somewhere back in our history. Being a teacher of 33 years, I saw many examples of it, kids coming to school. I remember some kids would come to school and you'd wonder why are they wearing their big winter jacket inside of the school, and you find out that that's the only jacket they have and if they don't wear it, someone else will steal it from their home. There's not the love that most of us were brought up with a family, and some of these kids are—have family violence on a day-to-day basis, so it is a very, very important topic.

I myself knew my grandpa as one of the greatest men that I ever knew. His name was Walter Kerswaty [*phonetic*] and he owned a store in Carragana, Saskatchewan. He—in the '30s, he walked from Ituna to Carragana, which is about seven miles from Porcupine, Saskatchewan, to buy this Chinese restaurant. He had a drinking problem. I think everybody in the family did not want to say he was an alcoholic, but I'm assuming that he was. I did not know that 'til I was a teenager. This man had the utmost respect from me. I just loved my grandpa. Then when I found out from my mom that there was a drinking problem and the family wasn't, you know, had its problems, I realized that, you know, it touches many people, many people in here.

And it touched me after I found out because my mom, a family of six daughters and one son, she had to make a choice. My grandpa asked her if she would work on the—at the store. She was 18 or 17 years old, and she would have to give up going to grade 12. And my mom made an agreement with him that if he stopped drinking, she would go work at the store, and that eventually happened and the rest is history. My grandpa never did touch another drop, but having talked to my aunts and my mom, when he did have a drinking problem, it wasn't good.

And so I respect the member's ideas, the honourable member from the leader of the Liberal Party here. I respect his ideas, but I think we could do more consulting, more working with the teachers. As a teacher, we'd like to know what are the parameters. We're putting more and more onus on the teachers to be social workers, and this is obviously impacting their job because their job in education or teaching is going way beyond the expectations that parents have and whatever.

So, in essence, I do agree, but this is something we have to address and I think, like the member of Steinbach says, I think we have to look at all the parties sitting down and coming up with some idea, consulting on some idea where we can make this a better act and work together on it. I think when we look at some of the things that were suggested, the issues require further consulting. The changes made—kids who have suffered violence are going to be re-traumatized in the essence that if there is family violence, most kids or whatever like to just keep it quiet. How are we going to deal with that? How are we going to deal with that at the school?

* (10:20)

There's a lot of things to take in consideration because we're dealing with children here, children from grade 1 to grade 12. There is no age limit on family violence, and teachers have to learn to address this. I know that I've taught from grade 4 right up to grade 12, and I taught at an alternative school for 10 years and I've seen the whole spectrum of family violence. I've had children come and sleep in my house, which, obviously, you wouldn't—couldn't do that today, but they had nowhere else to sleep. They didn't want to go home. They'd be beat up or whatever, and so there's a lot of things that we got to look at here. It's just not something we can have a magic wand and it's going to go away. I think society has shown that there's even more pressures now on children than there ever has. It's—the cares and—of the world just don't go away when you go to school. They're brought there, and so we have to train people to understand this and have other agencies involved so that we can work out for what's better with the children that we're looking at.

Also, we got to look at restorative justice. Many—I was up North with the former Attorney General and—from Minto and when we went to Thompson, we went to some of the court cases involved. The amount of money that is spent on flying individuals from some of the isolated communities like Tadoule or other—Pukatawagan, any of them—to bring them in for court cases, it costs a lot. And some of it is just breaking a window, but, I mean, it might be the second or third window they broke. And some of it is out of frustration; some of it is because of family problems in between the mother and the father. And the costs just go up, and we're not really dealing directly with the problem, and people are not being responsible for their actions. And I think restorative justice is so important that we can tie in with this, bring the family in, show the way the child is behaving and what are the reasons because it's—nobody likes to be in trouble and nobody likes to be sent to juvenile or whatever. Everybody wants to succeed in this world, but sometimes there's barriers put up, not natural barriers, but family barriers that are put up for these people or for these children to fail and that. So I think it's really important.

When I think of the teachers that are in this—in the Leg. here that have been teachers, I'm sure we've all gone through many situations where we actually stuck our nose in too much to try and help the problem, which is way beyond what we're supposed to do but we're dealing with people here. We're

dealing with human beings. We're dealing with children. The younger it is, the harder it is to deal with, and—but I think everybody has a big heart. I know the member from Steinbach was bringing up Christmas here, and I agree with him. We're in a Christmas spirit. We want to work together, and I think, with this bill, we have more consultation. We can work together and make some of the institutions that we have already stronger and we can work better with the people involved to give them the tools to try and help the situation.

So thank you, Mr. Speaker, for giving me a few words to say on this. Thank you.

Hon. Melanie Wight (Minister of Children and Youth Opportunities): Very pleased to get a chance to speak to this bill, and I do appreciate the member bringing it forward so that we can get some words on the record around this topic. Very close to my heart, as I know it is for everyone here.

I don't know that there's any of us that haven't been affected in some way, many of us personally, by interpersonal and family violence. Certainly, we all know a friend or a loved one who's experienced these things, so it's certainly a topic that we're all very, very interested in seeing work done on. And we have been, of course, working on preventing violence in our society for many, many years and we need to continue to do that.

In fact, we recently brought in a bill just the other day, which I think will be very, very important, Mr. Speaker. Sadly, the—that wasn't—it wasn't a bill that was supported by everyone. I know the candidate for Radisson for the Liberals, for example, felt that it would be too expensive to be able to bring that in and also that it would be an imposition on the rights of these men to not be allowed to keep their weapons, rather a surprising and heartbreaking position for that gentleman to take.

We know that there are many barriers for victims of domestic violence to get the help that they need to find solutions, and so we've also created the first paid leave for victims of domestic violence in Canada and very proud of that, Mr. Speaker. Didn't get a chance to speak to that before and I just—I have known many women in that position and knowing that there's some protection for their jobs, that's certainly not a stress that we need added on to them when they're in these positions and we want them to not have to be worried about whether or not they're going to lose their job or—while keeping themselves

safe. So it's just one of the many things that I think are incredibly important.

And when it comes to reducing violence in families, Mr. Speaker, I think that one of the very first things we need to be doing is really working, even earlier than what this bill speaks to, and getting to folks right at the birth of their children, for example. We can bring in supports and help. We're doing that in many cases to people and work with them, even earlier on, with the actual families on how to change those things. And many things affect domestic violence, and people living under stress, living with extreme poverty, living without work, we know that those things do affect people's stress levels. And we want to be able to help them very, very early on.

I actually taught a program that worked with teenagers, and it's a Red Cross program and it's part of their RespectED program. And it's an amazing work that they've done and it goes to the younger kids—14, 15, 16—and it's about building healthy relationships, Mr. Speaker. And its goal is to end domestic violence by getting to kids much earlier. And I can remember teaching it to kids who lived in very high-risk situations and it's all very activity based, so you're not sort of up there preaching at them. You're getting them involved in activities so that they can understand what a healthy relationship is.

And I can remember one girl saying to me after she—when we were teaching about what a healthy relationship was, and she said to me, you know—I'm not allowed—I don't know if I'm allowed to say this in the House, but anyway, she said this was absolute bull, that there was no such thing as a relationship that didn't involve some kind of abuse, at least verbal abuse. She couldn't believe that such a relationship could exist and she thought I was full of it when I said, no, no, you really can, you know, have—it is possible to have a healthy relationship. And she was in a relationship at the time with her boyfriend and from the things that she had told us, we knew it wasn't a, you know, wasn't a very healthy relationship. And about—this was a course that went over different weeks and we came back a few weeks later and we were teaching something else and she put up her hand and said, you know, I just ended a relationship because, you know, I realized that he wasn't saying things to me that were, you know, good, healthy things, right? And that even in that, she had learned that it was possible. It was possible to have a healthy relationship.

So I think there are amazing things that we can do in that world. And reaching out to teenagers, for example, I think, is one of the very, very best ways and early familyhood, working with families very early on to help them get help in these areas as well.

*(10:30)

This particular bill that the member brought forward, came forward with, it's hard to believe, but no consultation whatsoever is my understanding, Mr. Speaker. And there was no consultation with teachers. There was no consultation with educators. There was—none of the stakeholders were talked to. And I was amazed that the member from Steinbach said that we should just send it to second reading anyway, but he is often the very one who's telling us we should consult, and we agree with him. We need to do those consultations because, as some folks have said, you know, poor consultation leads to poor legislation. So if we are going to do something like this, we want to make sure that it's right, that it's the very, very best legislation that it could possibly be.

I'm a little concerned about—it's interesting that the Liberal candidate in Radisson was speaking about the cost and saying that it was going to cost too much money on our bill around domestic violence. But I don't know where, you know, the Liberals would get the money to be doing anything, really, because, I mean, one of their platforms is a \$450-million tax cut to big banks and, you know, big corporations. And I—it shocks me, quite honestly, that the member that is in the House from a Liberal Party who has always been one who I thought was fighting for, you know, this kind of bill is now fighting to have alcohol at a cheaper cost and privatizing the liquor, and that's a loss of \$350 million to things like health care and education. And combined with the \$450-million tax cut, that's an \$800 million cut to the budget, Mr. Speaker, so I don't think they'll be able to afford to do these—any of the good things they might speak of.

But on this particular bill, we certainly do want to do more work on it and talk to people and consult and find out what people think and—about it and find out the very, very best way to make this bill one that would be effective, and so that would be our goal.

We outlined a number of things, as well, in our Throne Speech, as you must know, Mr. Speaker, of course, around poverty, and we know that that is something that removes stress if we can relieve poverty from families. And so—and yesterday we were hearing the members opposite from the

Conservative Party speaking against child-care spaces in schools. It was kind of confusing to me. But we're going to be building 12,000 more of those and additional social and affordable housing and healthy breakfast and lunch programs and all things that focus on lifting people out of poverty, which is another area that I think impacts on this.

So I would just like to say thank you for the opportunity to put a few words on the record around this, and we are certainly going to be looking at consulting.

Thank you.

Hon. Erna Braun (Minister of Labour and Immigration): I'm looking at this proposed bill with interest, especially since it places upon our public school system a large number of requirements. And I guess my first question, too, would be as someone who taught for 34 years that many of these things that I see in the bill summary that I have here are things that, over the many years of being in the classroom from junior high to senior high, seem to me things that have been ongoing for the decades that I was a teacher.

I think that when you're talking about creating a curriculum with requirements as to the training and origins of interpersonal and family violence, I think that it is selling teachers short in many ways because I would think that many of my friends and colleagues over the years—and myself, as a matter of fact—we are on the front lines and we certainly are aware of what is going on in many homes and are there to intercede. And I can't think of a group of more dedicated individuals than the teachers, the support staff, administration in a school who are being very vigilant in making sure that our students are safe and that there are ways in which they can provide the support to the—not only the children but also the families.

Certainly, the guidance counsellors—I have a number of friends who are still active teachers and/or counsellors and are teaching in some very high-needs communities within the city of Winnipeg. And when I hear the kind of programs that they offer, it astounds me that they are so far ahead, more—I should say they are further ahead than perhaps our colleague opposite recognizes that what is happening in schools and what teachers are able to do already.

I think back to when I taught at the Adolescent Parent Centre and, certainly, a large component—and this is going back, you know, a decade and a half,

and we were already doing a lot of things on relationships and family violence. We had expert teachers in the area. We had psychologists and social workers that were part of the complement in the school to make sure that appropriate work was being done with the students, that they were assisted in—not just in their academic activities in the school but also in their personal lives with their children and their extended family.

But the kinds of things that are being proposed here, I think it really warrants a look at what is already being done because it certainly would take resources to create, you know, to recreate something that is going on in many places across the province.

Certainly, my experience is largely Winnipeg School Division, and I'm always so impressed with the kinds of—ahead of their times they are in recognizing ways in which they can assist families and children to succeed in school and to deal with the kinds of family crises that may occur. Certainly, in many of our schools, there are teams already at work that work with the students and, in turn, also work with families. And it's not unusual, when I've spoken with friends of mine who are in administration, when they have family-counselling sessions in their schools, and they bring together the families as well as the children to deal with some of the issues that they hopefully can deal with in a very positive manner.

Certainly, the supports are there and the teachers access those. Even if they may not be a guidance counsellor, certainly, there is an information tree that goes on through schools where, if teachers are noticing anything, they're able to work with their colleagues in counselling, with administration, with the social workers that may be in the school. And, certainly, school psychologists are part of the program in any of the schools.

I guess from a personal perspective as a former home-economics teacher—home economics, certainly in Winnipeg School Division, was compulsory, and in my many years of teaching home economics, family studies and the components of family life and dealing with family situations was something that was taught on a regular basis.

One of the most popular classes that I taught when I was at Churchill High School was—it was named psychology, but I tended to move it into something that was a little more unusual. And year after year, students would ask me whether or not I was still teaching the conflict-resolution portion of

the course, and it was something that the students really valued, and we set it up in such a way that they had an opportunity to actually practise how to deal with certain aspects of conflict in their lives and how they could deal with that and work through it.

So I think that the thing that I find with looking at this bill, I think the intentions are probably noble, but I would think that there is a lot of background that needs to be taken into consideration in putting together a bill like this. I think we need to talk to the Manitoba Teachers' Society. They already do a lot of work with teachers through their professional development work that they do on all sorts of aspects in the school. And dealing with family violence is certainly one of the things that teachers do encounter, and so that becomes part of the professional development that teachers go through.

*(10:40)

I think that the experts are already there. Divisions already are aware that this is a situation that occurs far too frequently, and the personnel is there. Certainly, the fact that the supports in schools have expanded beyond, perhaps, just a resource teacher—they are now far more expanded to include psychologists, social workers. And I know that one of my friends who is a counsellor in a very high-needs elementary junior high that there are regular contacts with some of our departments to ensure that these kids have the necessary interventions to make their lives safe.

So I think that, on the broad picture, I think there's a lot of consultation that needs to happen. We need to look at a variety of options in schools. Not every school is identical; not every school culture is the same, and I think to have sort of a blanket statement that these are things that should be happening, I think we need to look in the context of the schools, of the communities, the school divisions, and I think that we sell teachers short, that many of the things that are implied in this legislation are things that are occurring currently and that we do take it very seriously. I mean, those children are placed in our trust and we're very vigilant.

I mean, it's certainly not something that was unique in my career as a teacher, to sit down with students and have conversations with them on what life was like at home, having conversations with a young man who was battling alcoholism in grade 11 and trying to find ways in which he could deal with his home situation and be able to enter into a healthy life again and also help his family in the same way.

So I think that as teachers, the teachers' society and different organizations within Education need to be talked to, because I think that there are many things that we could be doing and before anything is put to print, I think there needs to be far more consultation that occurs.

Ms. Jennifer Howard (Fort Rouge): It's my honour to speak to this bill today. I do want to say, from the outset, that I think there are very good ideas within this bill, and the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), who I've come to know in this Legislature, I'm not surprised he would bring forward a bill like this. I know his deep commitment to issues of social justice and equality.

I also know that he has had good, constructive conversations with the Minister of Education about this issue. I hope those conversations will continue about how we can do more to include discussions of family violence and prevention of violence in the curriculum.

There are, of course, programs that are ongoing that do this work, very good community-based programs like Klinik's Teen Talk program that has been going for some years now and who I knew the founders of. This is peer-based education where young people go into schools to talk to other young people about things like dating, safer sexual practices, bullying, all of those things. And at the core of preventing violence in intimate relationships is talking to girls and boys about those relationships. At the core of that, I think, is giving girls the message that they don't need to be defined by their relationships and giving young men the message that being—you know, in 1980, we had a discussion of family violence in the House of Commons. I was greeted by laughter. I thought we had come a lot further than that in the last 30 years, but judging by the opposition benches, we have not, sadly, Mr. Speaker.

I do want to—I was talking about the Klinik program, which takes a peer-based approach, but also talks about some of the things that are at the heart of violence, which for young men is often the notion that masculinity has to be tied to power and control over women. And part of, also—I think something that is going to show great promise is getting the Blue Bombers, the football team, involved in the anti-violence campaign and now taking the second step, which is to get those football players in front of high-school classes to talk about what being a man is.

For many, many years our discussion about violence prevention has focused on women and girls, and that is good information and information that has to continue to get out there, but really, we're not going to make a lot of progress on preventing violence until we talk to men and boys, until we talk to the half of the population that are mostly those who are the perpetrators of violence.

And so I think that's why our partnership with the Blue Bombers, programs like Klinik, are showing great promise.

So it was with some surprise and regret, I guess, that when I look at this bill, I have to wonder at the recent comments of the Liberal candidate in Radisson about the domestic violence and stalking bill. The domestic violence and stalking legislation that was brought before this House was developed in consultation with women who work in women's shelters, women who research family violence, women who accompany women to court to get protection orders who we've heard from loud and clear that it was too difficult to get a protection order in Manitoba, and that we heard from loud and clear that even when you get to the step of getting a protection order that sometimes you can't get granted the ability to have the perpetrator's firearms taken away from him.

And we saw the tragic result of that recently in a death here in the city. And so to read the Liberal candidate for Radisson's comment saying that having this new approach to protection orders was too expensive and too cumbersome and that it was too much of an imposition on the rights of men, who, granted, are only accused of family violence, it was too much of an imposition on them to take away their guns while the case went through the court system; to keep women safe was too big an imposition on those men. To read that that is now the position of the Liberal Party makes me wonder what Liberal Party it is that the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) now belongs to, because it's not the Liberal Party that I remember, and I would hesitate to say it's not the Liberal Party that he remembers either.

So that is regrettable because I think that bill that is working its way through the Legislature is going to be a bill that is going to mean real change and real protection for women because prevention is important and education is important. But I want to tell you from the stories that I've heard with the women I've worked with, when your abuser is at the

door with his shotgun, a workshop in a school is not going to save you. What's going to save you then is courts that have the courage and governments that back them up to make sure that he doesn't have those firearms when you come forward with very real concerns about your personal safety.

I also want to speak for a moment personally, and this is something I've hesitated to do in this House because I think when we speak in this House, we should strive to make our comments about our constituents and about the community, not about ourselves, but my commitment on family violence is not just because, like all of us, I want to create a safe province but because I'm a survivor of family violence.

I was a child witness to family violence in my own home and I have very real memories of, as a child, hiding in the closet of my room out of fear for my own safety. I have very real memories of waking up in the morning to see my mother once again injured and unable to go to work because of the violence that she had experienced the day before. I have very real memories of leaving with my mother and going to stay in a hotel, because that was the only safe place that we could get access to, and him finding us in that hotel, and hearing her—him coming to the front desk and the front-desk clerk not know what to do, not disclosing our room number, thank goodness, but giving him the phone number and having to talk to him on the phone.

I remember him coming to my school after we had left and me being called out of class to talk to him in the hallway and him trying to get me to go with him in the car, which I did not do because I knew if I got in the car that day with him that my life would be in danger. And in those days there was no way to talk to teachers or administrators about what was going on in my life. Perhaps they would have been prepared to deal with it, but there was still such a stigma that I felt personally about talking about what was going on in my own family that I wouldn't have dared to disclose those things.

And so, you know, I live with the legacy of that childhood. I have thankfully been able to get very good-quality counselling and put the past in the past, but it affects me every day. Through my 20s I dealt with the effects of post-traumatic stress and I dealt with crippling depression, at times, that I managed to come through.

And, you know, as I parent my own children I am aware every day of the legacy of childhood

abuse. I am aware every day of the research and statistics that tell us that those of us who experienced child abuse and family violence are more likely to perpetrate it, not because we want to, not because we're bad people, but because those patterns are deeply, deeply ingrained. And so I am extra cautious, when I speak to my children, to think about the words that I use, because I also know, as a child, that, you know, as frightening as it is to be in a situation where you think you're going to be hurt or your mother's going to be hurt, it is the everyday psychological and emotional abuse that happens that takes a real toll.

* (10:50)

But, you know, that legacy will be with me the rest of my life. As good of help and counselling as I can get, that legacy will always be with me. And I've hesitated to ever speak publicly; this is the first time I think I've ever spoken publicly about it because, as I say, I don't think our job is to make these things about us. But I do think it's important to remember that we all come from some place, and we all bring the experiences of our life with us to this job. And so, when we have debates about these issues, I don't think that it is in the absence of real, lived experience for many of us, whether we choose to talk about it or not.

So I want to thank the member of River Heights for bringing this forward. I want to encourage him to continue to work with the Minister of Education to get these issues even more in the curriculum. I want to assure him that there is much good work already happening, but of course there's more to do.

And I guess what I want to say to all of us in this Chamber is as we go forward—as we go forward, I guess, into the Christmas season—to be aware that you never really know the story of the people that you're talking to or talking about and to always be open to hear their stories, to believe their stories. And sometimes that is the thing that makes the difference. Sometimes that is the thing that helps somebody get to safety.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Deanne Crothers (Minister of Healthy Living and Seniors): I'd like to say thank you to the MLA from River Heights for bringing this forward. I appreciate what he's striving to do with this bill. And I think that effecting change through education—I think he's absolutely correct; that is our best way to do that.

We know that educating young people gives us our best chance of changing attitudes that lead to violence. And I think that the term leading by example as a parent certainly is front and centre for me in terms of educating my own children. And when we have families that may not be demonstrating what a healthy relationship looks like at home, I think providing opportunities through education and through school to reinforce what they should expect from a healthy relationship is a very smart idea.

Now, in reference to some of the comments made by my colleagues that we need to educate boys and men, I have to say I absolutely agree. I have a son and a daughter both, and it's important for me at home to make sure that the message I am giving them is that they should expect to be treated well by other people and they absolutely should expect to be treated well by someone someday, when they're older, that they are in a relationship with, that they deserve that. They deserve to be treated in a loving way. It doesn't mean they're always right all the time, but they deserve to be treated as if they are valued, as if they're respected, and they should expect that from a partner.

And it also leads to discussions at home about how you deal with conflict and what's an acceptable way to deal with conflict. And certainly in our work environments—and ours is a perfect one to reference, I think—things are often said in this Chamber off of the mic where I would say most people would draw a line and say that that's unacceptable. So it's something that clearly we need in this day and age, and we need it in this Chamber too.

I think it also speaks to the idea of how we prevent bullying, because it's all about how we treat one another. And I'm very proud of the work that we've done on this side of the House in terms of bullying and safe schools because we know that kids aren't going to learn well if they don't feel safe or included at school. And that's why we introduced our bullying legislation, because we believe Manitoba schools should be safe places where all students can learn free from bullying. And we're working to make our schools safe and inclusive places for all of our students.

Our action plan gives students, teachers and parents more tools to address bullying by it, something that I certainly appreciate, again, as a parent, because we've had that experience already. My kids are quite young and, you know, children are

frequently upset by things that other kids might say. And it might seem harmless to an adult, but to a child that's going through something like that, it's hurtful and it's—you know, in my house we certainly try and encourage our kids to deal with it directly themselves; if they can't, if there's—if it's still going on, then to ask for help. And I think that's important too, especially for a situation where there's domestic violence. We know that women often will live with it for a long time before they get to the point where they need to get help, and sometimes it's other people that notice they need the help before it comes to light.

So we're not just dealing with this issue within the home. I think that having ways to support a family that's going through something like that, whether it's through services for the adults in this situation or as in this case, a program that would be available for children who are living with that at home. It's important to do that, and I appreciate that about this bill.

We know that because it's tied to education act, it's very important that we've got the support of organizations and people involved with education itself, and I think that's my only concern with this as this bill is tied to the education act, that it's vital that we have support from stakeholders and have their input. And I know that the Minister of Education made it very clear that he would be willing to help the MLA in developing this bill in a way that would allow interaction with stakeholders to have some input in it as it's being developed so that the support would be there for it to move forward, and I'd like to thank the Minister of Education for making that meeting happen.

He invited the MLA to his office along with members of organizations from a variety of education-tied stakeholders, and I know that there were comments made by one of the members opposite that we had no proof that there was no consultation done. Well, we do because the Minister of Education enabled that consultation to take place, and I appreciate the member from River Heights for going to that meeting and talking with some of the organizations, which included the Manitoba Teachers' Society, The Manitoba School Boards Association, the Manitoba Association of Parent Councils, the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents, and they all had concerns with this bill as it stood, and I think that they were open and willing to work with the member from River Heights

to ensure that this wonderful idea that he's brought forward would go forward in the best way possible.

And I know that he would still like it to move forward without the changes that they recommended but it's very hard for us to support something as it stands today like this without that input and consultation from these stakeholders, which is vital because it would affect what they do and how they deliver some of these great suggestions that are being made. But without their input it seems to defeat the purpose of the goal, which I think we all agree we would like to get to.

So I would like to again thank the member for bringing this forward. I think that with further consultation and changes made in light of what some of these organizations have suggested, it would be a much stronger bill and would have the kind of impact that we all want to see because we want all of our children going through school with a clear understanding early on of what they should expect from healthy relationships. It's much harder to change those attitudes later on in life when, you know, people have already injured one another, hurt one another, and set an example for their own children of how not to have a healthy relationship. We want that to happen early on and this is a great idea. It needs further consultation and I'm sure that with that kind of consultation, and the changes that would make this an even better bill, it would get greater support throughout the House.

I would like to just make sure that—I'm being encouraged by my colleague here to keep going so I better keep going. I think that it's just as important when—we were referencing earlier the education of boys, I know that it's just as important in my house as well to make sure that my daughter understands what is acceptable and what is absolutely unacceptable. I think it's important that we let our children know it's fine to withdraw from a situation if it doesn't feel right, if someone's treating you badly, and that I think these two approaches need to happen simultaneously. I don't think it's just about educating boys. It's not just about educating girls. We have to provide supports in both respects, but ultimately we need to make sure that our girls understand that they deserve to be—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable Minister of Healthy Living and Seniors (Ms. Crothers) will have two minutes remaining.

* (11:00)

RESOLUTIONS

Res. 1—Transparency Lacking in Routing of Manitoba-Minnesota Transmission Line

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 11 a.m., it is time for private members' resolutions, and the resolution under consideration this morning is entitled Transparency Lacking in Routing of Manitoba-Minnesota Transmission Line, sponsored by the honourable member for La Verendrye.

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): I move, seconded by the member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler),

WHEREAS the Manitoba-Minnesota transmission line is a 213-kilometre transmission line that will run from northwest Winnipeg to the Manitoba-Minnesota border and will run through or come close to many communities in southeastern Manitoba including Anola, Ste. Genevieve, Richer, La Broquerie, Sundown and Piney; and

WHEREAS the Manitoba-Minnesota transmission line is expected to be built between 2017 and 2020 at a total cost of approximately \$850 million; and

WHEREAS Manitoba ratepayers will pay \$596 million for the construction of this line, including \$294 million for the portion of the line on the US side of the border, but Manitoba will retain only 49% ownership of this line; and

WHEREAS the preferred routing for the Manitoba-Minnesota transmission line will go through many densely populated areas which is intrusive to the residents of southeastern Manitoba; and

WHEREAS the official opposition has repeatedly asked Manitoba Hydro for the analysis that led to the selection of the preferred route and that has not been provided; and

WHEREAS Manitoba knows that the provincial government has a history of interfering in operational decisions at Manitoba Hydro, including the routing of Bipole III transmission line; and

WHEREAS the residents of southeastern Manitoba and indeed all Manitobans deserve a provincial government that is open and transparent about the decisions that led to the preferred route of the Manitoba-Minnesota transmission line.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request that the Minister responsible for the administration of Manitoba Hydro Act immediately release the reasons for the selection of the preferred route of the Manitoba-Minnesota transmission line.

Mr. Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable member for La Verendrye, seconded by the honourable member for Lakeside,

WHEREAS the Manitoba-Minnesota—dispense?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

Is it the pleasure of the House to consider the resolution as printed on the Order Paper today?
[Agreed]

WHEREAS the Manitoba-Minnesota transmission line is a 213 kilometer transmission line that will run from northwest Winnipeg to the Manitoba Minnesota border and will run through or come close to many communities in southeastern Manitoba including Anola, Ste. Genevieve, Richer, La Broquerie, Sundown and Piney; and

WHEREAS the Manitoba-Minnesota transmission line is expected to be built between 2017 and 2020 at a total cost of approximately \$850 million dollars; and

WHEREAS Manitoba ratepayers will pay \$596 million dollars for the construction of this line, including \$294 million dollars for the portion of the line on the U.S. side of the border but Manitobans will retain only 49% ownership of the line; and

WHEREAS the preferred routing for the Manitoba-Minnesota transmission line will go through many densely populated areas which is intrusive to the residents of southeast Manitoba; and

WHEREAS the Official Opposition has repeatedly asked Manitoba Hydro for the analysis that led to the selection of the preferred route and that has not been provided; and

WHEREAS Manitobans know that the Provincial Government has a history of interfering in operational decisions at Manitoba Hydro, including the routing of the Bipole III transmission line; and

WHEREAS the residents of southeastern Manitoba and indeed all Manitobans deserve a Provincial Government that is open and transparent about the

decisions that led to the preferred route of the Manitoba-Minnesota transmission line.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request that the Minister responsible for the administration of The Manitoba Hydro Act immediately release the reasons for the selection of the preferred rout of the Manitoba-Minnesota transmission line.

Mr. Smook: It is an honour to bring this resolution forward on behalf of the residents of southeastern Manitoba. This resolution is not whether about the line should be built or not built; that's a totally separate issue. This resolution is about where the line will run and how the decision was made to put it there.

Many residents are concerned how this line will affect their lives. It runs for 213 kilometres, from northwest of Winnipeg to the Manitoba-Minnesota border near Piney, Manitoba. Residents are concerned about how close these lines will run to their yard sites and what effects this AC line will have on them, what effects it'll have on their children, what effects it will have on their livestock; it's an important issue for many people.

Many couples have saved over the years to buy their dream property. This dream property is something that they're looking forward to building a home on and now this dream is being shattered because in a lot of cases, this line runs, cuts some of this property in half, runs right close to a building site that they had thought they could build on. So it's just not considerate; these people are having a hard time with this.

Farmers are concerned about how this line will affect their farm operation, how much more work they'll have to do to put their crops in, how much time they'll have to spent to go around—spend going around these towers. Will they have to purchase additional chemicals to spray around these towers so the weeds don't move on to their cropland? How will it affect their livestock? I mean, there's a lot of dairy operations in the area and these farmers are concerned. What will happen if this line runs in close proximity to their herd?

One of the major concerns that I've heard in the area: the town of La Broquerie, it's a fast-growing community. The line runs right alongside the golf course and where future developments could be made. La Broquerie is growing. Many new houses are coming up there every year, and one of the areas

that would be the next area that new homes could go to would be the area where the hydro line runs through just east of La Broquerie. There are many concerns that have been brought forward in all the different meetings that I've attended, but I don't think I have enough time that I've been given here to list them all.

Manitoba Hydro had three rounds of public engagement in a number of communities in southeastern Manitoba, three chances for residents to bring forward their concerns about where the line would run. I attended a number of these meetings to listen to what their concerns were. There were a number of Manitoba Hydro staff there answering questions. But what I did hear at all three rounds of consultation was basically the same concern that was held by many: Why can't the line run further east along one of the other alternative routes that were presented in round one? There were several routes presented, but it seems that everything went back to the same route. What were the reasons for dropping these other routes that were originally offered by Manitoba Hydro?

The RM of Reynolds has written letters to Hydro telling Hydro they would be willing to take as much of that line as possible into the RM of Reynolds. They would be more than happy to put it into their parts of their RM that would be less intrusive to everybody else where the line is presently supposed to run.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues and myself have read a number of petitions in this House with hundreds of signatures. I have asked the minister several questions with the same answer. I would ask the minister once again, when he does have time, why won't he release the information, get Manitoba Hydro to give the reasons for the selection of the preferred route of the Manitoba-Minnesota transmission line over a less intrusive one. Why did they choose the line that they have chosen instead of a less intrusive one? And I have not received any answers or any reasons why they have chosen this.

One answer I did get from the minister in one of my latest asks was, and I quote: Selection of the route and the submission was made a long time ago, way before any of us. I don't know how long ago. It was a long time ago. These things are planned out years in advance. Mr. Speaker, this answer is totally different from the answer that Hydro provided in September when they said that's when the route was chosen. But if the minister is right, why were there

three rounds of engagement in several communities? Why were residents told their input was important? Why were there so many routes in round one? How much money has been spent on these public engagement meetings if they really didn't matter?

Mr. Speaker, Manitobans deserve an honest and transparent government, not one that says one thing and then does another. Manitobans have the right to know why the current route was selected over a less intrusive one. Even Manitoba Hydro employees have stated at some of the meetings that I've been at they would not want this AC line running over their home. We know that the NDP interfered with the route selection for Bipole III. Are they doing the same with the Manitoba-Minnesota transmission line? Will the minister—why will the minister not provide stakeholders with reasons for the current route selection?

Manitobans are feeling disrespected and are tired of this NDP government mismanaging Manitoba Hydro. They want to know why they are not being listened to. This resolution is about respect, honesty, and transparency. I would ask the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro and his caucus to support this resolution, to show Manitobans what a transparent government should look like.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

* (11:10)

Mr. Jim Rondeau (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to put a few words on the record on this. I'm actually very surprised by the members of the opposition who have difficulty with supporting Manitoba Hydro and an asset that's owned by all Manitobans. And I want to put on the record a few important facts that maybe will put things into perspective.

They talk about not wanting transmission. I know the member opposite who brought forward the resolution hasn't been here a long time, but back in 1995, there was an engineering report that actually talked that we needed additional transmission. And part of that was because there was an ice storm. And the ice storm actually created issues with where our electricity is transmitted. And so what happened was we found that there was a risk because the two bipoles that are currently in service are right beside each other.

Now, I have to admit that the Conservative Party did not do anything with the bipoles. They sat on that. And the other thing that's interesting to note is

those two bipoles are actually overcapacity. In other words, they're wasting electricity because there should be another bipole built.

So I'm pleased to be part of a government that (a) is dealing with an issue that was not dealt with by the former government. They did not have a plan and they didn't do it.

Now, the other thing that I want to put on the record is the opposition keeps on talking about rates. And they talk about the rates of hydro. I want to put on the record what it actually costs, the average retail price of electricity.

In Manitoba, the average retail price of electricity is 6.4 cents per kilowatt. In Quebec, it's 6.75. In British Columbia, it's 8.34. Saskatchewan, they always talk about Saskatchewan, it's 9.64, which is 50 per cent more on the price of electricity. Ontario, to put it into perspective, is 13.9 cents, which is double ours. And so—and if you talk about Alberta, it's even higher than that of Saskatchewan. So when we talk about our price of electricity, the members opposite fail to talk about the fact that we have the lowest cost utility.

And the interesting part is that this is the exact same argument they used on MTS. They talked about MTS when we had the second lowest or lowest rates in the country. They privatized the company. I won't say how many of their friends and colleagues and spouses made money on the share of MTS sales, in fact I think it was one member in this House that actually was censured by the Manitoba Securities Commission for selling those shares.

But the interesting part was back in the '90s we were the lowest cost jurisdiction for telephone rates and now I think we're the second highest. So I can see a pattern here.

I notice the member opposite talked about a few things. One, they talked about respect. I do believe that there's respect, and I understand that the land deals are offering a good value. I understand the vast majority of the land deals have been signed, and also I understand that the vast majority of municipalities, First Nations, and the MMF have agreed to the process and the location. The member opposite is wondering why we're putting it where we are. Well, I'd like to inform the entire House that we started out with a nice sale to Saskatchewan, I know it was only 25 megawatts, I know the second tranche was a hundred megawatts, which is 125 megawatts; which

I want to put into perspective, over the life of the contract is about a billion dollars.

So when you're talking about why we have a bipole on the west side of the province, maybe you should note that we actually have sales on the west side of the province. Now I hate to tell you that that makes sense.

Number three, when we're talking about this whole idea about route and transmission line, let's be—note (1) it can be built so that we can make our obligations for sales into the States. Now, for members opposite, that's about \$10 billion of sales into the States. Now, that actually pays—\$10 billion pays not only for the hydro development on the new dam, it pays for the transmission line over time, and I'm very pleased that we're moving forward with that.

So when you're looking at it, we have sales over \$9 billion; I think it's approaching \$10 billion. We have a firm 250-megawatt power sale with Minnesota. We have sales with Saskatchewan and for all members of the House to know, we have a 500-megawatt move with Saskatchewan where we're negotiating with Saskatchewan on prices and delivery. And the interesting part about that is Saskatchewan—for the members opposite, the Conservative Party—is to the west of us. So if you're trying to do sales to the west of us, the transmission is to the west of us.

Now let's talk about the opposition's real plan. Basically, if you look at hydro, it has been a very, very effective jewel. It saved Manitobans lots of money. In fact, when the opposition was in power, it had the worst demand-side record in the country; now it has one of the best. I have to say it's got the lowest utility rate. It provides assistance for people so that it provides free insulation. It provides all sorts of supports so people can save money forever because it's our utility.

I compare that with the members opposite who, when they sold MTS, made short-term gain for long-term pain and I don't think that's a good answer.

Last, when you're starting to talk about other things about this whole idea about transmission line, let's be blunt. The Conservative Party has not built any facility, whether it's transmission, whether it's generation, et cetera. In fact they're complaining when Manitoba Hydro's spending \$2.2 billion on updating the infrastructure, so we're putting in new transmission lines, we're putting in new distribution,

new transformers and that's \$2.2 billion. And they keep on saying where we are.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to put it on the record that if Ontario had no increases whatsoever for 22 years—for 22 years then our rates would be close to theirs, what they're currently paying. What's interesting to note is that they have asked for a 29 per cent increase over the next three years, so we are not even going to be close. We're never going to be there unless the Conservatives get power, blow up hydro as it is and move that forward.

We have low rates. We have good dependability. We're following the engineers' advice and Hydro's advice as far as delivering electricity over a transmission line. It can be built in the right time period and, Mr. Speaker, it's being built where we have the newest export sales. So I hope the members opposite are listening. I know that some members opposite say it's NIMBY; it's okay if it's not in my backyard but it's okay if it's in your backyard. To me, I think it's part of our responsibility as a society to make sure that we have a good route, we have listened to the public and we have a good utility.

And for me I believe that it's been a vision of the NDP governments in the past and the future on how we work with Hydro and I think that our public meetings, our discussions have been consistent, they've been public, they've been forthright and the only difficulty is I wonder what the Conservative agenda is as far as privatization and the abuse of a public asset which is currently owned by all of us.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

*(11:20)

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): It's a pleasure to have seconded this resolution brought forward by the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Smook).

And listening very intently to the member from Assiniboia, and I have a lot of respect for him as I put on the record the other day. Unfortunately, as the member from the government that sits on that committee, it looks like he's missed some of the meetings.

So I'd like to correct the record that he put on the record just a few minutes ago in regards to Bipole I and II, which I'm very much aware of. It runs right through my riding. If he would talk to those experts, there's lots of transmission line available. It's not over capacity at all. In fact, there's enough to run Keeyask on Bipole I and II without any new—without

any new—transmission line on Bipole III. We know that because the experts have put that on the record and, unfortunately, that member has not got that memo, when that is the fact.

The—also, he talked about the hydro lines going down Bipole I and II. If you go back in the history of Manitoba Hydro, the minister will know this—and I'm sure he'll correct it on the record as well—the number of hours—the number of hours—not days, weeks, months, or years, that Bipole I or II has ever been down is no more than 72 hours. And the lights never went out—never went out once. So the premise that Bipole I and II is the issue, that's not the issue at all.

And what I want to come back to is the resolution that's at hand, so I won't take debate and correct everything that he's put on the record in regards to Bipole I and II, but I do want to focus on the Minnesota transmission line. And what we've heard from the minister and from Manitoba Hydro is conflicting statements. Manitoba Hydro said that they have the authority to go out and consultate. In fact, the member from La Verendrye talked about three meetings. I was at a couple of those meetings. I met with several of the ratepayers from that area, and it's very clear—very clear—this group of people is frustrated. They feel their voice was not heard.

And last week, the minister got up in the House after a question from the member from La Verendrye and said that decision was made long ago—long ago, Mr. Speaker. Well, that's not what those folks had become accustomed to. They thought they had a government that was open, transparent, and one they could trust. Obviously, this government's lost the trust of those folks, unfortunately, and I can see why. Any government that feels they have those—the power to make those decisions without consultation is wrong. And I know I've got a number of those calls as the critic for Manitoba Hydro. And they're upset that that voice was not heard.

And part of those meetings that I was at, and calls, is from the member from Dawson Trail—the member from Dawson Trail. I know a number of those folks. In fact, I was at a meeting just not very long ago, month and a half, and a number of those people were at that meeting, and they said they can't even get a phone call back from that minister, not a phone call to explain why this line is going in the direction that it is.

The other part about this is the cost. And the member from Assiniboia has talked about it, and they talked about how low rate—the rates are for

Manitobans. Well, very clearly, Mr. Speaker, we know the rates are not staying the same. We've seen a 24 rate-per cent increase since the current First Minister's come into power. And we also know that they've also put on the public record that 3.95 per cent for the next 20 years is also going to be on the backs of all Manitobans.

When this government went door to door in 2011 campaigning, they said very clearly that this line would not cost Manitobans one cent. Well, they're right about the one cent. Manitobans are on the hook for the full cost. When they made the deal and they told Manitobans that the cost of this transmission line and the cost of the dam would be put in to the cost of which they were selling the product for, that's the right thing to do, Mr. Speaker. I hundred per cent support it; our party supports that. That's the way good business operates.

So we went from a very competitive point in Manitoba Hydro rates to one now that Manitobans are going to feel forever. They're going to be on the hook forever. Our children, our grandchildren are going to pay for that cost, and whenever we look at the way that government has handled not only the Bipole III, Keeyask and the Minnesota transmission line, they've neglected the right of real Manitobans, the people that own Manitoba Hydro, that has been telling this government time and time again they want to have that input.

So almost a year ago now this month, Cabinet decided they wanted to expropriate, for the first time in the history of Manitoba. They wanted to expropriate some of the best farmland, the very best farmland in this province. Unfortunately, those farmers didn't have a right. Now they—the members opposite get up and they say, well, they've been compensated three times the value of the land. Well, it doesn't matter what you compensate them for if they don't want to sell it. And to work around those towers—I know, because Bipole I and II come right through my area, and it's hard to farm around towers. You can't break an irrigation system in half and expect it to continue. It don't work that way.

So that land is going to go down in production, food costs will go up, and that's the legacy this government's going to have to wear as the days and months and weeks come forward.

The other thing that I wanted to put on the record, and I know the minister has also said this, but when rates go up, those in the lower incomes, those on social assistance and those in First Nations

communities will pay a higher rate. They will pay a higher rate. And, unfortunately, it's because of the mismanagement of this government, the lack of consultation and then also not also listening to the experts that have made very clear—they've made it very clear that if transmission does continue at the rate the government says they have in export sales—the last quarter report is not like that at all. In fact, you saw a steep decline in hydro exports. In fact, they lost \$43 million in the last quarter alone in export sales from where they were last year, never mind an increase in those sales. So we'd like to hear what the minister has to say about that as well.

And I want to thank the good folks coming from that area that's in the gallery today to hear exactly what this government has to say, and I know that I give full credit to the member from La Verendrye that has brought this resolution forward. And we know that every Manitoban, the real owners and Manitobans, have that right and should have that right, and we want to give the minister an opportunity to correct the record here today and say that really, we messed up and we will support this resolution, and I'll give him that opportunity.

So thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): Mr. Speaker, it's always interesting to hear members opposite try and talk about publicly owned Crown corporations. They come at it in different ways, but the end result is pretty much always predictable.

I think I just—I have to start by acknowledging, Mr. Speaker, that, of course, we are here on Treaty 1 land. And for the member opposite from Lakeside to say that there's never been a history of expropriation of land until now, he might want to talk to the original inhabitants of Manitoba about that, probably a few examples in history that he should quite clearly become more familiar with. And that lack of knowledge of Manitoba's history is really pretty stunning and pretty disappointing, not at all surprising coming from members opposite. I think I cannot remember the last time any of them actually asked a question about the role that indigenous people play in our society.

They do like to attack Hydro, though. They're pretty clear about that, and they'll come at it from lots of different ways. And they'll go to their communities; they'll go to the people in southeastern Manitoba and they'll, you know, head into the coffee shops and knock on the doors and rile folks up about what a horrible thing Manitoba Hydro is. And the

hidden agenda in there is absolutely the privatization of our—of one of our Crown jewels in the form of Manitoba Hydro.

I, as an MLA, have, on multiple occasions, had activities in my constituency that the government's involved in, had projects that were being proposed by a variety of, you know, different departments or different community groups, and the commitment that I always give to my constituents, what my role has always been, is come on out and get engaged in the process.

* (11:30)

So I've got to ask the question: Did the members opposite, did they go out and actually ask their citizens to come out to the hearings to hear what Hydro had to say, to hear about the rationale for the project, or did they just show up and try to block the process and make a partisan issue out of it? That's an honest question, Mr. Speaker. I don't reside in southeastern Manitoba. I don't know how the member opposite approached these consultations, if it was in an adversarial manner or if he was trying to engage his citizens in the democratic process. But going forward, if he hasn't tried democracy before, he might want to try it in the days ahead.

And what you tell folks is pretty clear. Just because you show up doesn't mean that your particular opinion carries the day. Everyone else gets to have an opinion. It's like an election, you know. I may cast my ballot, you may cast your ballot, Mr. Speaker, they will cast their ballot for their preferred choices, doesn't mean just because you showed up and voted that your vote's going to be the one that carries the day.

The piece about a community consultation, the importance of democracy is that that citizens have a chance to step forward and make their views known, and hopefully keep an open mind to what everyone else is saying.

As for the rationale, for a fantastic project like this, and why is it that this is so important? Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm about to head over to join our Premier (Mr. Selinger) as he announces Manitoba's new climate change action plan. Climate change is one, if not the defining issue of our era, and we have an enormous successful story to share here.

We have jurisdictions to the south of us who are still stuck on coal, who are stuck on natural gas, who are stuck on nuclear; that's how they keep the lights on, that's how they power their economy. And here

in Manitoba we are so lucky to have a clean source of power that we can sell to them and Manitobans benefit from that and our customers benefit from that, and wouldn't you know it, the planet actually benefits from that.

And I know that the member for Morden-Winkler (Mr. Friesen) would love to make jokes and he doesn't care about any of this sort of stuff because he's got a narrow, privatization, elitist approach to how Manitoba Hydro should operate and how government in general should operate.

I respectfully disagree with just about everything that he has said in this Chamber. He has the right to say it; he has the right to be wrong. We haven't passed a law saying that you can't be wrong in this Chamber. But they are wrong to be opposed to Manitoba Hydro's development plans.

We are one of the few jurisdictions in the world which can say that our electricity is nearly 100 per cent free of fossil fuels. Even when the remarkable achievement of the new NDP Premier in Alberta, and I give her top marks for the steps that she's managed to bring her province forward on the climate change front. Even when that plan is fully implemented, Alberta's electricity will be 30 per cent green, and we're already close to 100. We have an enormous asset.

And wouldn't you know it, electricity actually needs to travel along a power line in order to reach its customers. This might be news for members opposite. They seem to be opposed to all these things, but you do actually need a power line.

And as the member himself who introduced this motion pointed out, Manitoba Hydro didn't hold just one meeting, it was not just a one-off type of gathering—there were three distinct stages of the consultation as you gradually narrow the preferred route, and, absolutely, community input is going to be part of that. Technical requirements are going to be part of that. And Hydro will be making the decision on ultimately where that route travels.

Mr. Stan Struthers, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

But you do need a power line and this power line will in fact provide a new level of integration between our grid and grids to the south. We would love—we would have loved it, Mr. Speaker, if someone other than the Conservatives had been in power in Ottawa for the last 10 years. We could not get any interest on an east-west grid from anyone in Ottawa. We have an enormous resource here. But we

do lack the power lines to connect Manitoba Hydro's great resource to fellow citizens to the east of us and to the west of us.

Taking an approach like we have, where we do not call for mothballing of projects, where we do not just decide to trample on indigenous communities' rights, where we do not fail to look at the big picture of important issues like climate change and affordability here in Manitoba. When you take the progressive view on all of those fronts, it's quite clear that one of the great assets that we have to share, not just with our nation and with future generations, but indeed with the whole planet, is the proper development of new hydro exports.

And those exports can come from lots of different original sources. It doesn't have to just be new dams. You can have additional energy conservation, and demand-side management efforts play a role. Who knows? In the future, geothermal, wind, solar. The economics of all of these phenomenal technologies are changing and improving rapidly every day, but if you don't have the capacity to actually get your product to your customers, you're not going to be able to make the benefits out of it that are necessary.

So, for members opposite to be bringing forward this motion today to yet again try to undermine the work that Hydro is attempting to do, when after there have been three distinct stages of consultation, for them to now come to the House and say, well, why are you building a power line, it really is disingenuous. And I would ask the member to maybe reflect on some of the feedback that he is receiving not just from me but from others in the Chamber here, to reflect on the broader agenda that we need to be taking seriously which includes climate change. One of the main ways that Manitoba is going to be able to contribute in a positive way to reducing emissions is through clean electricity, and not just here in Manitoba but across the country.

So, Mr. Speaker, having offered those remarks, I'll gladly take my seat and hear what the next presenter has to say. Thank you very much.

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland): Well, thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Welcome you to the chair.

First of all, I want to start out by thanking the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Smook) for bringing this, not only for bringing this resolution forward but also for his work, his tireless work that he's done in his constituency and in his neighbouring

constituency of Dawson Trail because the current member for Dawson Trail (Mr. Lemieux) refuses to answer his phone to the residents. And I welcome the guests up in the gallery today who have constantly been phoning the member for Dawson Trail, who will not answer his phone. The resolution is quite clear. What they want to know is the planning for this Manitoba-Minnesota route. What was involved in the planning? Why was this route selected? That's what the resolution asks for.

And yet this minister refuses to release that information. In fact, just last week, he told this House—the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro said the route was selected a long time ago; those things are planned years in advance. So why do you have public consultations if it's already planned and already set? You're not willing to listen to what Manitobans have to say. You're not willing to listen to what the concerns are of these residents. You don't listen to the municipalities who have suggested a better route, less intrusive route.

I've been out to those meetings; I've listened to the municipalities. I've travelled with the member for La Verendrye. I hear what the residents are saying—*[interjection]* I know the member from Brandon East has lots to comment on. He can have his chance here right away to tell us why they picked this route through the most heavily populated area, the most intrusive that they—it seems like the government has decided to pick the most intrusive route. They're going through farmyards; they're going right near residences.

I talked to a person who had just bought his dream property out in the member for Dawson Trail's constituency, a small acreage. And he bought it to build a house on. After he bought it, he found out that Manitoba Hydro already planned to run this route, this line, right beside where he planned on building his house. Why didn't Manitoba Hydro have this information out ahead of time? If you already knew the route years ago—the minister said the route was planned years ago—why is it that they are so secretive? This government is so secretive about this kind of information.

The member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer)—and I certainly hope he has a good trip to Paris to the climate change conference. Just think of the greenhouse gas that he could save if he didn't fly over there to that and tour Paris at taxpayers' expense.

* (11:40)

The member from Assiniboia and his comments before, talking about sales to Saskatchewan. Those sales are in alternating current, which is called AC. Bipole III is direct current. You cannot switch—you cannot simply plug off of that line and go into Saskatchewan for these sales. It's a different line, unless you want to spend billions on converter stations to convert it back to AC in order to sell it into Saskatchewan. So that argument went out.

I know what these members and the members in the gallery and the landowners that are involved in this Manitoba-Minnesota line—I know what they're going to look forward to in this route being built here because I call them my landowners. And they're not all my landowners but they're—many of them are in my constituency, and what they've been dealing with in this government for Bipole III.

And, again, I can only quote what the Minister of Agriculture said yesterday. He said, biosecurity is the new swear word of agriculture. Like, do you not realize the impact that you will have by not observing biosecurity by coming onto private land? Speaking of which, coming on to private land, I also asked him in question period yesterday about not getting permission to cross private land in order to access their west-side waste line. The minister—and I'll quote from Hansard yesterday, "they need to be notified of trespassing, and which we believe is still happening and will continue to happen."

So there you go. There's what's going to happen with this government at the wheel head on this line. They will not respect property rights; they will not respect biosecurity. The intrusion onto the farmland of this Manitoba-Minnesota line in an area that has—is not only densely populated for people, there's also a lot of livestock in that area. You will impede on the ability of those—application of fertilizer from the animals. And it's just something this government does not want to even take into consideration. The RM of Reynolds—I was there at a meeting; the RM of Reynolds has offered an alternative route, a much better route, but this government says, no, we will not even consider that.

So they have public consultations. What's the purpose of the public consultations if all you ever say is no, and not only are you saying no, you have no good reason for why you're saying no. You won't publish the reasons why you're saying no. If it's really that good to send this line through this—through these residences, through this farmland,

publicize it. What are you afraid of? Broken government—broken trust, broken government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this—I really do feel badly for these residents here because I've seen what this government has done on Bipole III on their route selection, on their disrespect to landowners, expropriating 88 landowners and then walking on their property and with no respect at all for the property rights, for biosecurity. Just the sheer fact of building a line 500 miles farther out of—or 500 kilometres, pardon me, out of the way on this. The extra costs, the extra upkeep, building it through just some of the most productive farmland in Manitoba and in, perhaps, some of the world, because we have irrigation potential, we have live-stock potential. That all disappears once this line is built on those—on that land. You cannot do that.

And we have so much potential. The potato industry continues to expand in my area, and yet when you have a transmission line built, you are now creating an economic dead zone through there, and that's what they're going to do with this route selection of the Manitoba-Minnesota line because they absolutely refuse to take in the potential of economic development in our local communities.

For some reason or another, this government seems to think that they know better than everybody else, so if you really do know better—if you really do know better—publicize it. Tell us why you've picked the route that you have for this Manitoba-Minnesota line. Let us debate it. Let us let the public know. Let these landowners know why you're doing this instead of the secrecy that you continue to do.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is—this government continues to run Manitoba Hydro into the financial ruins. They're building this line to export power at a loss. The energy market has changed so much since the—since this government decided on the route that they would push Manitoba Hydro to.

So it's unfortunate that they continue on this—it's a path of secrecy is what this government has. Instead of telling—instead of being open to the real ratepayer—to the real owners and to the ratepayers of Manitoba as to why they pick certain routes, it comes by government decree now and everybody is supposed to just sit down, shut up, take it up, what this government is forcing on them, and that is wrong, and they have next April 19th, Manitobans—there's a change for the better coming and it just can't come soon enough. Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

Hon. Eric Robison (Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs): I listened to the members and the remarks that they had to make and a number of issues have been raised including Bipole III, and certainly we don't want to confuse all these issues relating to hydro development in the province of Manitoba.

I, too, would like to acknowledge that we are on a traditional—the traditional territory of Treaty One and also the area that we're talking about for the most part is the heartland of the Metis people, the area that the member has raised on a number of occasions.

Let me say, as well, on the bipole initiative as well it's long been known that we're going down the west side of Lake Winnipeg because we are doing our share as a government, and I believe on behalf of Manitobans, to protect the boreal forest on the east side of Lake Winnipeg ensuring a way of achieving reliable energy at the same time for all of Manitoba.

As well, the member—I can't help but raise the matter about the—the expropriation matter, and I've been on my feet on several occasions to address this issue. Let me say that Manitoba Hydro has been offering a fair and generous compensation package for easements that amount to 150 per cent of market value per property plus additional payments for structural impact and construction damage and ancillary damage as well. And Hydro has been negotiating with landowners for voluntary easements and compensation agreements since 2012 in July of that year.

For those who haven't signed voluntary easements, Manitoba Hydro has secured easements along the Bipole III route through expropriation and every property owner, whether in the city or in the country, has an easement from Hydro and other utilities on their property, and the public has been consulted on Bipole III reliability.

Since 2008, over 400 meetings have occurred now with landowners, RMs, First Nations communities, stakeholder groups and so on, and the route selected for Bipole III is—has the least impact on agricultural land among the three alternatives that were presented at public meetings back in 2009. And based on the recommendations of the Clean Environment Commission, 74 route adjustments were made on the Bipole III initiative.

We want to say that Manitoba Hydro and this government are totally committed to ensuring that

indigenous communities are going to benefit from hydro development for all of Manitobans because they are the ones firstly that are impacted directly first of all at the start of any hydro projects in northern Manitoba communities.

* (11:50)

And I know this because I come from a northern flood community. I was born and raised in communities that were affected by hydro development, and I'll be the first to admit that hydro development projects and their effect they've had on indigenous communities have not always been good.

And since I've been appointed to have responsibility for Manitoba Hydro, I've made it my business to correct the wrongs of the past. And I've done that to the best of my ability by going through our reconciliation tour with the First Minister to communities affected under the Northern Flood Agreement that took place in the 1970s.

These projects, including the Winnipeg River hydro project, took place long before any of us were born here. This took place probably at the turn of the century, pre-World War I and post-World War I, on some of these initiatives that we've come to know now. These are planned out way before we know about it, by people. It was in that context that I was referring to the matter that was raised by the member from La Verendrye when I was saying that hydro development occurs in the province of Manitoba.

But then of course, you know, I am not surprised that I was misquoted and I'll take the responsibility for what I said. I tried to correct the record as you know, Mr. Speaker, with the member earlier but I guess that didn't help.

The construction of the Keeyask and bipole itself will boost our provincial economy by more than \$1.5 billion, create thousands of jobs, especially in northern and indigenous communities. And you know what I'm proud of, is that our government is a leading exporter of clean, renewable energy. Climate change is real. And I've always noted and I've always made it a point that indigenous knowledge is important in any and all things that we do with respect to climate change.

I think clean energy is the way of the future. Clean energy exports will only become more valuable in the time to come. And since 2010, Manitoba Hydro has signed in excess of \$9 billion in firm, long-term power sales, and this includes a 100-megawatt deal with the province of

Saskatchewan that somebody referenced just earlier. And by expanding our ability to export power, Manitoba Hydro is ensuring low electricity rates for all of Manitobans into the future.

And one of the first things we did when we came into office in 1999, was equalize hydro rates in the province of Manitoba, regardless of where people live. And I was very proud to be a part of that. Consumption rates are different in a lot of First Nations communities because of the construction and the poorly constructed homes in some of these communities.

The route for the Manitoba-Minnesota line has been chosen over a three-year process. The selection of the route and submission of the environment impact statement are a culmination of years of planning, environmental studies and engagement with stakeholders.

And I take very seriously the opportunity for Manitobans to provide input into the routes that Manitoba Hydro sees fit to build power lines over. And we've had many rounds of consultations, as members opposite have attested to. And members of the opposition have also met Hydro representatives to talk about this issue and also my predecessor in the fall of 2014 to hear the plans and to make their concerns known. And current concerns and comments continue to be heard, and through Manitoba Conservation, these issues are being done.

Manitoba Hydro, Province of Manitoba and the City also provided opportunities for the public to provide input and ensure concerns on the location, and the line itself is nearing its finalization with a small portion of the line still under discussion.

And landowners have been notified, for the most part, of the location and have undergone a long public engagement process. We have said that time and time again in this Chamber. We are, with the co-operation and with the understanding as Manitobans, continuing to develop the Minnesota line. And we believe that to be good news for Manitoba and our ability to grow our exports. Manitoba Hydro has a 250-megawatt firm power sale from the state of Minnesota based on the building of this line. And this agreement is part of Manitoba's hydro power sales which is now totalling over \$9 billion.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable minister's time on this matter has elapsed.

Mr. Clarence Pettersen (Flin Flon): Thank you for letting me talk a few minutes on this. I just have to say that it's an honour to talk about this. And I know the member for Midland (Mr. Pedersen) talked about security, and I think Manitoba Hydro is our security. It is our future. And I think that's important that he brought that up because the future of Manitoba in the North, in the south, throughout Manitoba, is Manitoba Hydro.

And I have to thank the people in the gallery for coming down. I'm sure they have some concerns. I know the Minister of Hydro has listened to the different choices with the routes and all that; there's been consultation over three years, and hopefully, like I say, that issue is resolved.

The other thing I'd like to put on the record, Mr. Speaker, is that I'm getting sick and tired of hearing the opposition to always put down our future, which is Manitoba Hydro. It's like watching an issue of *The Simpsons*: blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. It's like, you know, we want to sell Hydro. We don't want to—the member for Midland brought up that, you know what, we can't sell power to Saskatchewan. Well, maybe they have their own converters. The members do not want us to sell power to Minnesota or Wisconsin. Minnesota and Wisconsin want the cleanest power on earth: that's us. We've got the cleanest power, cleanest power in Canada. Saskatchewan is at 50 per cent coal power, 30 per cent in Alberta. Right now, with climate change, our hydro is becoming the most important resource in all of Canada.

And they talked about a new west agreement. It—we got to look at something bigger and a Canada energy policy right across Canada. We can't be looking at individual provinces. We got to look at the country of Canada and make sure our power doesn't go just north and south but east and west.

I know the member from Assiniboine talked about rates in Manitoba, 6.4 per cent—or kilowatt costs. The—Quebec, 6.75; Saskatchewan, 9.64. What we're seeing is that Manitoba has the cheapest power. What's the complaint? They keep on saying that's not good enough. They're saying, well, you know, what do we want?

Our future is with Manitoba Hydro, and I stand here today, and I will not take my hand off the pulse of the province in that Manitoba Hydro is here to stay for Manitobans, for all Manitobans, so thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park): It's always a pleasure to rise in this House and speak about a resolution that seems to beg the question, in the perfect world, what does the opposition really want?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Tyndall Park will have nine minutes remaining.

The hour being 12 noon, this House is recessed and stands recessed until 1:30 p.m. this afternoon.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, December 3, 2015

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