

Third Session - Fortieth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS

Official Report
(Hansard)

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authority of
The Honourable Daryl Reid
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Fortieth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLAN, Nancy	St. Vital	NDP
ALLUM, James, Hon.	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	NDP
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	NDP
BLADY, Sharon, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	NDP
BRAUN, Erna, Hon.	Rossmere	NDP
BRIESE, Stuart	Agassiz	PC
CALDWELL, Drew	Brandon East	NDP
CHIEF, Kevin, Hon.	Point Douglas	NDP
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	NDP
CROTHERS, Deanne	St. James	NDP
CULLEN, Cliff	Spruce Woods	PC
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	NDP
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	PC
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FRIESEN, Cameron	Morden-Winkler	PC
GAUDREAU, Dave	St. Norbert	NDP
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Liberal
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	PC
GRAYDON, Cliff	Emerson	PC
HELWER, Reg	Brandon West	PC
HOWARD, Jennifer, Hon.	Fort Rouge	NDP
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri, Hon.	Fort Richmond	NDP
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	NDP
KOSTYSHYN, Ron, Hon.	Swan River	NDP
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	Dawson Trail	NDP
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Flor, Hon.	Logan	NDP
MARCELINO, Ted	Tyndall Park	NDP
MARTIN, Shannon	Morris	PC
MELNICK, Christine	Riel	Ind.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	PC
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	NDP
OSWALD, Theresa, Hon.	Seine River	NDP
PALLISTER, Brian	Fort Whyte	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine	Midland	PC
PETTERSEN, Clarence	Flin Flon	NDP
PIWNIUK, Doyle	Arthur-Virden	PC
REID, Daryl, Hon.	Transcona	NDP
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Kewatinook	NDP
RONDEAU, Jim	Assiniboia	NDP
ROWAT, Leanne	Riding Mountain	PC
SARAN, Mohinder	The Maples	NDP
SCHULER, Ron	St. Paul	PC
SELBY, Erin, Hon.	Southdale	NDP
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	NDP
SMOOK, Dennis	La Verendrye	PC
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	PC
STRUTHERS, Stan, Hon.	Dauphin	NDP
SWAN, Andrew, Hon.	Minto	NDP
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WIGHT, Melanie	Burrows	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC
<i>Vacant</i>	The Pas	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 29, 2014

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Good afternoon, everyone. Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Mr. Speaker: Introduction of bills? No bills?

PETITIONS

Mr. Speaker: We'll move on to petitions.

Neurofibromatosis Awareness Month

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Neurofibromatosis, NF, is a genetic disorder that causes tumours to form on nerves anywhere in the body.

(2) NF also causes complications such as disfigurement, bone deformities, learning disabilities, epilepsy and cancer.

(3) NF is a neurological disorder affecting one in every 3,000 births.

(4) NF affects more than 10,000 Canadians, making it more prevalent than cystic fibrosis, Duchenne muscular dystrophy and Huntington's disease combined.

(5) The Manitoba Neurofibromatosis Support Group, MBNF, is a support group that provides much needed support to individuals and their families who are living with NF.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To proclaim that the month of May of each year is to be known throughout Manitoba as neurofibromatosis, NF, awareness month.

And, Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by J. Clark, L. Johnstone, B. Shier and many, many other Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker: In keeping with our rule 132(6), when petitions are read they're deemed to have been received by the House.

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

Neurofibromatosis, NF, is a genetic disorder that causes tumours to form on nerves anywhere in the body.

NF also causes complications such as disfigurement, bone deformities, learning disabilities, epilepsy and cancer.

NF is a neurological disorder affecting one in every 3,000 births.

NF affects more than 10,000 Canadians, making it more prevalent than cystic fibrosis, Duchenne muscular dystrophy and Huntington's disease combined.

The Manitoba Neurofibromatosis Support Group, MBNF, is a support group that provides much needed support to individuals and their families who are living with NF.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To proclaim that the month of May of each year is to be known throughout Manitoba as neurofibromatosis, NF, awareness month.

And this petition is signed by S. Wang, P. Hammell, T. Rozander-Jones and many more fine Manitobans.

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Neurofibromatosis is a genetic disorder that causes tumours to form on nerves anywhere in the body.

(2) NF also causes complications such as disfigurement, bone deformities, learning disabilities, epilepsy and cancer.

(3) NF is a neurological disorder affecting one in every 3,000 births.

(4) NF affects more than 10,000 Canadians, making it more prevalent than cystic fibrosis,

Duchenne muscular dystrophy and Huntington's disease combined.

(5) The Manitoba Neurofibromatosis Support Group, MBNF, is a support group that provides much needed support to individuals and their families who are living with NF.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To proclaim that the month of May of each year is to be known throughout Manitoba as fibromatosis, NF, awareness month.

This petition is signed by D. Poersch, K. Demers, H. Dickson and many more concerned Manitobans.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Good morning—or good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And these are the—this is the background to this petition:

(1) Neurofibromatosis, NF, is a genetic disorder that causes tumours to form on nerves anywhere in the body.

(2) NF also causes complications such as disfigurement, bone deformities, learning disabilities, epilepsy and cancer.

(3) NF is a neurological disorder affecting one in every 3,000 births.

(4) NF affects more than 10,000 Canadians, making it more prevalent than cystic fibrosis, Duchenne muscular dystrophy and Huntington's disease combined.

(5) The Manitoba Neurofibromatosis Support Group, MBNF, is a support group that provides much needed support to individuals and their families who are living with NF.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To proclaim that the month of May of each year is to be known throughout Manitoba as neurofibromatosis, NF, awareness month.

And this petition is signed by B. Riddell, A. Braun, R. Unger and many, many more fine Manitobans, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And this is the background for this petition:

Neurofibromatosis, NF, is a genetic disorder that causes tumours to form on nerves anywhere in the body.

NF also causes complications such as disfigurement, bone deformities, learning disabilities, epilepsy and cancer.

NF is a neurological disorder affecting one in every 3,000 births.

NF affects more than 10,000 Canadians, making it more prevalent than cystic fibrosis, Duchenne muscular dystrophy and Huntington's disease combined.

The Manitoba Neurofibromatosis Support Group, MBNF, is a support group that provides much needed support to individuals and their families who are living with NF.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To proclaim that the month of May of each year be known throughout Manitoba as neurofibromatosis, NF, awareness month.

This petition is signed by A. Bordush, J. Taimem, S. Friesen and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

Neurofibromatosis, NF, is a genetic disorder that causes tumours to form on nerves anywhere in the body.

NF also causes complications such as disfigurement, bone deformities, learning disabilities, epilepsy and cancer.

NF is a neurological disorder affecting one in every 3,000 births.

NF affects more than 10,000 Canadians, making it more prevalent than cystic fibrosis, Duchenne muscular dystrophy and Huntington's disease combined.

The Manitoba Neurofibromatosis Support Group, MBNF, is a support group that provides

much needed support to individuals and their families who are living with NF.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To proclaim that the month of May of each year is to be known throughout Manitoba as neurofibromatosis, NF, awareness month.

This petition is signed by K. Morton, K. Day, E. Gagne and many other fine Manitobans.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

Neurofibromatosis, NF, is a genetic disorder that causes tumours to form on nerves anywhere in the body.

NF also causes complications such as disfigurement, bone deformities, learning disabilities, epilepsy and cancer.

NF is a neurological disorder affecting one in every 3,000 births.

NF affects more than 10,000 Canadians, making it more prevalent than cystic fibrosis, Duchenne muscular dystrophy and Huntington's disease combined.

The Manitoba Neurofibromatosis Support Group, MBNF, is a support group that provides much needed support to individuals and their families who are living with NF.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To proclaim the month of May of each year is to be known throughout Manitoba as neurofibromatosis, NF, awareness month.

And this is signed by L. McIntyre, S. Warelis-Thompson, S. Cruickshanks and many others, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Neurofibromatosis, NF, is a genetic disorder that causes tumours to form on nerves anywhere in the body.

* (13:40)

(2) NF also causes complications such as disfigurement, bone deformities, learning disabilities, epilepsy and cancer.

(3) NF is a neurological disorder affecting one in every 3,000 births.

(4) NF affects more than 10,000 Canadians, making it more prevalent than cystic fibrosis, Duchenne muscular dystrophy and Huntington's disease combined.

(5) The Manitoba Neurofibromatosis Support Group, MBNF, is a support group that provides much needed support to individuals and their families who are living with NF.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To proclaim that the month of May of each year is to be known throughout Manitoba as neurofibromatosis, NF, awareness month.

Signed by H. Falk, C. Pimentel, D. Bedard and many other fine Manitobans.

Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition as follows:

(1) Neurofibromatosis, NF, is a genetic disorder that causes tumours to form on nerves anywhere in the body.

(2) NF also causes complications such as disfigurement, bone deformities, learning disabilities, epilepsy and cancer.

(3) NF is a neurological disorder affecting one in every 3,000 births.

(4) NF affects more than 10,000 Canadians, making it more prevalent than cystic fibrosis, Duchenne muscular dystrophy and Huntington's disease combined.

(5) The Manitoba Neurofibromatosis Support Group, MBNF, is a support group that provides much needed support to individuals and their families who are living with NF.

We petition the Manitoba Legislative Assembly as follows:

To proclaim that the month of May of each year is to be known throughout Manitoba as neurofibromatosis, NF, awareness month.

And this petition is signed by C. DeGagne, J. Hodge and L. Kinaham and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present this following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background of this petition is as follows:

Neurofibromatosis is a genetic disorder that causes tumours to form on the nerves of anywhere on the body.

NF also causes complications such as defiguration—disfigurement, bone deformities, learning disabilities, epilepsy and cancer.

NF is a neurological disorder affecting one in—every 3,000 births.

NF affects more than 10,000 Canadians, making it more prevalent than cystic fibrosis, Duchenne muscular dystrophy and Huntington's disease combined.

The Manitoba Neurofibromatosis Support Group, MBNF, is support group that provides much needed support to individuals and their families who are living with NF.

The petition of this Legislative Assembly follows:

To proclaim the month of May of each year to be known as throughout the Manitoba as neurofibromatosis, NF, awareness month.

And is—petition's signed by C. Newton, A. Brokopp and J. Davis and many, many other Manitobans.

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, I wish to petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And the background of this petition is as follows:

(1) Neurofibromatosis is a genetic disorder that causes tumours to form on nerves anywhere in the body.

(2) NF also cause complications such as disfigurement, bone deformities, learning disabilities, epilepsy and cancer.

(3) NF is a neurological disorder affecting one in every 3,000 births.

NF—(4) NF affects more than 10,000 Canadians, making it more prevalent than cystic fibrosis, Duchenne muscular dystrophy and Huntington's disease combined.

(5) The Manitoba Neurofibromatosis Support Group, MBNF, is a support group that provides much needed support to individuals and their families who are living with NF.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To proclaim that the month of May of each year is to be known throughout Manitoba as neurofibromatosis awareness month.

This petition's signed by S. Goodall-George, I. Goodall-George and K. Goodall-George and many, many more fine Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker: Any further petitions? Seeing none, we'll move on to committee reports. Tabling of reports? Ministerial statements?

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to oral questions, I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today Ms. Raelle Fehr, Ms. Tannis Fehr and Ms. Meaghan O'Hare, who are the guests of the honourable member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon).

And also in the public gallery we have with us today Dr. Joseph Du and his wife, Jeannie, who are the guests of the honourable Minister of Multiculturalism and Literacy (Ms. Marcelino).

And also in the public gallery today we have with us from Kildonan-East Collegiate 19 grade 9 students under the direction of Mr. John Thompson, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe).

And also in the public gallery today we have from Kent Road School, we have 60 grade 5 and 6 students under the direction of Will Burton, and this group is also located in the constituency of the honourable member for Concordia.

On behalf of all honourable members, we welcome each of you here this afternoon.

ORAL QUESTIONS**Democratic Principles
Government Record**

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): Well, let's see if the Premier can set a fine example for our young people in the gallery and work hard on this quiz today, Mr. Speaker. He hasn't done that well in the past, and it's a good opportunity for him today.

Now, first of all, the Premier has said that democracy is like a fragile flower—and we agree—precious thing. So do his decisions reflect the belief in democracy as such a fragile flower? Let's see.

Let's try this one. The Premier has abolished the right of Manitobans to vote on which of the—on all but one of the following. Which one is it? On the biggest hydro project in the history of Manitoba, (b) on the PST hike and (c) on the provincial fish?

Which of those did the Premier allow Manitobans to have a say in? Which one?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): It's very obvious the Leader of the Opposition's trying to reel in an answer that would satisfy him today.

Mr. Speaker, democracy is a fragile flower; there's no question about it. And why is that? Because we have an obligation every day to find a way to make life better for our citizens, and we do that in public debate. We do that in public debate in this Legislature.

We do that in—by regular contact with our constituents and listen to their priorities. And if they tell us their priority is infrastructure and we bring forward an infrastructure program that will create 58,900 jobs in Manitoba, that's because we're listening to the people of Manitoba.

When we hear families tell us that they want to make sure that their children have good job opportunities and we bring forward a skills agenda—and we made a very significant announcement this week, Skill Build shops for young people in high schools can get an academic education as well as a trade preparation as an apprentice—that is a strong desire to make our community work through a democratic process of listening to people.

And when they say they need skills and skills opportunities, we're providing them.

**Member for Riel
Removal from Caucus**

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): Well, the right answer was the Premier—was (c), Mr. Speaker. The provincial fish was the only thing the Premier thought Manitobans should have a say in, not the PST hike he promised he wouldn't invoke, not the biggest hydro project in the history of Manitoba, just the provincial fish. And somebody needs to give him the hook, really.

Let's try this second one, and I invite him to try a little harder here.

An NDP MLA was removed from caucus for which of the following: (a) making an insulting racist comment, (b) illegally withholding funds from the horse racing industry, (c) insulting municipal leaders by calling them insolent children or (d) none of the above? Which was it?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, because we have a democracy, we have this very experience right here of being able to ask each other questions to make us accountable for the policies we put forward.

The member opposite has many occasions to correct the record on misinformation and very untoward and disrespectful comments he's made in front of this Legislature and in the media. He has never availed himself of the opportunity to do that.

* (13:50)

If he wants to do a quiz, why doesn't he quiz himself on why he can never acknowledge when he puts misinformation on the record or uses disrespectful language in this Chamber? Let him quiz himself on that.

For our part, we will continue to listen to Manitobans. Good jobs, skills for young people, looking after people when they need health care, looking after families when they need daycare, building streets and roads and flood protection for Manitobans so they do not have to experience floods. We have very high water in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, right now in this province, and we're building the kind of flood protection which will keep people safe in their communities for decades to come.

Mr. Pallister: This is a Premier who ran on a promise not to raise the PST, said it was something he would never do and then proceeded weeks later to do it. So I don't think I need a lesson from him on democracy or respecting the people of this province.

He needs a lesson from the people of this province, and he shouldn't go into hiding every time he has a chance to learn from those people.

Number 3—and that's 0 for two. The MLA for Riel stated that the Premier's office was involved and aware of in advance a partisan political rally's organization. Access documents were obtained which verify her claim as true. The Premier knew this for over one and a half years but did nothing about it.

Subsequently, the MLA was removed from the NDP caucus for which of the following: (a) forgetting the facts, (b) covering up the facts or (c) telling the truth?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite, just this week in the House, made allegations that when he was in office that he actually increased funding for education in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, in the budgets that were tabled in this House when the member opposite was a member at the Cabinet table, the '93-94 budget cut education \$14.3 million. In the '94-95 budget, the education programs were cut \$20.5 million. In the '96-97 budget, another cut of \$15 million.

I want to give the member the opposite to quiz himself. When he's confronted with the facts, will he apologize to the House for the misinformation he put on the record, which severely damaged education? Mr. Speaker, 691 teachers lost their jobs, school programs were cut, and he denies it.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a new question.

Canadian Tire Data Centre Small-Business Support

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): At the next opportunity, Mr. Speaker, I will table a map which will give the Premier directions to Truthtown so he can get there.

Now, No. 4. The right answer for that last one, Mr. Speaker, I think was (c). Yes, his former colleague of 10 years was kicked out of the caucus by the Premier for telling the truth. Interesting.

Now, the NDP government chose to hand out million-dollar-plus subsidies to Canadian Tire, but 10,000 small businesses across our great province were given nothing but higher taxes.

Why was that? (a) The NDP believe that small businesses just create small jobs, (b) Canadian Tire

only had \$200 million of profit that year, so they really needed the help from those same Manitobans, or (c) Manitoba taxpayers just love to watch the Premier hand out their money in subsidy cheques, or was it (d) if the NDP take a dollar and only give back a nickel to someone, it's pretty obvious it's just a big shell game? Which of those?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, a year ago in May, the Leader of the Opposition said that when you provide money to an organization to create good skilled jobs in this province that once the money runs out that the jobs will disappear.

Well, I'm here to report to him today Canadian Tire spent up to \$50 million fixing up their new downtown facility for a cloud computer facility which will serve all of their stores in Canada, \$50 million on the construction phase.

Now they've opened up a new media lab that will create applications for retailing, what they call e-tailing, because the face of retailing is changing in this country. More people are identifying what they wish to purchase online through their iPads, through their computers, through their smart phones. They're making those purchases online, and they're evaluating their purchases after they receive them online. And modern retailing in this country will be recreated right here in the province of Manitoba with young people, with exceptional talents and skills and training, creating those new apps right here in Manitoba.

And the member opposite's opposed to that? What is wrong with him? We want a good future for young people, and we're doing it with an excellent partnership with one of the better corporations in Canada.

Pending Litigation Government Intention

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): Well, I guess what's wrong with me, Mr. Speaker, is I like to see small businesses succeed in Manitoba, and the Premier doesn't. Money in the hands of the Premier, gone; money in the hands of small-business people, jobs. That's what we believe over here.

Now, let's try this. It's 0 for four, but he's got a couple more shots.

The NDP is going to go to court against the PC Party to (a) fight for their right to take away Manitobans' right to vote, (b) fight for their right to

raise the PST now and in the future, fight for the right to establish a precedent which would allow them to raise income tax or business tax in the future as they wish, or all of those things? Which is it?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): It's now becoming clear to me why, when the Leader of the Opposition was in Cabinet, he wanted to abolish history as a course in the schools in Manitoba, and here's why.

When he was in Cabinet the small-business tax rate was 9 per cent, but only up to \$200,000 of profits. After that it was 17 per cent, and in addition to that they had a capital tax.

Let's take a look at history today, Mr. Speaker. In Manitoba, capital tax gone for all businesses. Tax for large businesses in Manitoba: 12 per cent, not 17 per cent. Tax for small business in Manitoba: zero-zero.

So I know why he doesn't like history courses, but history will show we have the lowest taxes in Canada for small business. It's worth about \$55,000 of additional revenue to every small business in Manitoba. They voted against it, we put it in place, and that's why our economy is growing.

Fiscal and Development Management Government Record

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): What's also gone is any integrity the Premier ever had when he promised people in this province he wouldn't jack up their taxes and then proceeded to do so, knowing full well that he was going to do so all that time, Mr. Speaker. That's a problem. It's a problem of trust.

I'll give him one last chance here. Why—or how can you tell that the NDP's favourite number is 300?

Is it because (a) the PST was raised by the NDP and cost Manitobans about \$300 million per year? Is it because (b) the bipole west line—or the bipole line itself constructed on the west side of the lake will cost Manitoba ratepayers an additional \$300 million per year? Is it because they've referenced the '90s 300 times in this session? Or is it just because the bipole west line is actually going to go 300 miles out of the way to transmit power? Or is it all of the above? Last chance.

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I always enjoy the opportunity to talk about the fact that Manitoba Hydro provides 98 per cent of Manitoba's energy, clean, reliable, affordable energy.

Again, when the member opposite was in Cabinet, the two existing transmission lines, which are very close together, went out of service for a brief period of time, which put at risk the entire Manitoba economy. If that would occur today, Mr. Speaker, it would cost the Manitoba economy over a billion and a half dollars every single week that those lines were out. We're building additional transmission to protect the Manitoba economy and to protect Manitobans.

And in addition, Mr. Speaker, as we build that transmission on the western part of Manitoba, we now have a \$100-million sale of hydroelectricity to Saskatchewan and an interest in another 500 megawatts of power, which will generate billions of dollars of export revenues, which will pay down the cost of transmission, will pay down the cost of the dams and keep Manitoba Hydro's rates the lowest in North America.

Manitoba Hydro Rate Increases

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): Mr. Speaker, members opposite campaigned on many promises, but in actuality they broke many of those promises. This government has lied to the people of Manitoba time and time again.

* (14:00)

Hydro rates have gone up 10.75 per cent since 2012. Over the next 20 years hydro rates will at least double.

I ask the Minister responsible for Hydro to stop this nonsense of doubling hydro rates, listen to the real owners of Manitoba, the ratepayers of Manitoba, do the right thing.

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro): Well, this member also asked me to stop the projects that are under way that keep our hydro rates the lowest in North America in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, we like, in this Chamber during question period, to quote the odd expert here and there. Let me put another one on the record. This is coming from the—from SaskPower. Members opposite love talking about Saskatchewan. SaskPower is looking for an increase in their rates bigger than what we are here in Manitoba. What does SaskPower say? Provinces that are able to generate most of their electricity through hydro power have the lowest electricity rates in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, why would we want to listen to members opposite when that only makes our rates go up?

Manitoba Hydro Bipole III Cost to Ratepayers

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): Mr. Speaker, we and all Manitobans know that this NDP government has a spending problem.

In the last election every NDP candidate said that the cost of Bipole III would not cost Manitoba ratepayers 1 cent. That was an outright lie. They said, and I quote, the line is paid for by international hydro sales.

Why is the NDP government making our ratepayers pay billions of dollars for Bipole III when they said it wouldn't even cost 1 cent?

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro): As usual, Mr. Speaker, this member is absolutely incorrect.

We have \$9 billion worth of long-term solid contracts that we've signed with Wisconsin, we've signed with Minnesota. As the Premier (Mr. Selinger) has just mentioned, we've signed with Saskatchewan. And there's more to come.

What does Saskatchewan say about our proven formula to keep rates down? They say that Manitoba rates are low because our province, Manitoba, has the capability of generating low-cost electricity through the use of extensive hydro generation and that rates in Manitoba are heavily subsidized by substantial export savings.

You are wrong.

Mr. Eichler: We will stand with the Manitoba ratepayers each and every day, Mr. Speaker. This minister's out of touch.

Members opposite have a historic opportunity today to vote about doubling the hydro rates this afternoon, in fact, doubling the debt, and to proceed with caution and develop what is the interests of Manitobans, a path to prosperity, not failure.

Will the minister responsible, any member on that side of the House, stand up and apologize for taking them down a path that will double hydro rates? Do the right thing, because this is costing Manitoba ratepayers billions and billions of dollars without any success.

Mr. Struthers: It's quite something, Mr. Speaker, that the people who put so much misleading information on the record can have the gall to stand and ask us to apologize for having the lowest rates on the continent. That doesn't make any sense.

If he doesn't believe SaskPower, maybe he'll believe Export Development Canada, who proves the opposition wrong. What do they say? They say electricity exports to the US grew by just over 21 per cent in 2013 owing to favourable water conditions. The outlook remains equally strong as Manitoba Hydro invests in transmission capacity and new export contracts that are signed. The total value of the company's export contract since 2010 is just over \$9 billion, and overall the energy sector forecast envisions 7 per cent growth in '14 and 6 per cent in '15.

We have a bright future in this province. We're not going to turn it over to you.

Mr. Speaker: I've cautioned the honourable Minister of Municipal Government before. I've cautioned the honourable Minister of Municipal Government before, please place your comments through the Chair, and I'm going to ask you once again for your co-operation in that regard.

Manitoba Hydro IBEW Job Numbers

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): Mr. Speaker, this NDP government likes to play fast and loose with the truth when it comes to jobs in this province.

In question period on April 9th this year, the Premier stated, and I quote, "there's close to 700 additional linemen in Manitoba," quote, end quote. In fact, according to Mike Velie of IBEW, there is only a total of 117 hourly journeymen, half of whom do not work on the front-line construction crews but, instead, in administration jobs. So once again the Premier played fast and loose with the facts in this province.

How can Manitobans believe anything that he says?

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro): Well, the real question, Mr. Speaker, is how can Manitobans believe an opposition who keeps not telling the truth when it comes to this issue and so many others?

Since—the facts of the matter are that since 2000 there's been an increase of 646 positions, IBEW positions, and an increase of about 50 in terms

of linesmen. That is growth. That is progress. That is testament to the fact that we're building this province and providing good-paying, high-skilled jobs to Manitobans.

Mrs. Stefanson: Mr. Velie went on to say that since 1999 the IBEW has grown by approximately 500 members, but he indicated that these were jobs that were transferred as a result of acquisitions of Winnipeg Hydro and Centra Gas. He said in a letter to the Minister of Health (Ms. Selby), and I quote, to say that this is the result of additional opportunities that your government has created is just wrong, end quote.

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Hydro just admit that their attempt to take credit for creating 700 jobs is nothing but a lie fabricated by this NDP government to try and once again take credit for jobs that they did not create here in Manitoba?

Mr. Struthers: Well, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite has it absolutely incorrect, as usual.

IBEW—as a matter of fact, IBEW is working on such projects as the St. Joseph and St. Leon wind farms. They've worked on Wuskwatim from the beginning to the end. They've worked on the Keeyask camp. They're working on the Keewatin converter station that's being built right now. IBEW's also been working on the downtown Manitoba Hydro office, which members opposite opposed, and they're working on the retrofit at Great Falls.

Mr. Speaker, it's very clear, and the facts bear this out, IBEW membership has grown by 646-plus members and 50 of which of those are linesmen, highly trained linesmen that have skills that we want to employ here in Manitoba.

Mrs. Stefanson: Well, Mr. Speaker, the NDP government likes to claim that they protect front-line workers, but, again, this is false. Mr. Velie said, and I quote, the IBEW is losing its market share and our growth has stifled under your government. The group that has benefited the most under the NDP is the supervisory staff at Manitoba Hydro, end quote, not the front-line workers.

Why is the NDP government lying about job creation numbers? Will they just admit that, as Mr. Velie says, under the watch of the NDP government the focus has not been on front-line journeypersons' jobs?

Mr. Struthers: Well, the members opposite lose a certain amount of credibility when they don't get the

numbers right in terms of the jobs that have been created in IBEW, and then they try to ignore the fact that when they were in government and they sold off the Manitoba Telephone System that IBEW lost 500 positions—500.

The energy and paperworkers union went from 1,750 down to 1,000 when MTS was privatized. The TEAM, the technical employees, went from 1,100 down to 1,000. That was a total loss of good-paying jobs of 1,350—dollars, when the people across the way privatized Manitoba Telephone System.

They also, Mr. Speaker, I will add, dipped into the collective agreements and messed around with pensions and benefits that did not work in favour of Hydro employees either—

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

Hydro Expansion Plans Cost to Ratepayers

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): This government knows that experts are saying that their \$25-billion NDP capital expansion plan at Hydro is risky for Manitobans.

Now, Mr. Speaker, one rationale for that is that this NDP government has a record of getting the real cost of Hydro development capital projects wrong. The difference between the estimates and the actual's a big difference. Where is the evidence for that? Head office: estimate, \$75 million; actual, \$283 million. Wuskwatim: estimate, \$900 million; actual, \$1.8 billion. Pointe du Bois: estimate, \$100 million; actual, \$2.4 billion.

* (14:10)

Mr. Speaker, as a result, Manitoba ratepayers pay more. Hydro rates are up 10.75 per cent since 2012 alone.

Will this minister admit that because of the NDP government's pattern of underestimating real cost of projects, the capital expansion plan of Hydro could be as high as \$50 billion? Is she going to raise hydro—

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

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro): This coming from a rural member whose party worked—voted against equalizing rural rates for rural Manitobans.

They come into this Chamber and talk about integrity, Mr. Speaker. They voted against northern Manitobans having the same equalized rates as our friends in the city of Winnipeg. They can give us and anybody else no lessons when it comes to making rates affordable for rural Manitobans.

Provincial Debt Burden

Mr. Friesen: Mr. Speaker, the NDP's \$25-billion hydro capital expansion plan means that when Manitoba Hydro goes into debt, it means that the NDP government issues bonds. Now, it also means that it—that means that it's lending Manitoba Hydro the money. It also means that the NDP government is charging them for the service, another tax, another source of revenue for this government.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Province's debt is rising at breakneck speed. We've seen over the past 14 years they can't control their spending. A \$32-billion deficit and the debt from these hydro projects puts at risk Manitoba's credit rating.

Mr. Speaker, the just released independent inquiry into Manitoba Hydro's expansion plan notes that if Manitoba's credit is downgraded and borrowing is more expensive, the NDP government has two options: higher taxes or reduced services.

I ask this minister: Which one is the minister intending, higher taxes or reduced services or both?

Mr. Struthers: Well, Mr. Speaker, the member across the way hasn't got it right.

Mr. Speaker, when we came into office, the debt-to-equity ratio at Manitoba Hydro was 86 to 14; today, 75 to 25. The ratio has improved. They are in a much better financial situation they were when the members opposite had their hands on the wheel. The asset base for Hydro is growing and continues to grow. It's a much stronger position. The facts of the matter are, is that Manitoba Hydro has never been in a stronger financial position.

This is not the time to take the advice of members opposite, rely on natural gas in the future. This is the time that we build Manitoba Hydro, we use it to keep our rates the lowest of the continent, and we put Manitobans to work.

Manitoba Hydro MBLC Meeting

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland): Mr. Speaker, on March 24th the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro assured the Manitoba bipole landowners

committee that Manitoba Hydro would sit down with them and address their concerns. He assured them. But this must be like the PST promise: say one thing, do something else.

Why is it that this minister continues to not allow Manitoba Hydro to meet with the MBLC? What is this minister so afraid of? What's this government so afraid of that they continue to bully and threaten landowners bracing for the social and economic impact of Bipole III on their properties?

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro): I wish members opposite would start the practice of doing some homework before they come into this Chamber.

The—I met with CAEPLA. I met with CAEPLA plus members, I think, maybe even from his own constituency here in the Manitoba Legislature. I met with the group. We talked about some of the challenges that they would face. I ensured them that they would be treated fairly.

And, Mr. Speaker, landowners continue to sit with Manitoba Hydro and sign off on agreements, and nearly 50 per cent of landowners have signed with Manitoba Hydro, the—in some cases receiving 150 per cent of fair market value.

So, Mr. Speaker, I really wish the member opposite would take those kinds of—

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

Mr. Pedersen: Mr. Speaker, I'm now getting calls from landowners in Minnesota regarding a transmission line this government is proposing to build on their properties in the United States. When I relate the bad experience of landowners here in Manitoba with this minister and this government, these Minnesota landowners are not impressed with the bullying tactics of this government.

So when will this minister and this government drop their arrogance, drop their ignorance, drop the threats and the bullying and sit down with the Manitoba bipole landowners committee to address the social and economic impacts of Bipole III on their properties?

Mr. Struthers: Well, Mr. Speaker, members opposite have invariably stood up for the rights of Saskatchewan folks and Minnesota folks. They stand up for their cousins in Ottawa. They stand up for everybody except the Manitoba ratepayers in this province.

Mr. Speaker, I fully admit there's a lot of interest in Minnesota to buy Manitoba's clean, green hydroelectricity, and I'm not going to let the member for Midland bully us off of making good, hard-earned money on behalf of the people in Manitoba as we sell power to Wisconsin and to Minnesota and to Saskatchewan and then we, in turn, use that to subsidize our rates here in Manitoba to build our economy and put Manitoba families to work.

Manitoba Hydro Demand-Side Management

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): When I've called on the Premier to end his proposed large hydro rate increases with an effective demand-side management approach, he's repeatedly said that Manitoba has been rated No. 1 in demand-side management. Mr. Speaker, we've dug up the relevant report. It was from five years ago. It reports on the year before the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger) was even premier.

Sadly, as I table yet again, today, under his leadership, Manitoba has slipped so far back in demand-side management that we are now rated 25th out of 25 states and provinces evaluated.

How does the Premier justify burdening Manitoba families with continuous rate increases while still ignoring effective demand-side management?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): I appreciate the member for River Heights tabling—putting the same table in front of us that he put in front of us a week ago.

We said we've gone from No. 10 to No. 1 in energy efficiency in Canada. And just this morning, Mr. Speaker, the Minister responsible for the City of Winnipeg, along with the Minister of Hydro, announced more Power Smart programs in Manitoba. Very significant.

Since 1999 \$800 million have been saved by Manitobans through conserving energy. Now they will be able to do that at higher levels of income. They will be able to do that with more convenient tools that are going to be made available to them. Manitoba Hydro employees are going door to door in the North End of Winnipeg explaining to people the opportunities they have to save energy, and these opportunities are opportunities that are available to all Manitobans, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to Power Smart programs.

There are programs now available for landlords. There will be additional programs for commercial operators. There are long-standing programs for residents in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, conveniently financed on the hydro bill.

Manitoba Hydro believes people can conserve energy—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

The honourable First Minister's time has elapsed.

Manitoba Hydro Rate Increases Impact on Manitobans

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, a few programs doesn't mean a comprehensive approach which is effective in reducing power—electricity consumption.

The Premier often compares Manitoba's hydro rates to everyone else in North America. With the rate increases Manitobans have been burdened with each year and two in the last year, the Premier stands on pretty shaky ground if he intends to continue along that line. With the continuing inflation increases to Manitoba Hydro bills are to stop, the Premier needs to chart a course for lower hydro rates, and that he is not doing.

With no new and effective approaches to put the brakes on, how does the Premier expect Manitoba's families to deal with these large rate increases?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, we will, through an independent audit, every year table in this Legislature the rates for electricity, the rates for home heating and the rates for auto insurance, and we will guarantee that they will be the lowest in Canada. We did it last year. We've done it this year. And you know what, Mr. Speaker? They were the lowest rates in Canada. That was a great accomplishment for the people of Manitoba, and we will continue to do that.

* (14:20)

The Power Smart programs provide additional opportunities for Manitobans to save on their energy bills. By 2017 the annual savings will be \$157 million. Today's new initiatives take it to a new level of savings for Manitobans, \$157 million annually, very significant savings for Manitobans.

And we look forward to further announcements from Manitoba Hydro on Power Smart programs, which will allow Manitobans to conserve energy, save energy. You will see new technologies, you will

see new tools and you will see new opportunities for Manitobans to conserve energy, because they believe that a kilowatt saved is a kilowatt exported, which earns higher revenues, which pays down the cost of the dam and keeps Manitobans' hydro rates the lowest in North America.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, in its final report before the NFAT review, the Consumers' Association of Canada said, and I quote, Manitoba Hydro did not develop assumptions and parameters for additional demand-side management in its original business case and did not incorporate additional demand-side management into any of the alternative demand-side management development plans.

Manitobans have heard the Premier's rhetoric many times over, and still they are seeing their hydro rates go up and up and up.

I ask the Premier: When exactly can Manitobans expect his NDP government to stop burdening Manitoba families with more hydro rate increases?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, all the members of the opposition were opposed to the idea of having uniform rates for hydro for rural and northern Manitobans. We brought that legislation. We passed it in this House.

At the home that the Minister of Hydro and the Minister responsible for the City of Winnipeg were at this morning, the program that they will participate in will save them somewhere between five and seven hundred dollars a year on their electricity and home heating bill. That's a very significant saving for that homeowner, and those benefits will be available to hundreds, if not thousands, of Manitoba homeowners.

We believe that energy conservation is a very key element of the affordability equation for Manitoba, and Manitoba Hydro not only will be announcing new programs, they'll be rolling out new opportunities for Manitobans to conserve energy, save money and keep a low cost of living in Manitoba.

Lake Manitoba/Lake St. Martin Flood Protection Plans

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Interlake): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Pallister) likes to tell us we should not dwell on their record in the 1990s, in the last century, as he puts it. In terms of flooding, how convenient that would be for him, who, for personal political gain, quit his job as the

minister responsible for Emergency Measures a few short months before the flood of the century hit in 1997. Shame.

The waters are rising around lakes Manitoba and St. Martin once again, Mr. Speaker. Will the current Minister responsible for Emergency Measures, a man who stood on the front line from start to finish during the flood of 2011, update the House as to the actions being taken to address this threat?

Thank you.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister responsible for Emergency Measures): First of all, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for the Interlake for once again speaking out behalf of his constituents, particularly in around Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin.

This year again we face challenges, more than 200 per cent of normal precipitation in both April and May. It's put challenges on the Assiniboine, challenges in terms of the Portage Diversion, challenges in terms of Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin.

We have used our legacy from the 2011 flood, the emergency outlet from Lake St. Martin. We have it ready to go if necessary. We've asked for the federal approvals. Our goal will be to minimize impact on Manitobans, including people around Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin.

I want to assure the member for Interlake, on this side, when the going gets tough, we don't quit; we get going to work to protect Manitobans.

Manitoba Hydro Rates Impact on Seniors

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): I'm really—actually really glad the minister finally noticed that we're having a flood.

Mr. Speaker, seniors in their own homes on fixed incomes have been—sorry—have been hard hit by this government. Increases in the PST and broadening of the PST items, like house insurance, have hurt Manitobans.

Increases in hydro rates of 8 per cent in 2012 and another 2 and a half per cent in 2013, for a total of 10 and three-quarters per cent, have taken \$100 million off the kitchen tables of Manitoba. This government's reckless hydro development plans have put seniors' retirements at risk.

Why is this government jeopardizing seniors' retirements?

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro): This is the government that this year will put \$235 into seniors' pockets through a tax rebate, Mr. Speaker. This is the government that has made it possible for seniors to enjoy the lowest hydro rates on the continent.

This is the government that's going to prevent members opposite from privatizing Hydro, which throws into disrepute—which absolutely, Mr. Speaker, puts pressure on seniors and rates and puts at jeopardy the jobs that employ the grandchildren of the same seniors that the member opposite pretends to be interested in.

Impact on Low-Income Manitobans

Mr. Wishart: Well, I think the grandchildren of those seniors will still be paying off the debt.

Mr. Speaker, those living on EIA are very vulnerable to increased costs. A 10 and three-quarter per cent increase on hydro rates is quite a blow, and landlords have but little choice to pass it on quickly. Hydro rates have already increased by—but EIA housing allowance has not.

How are these most vulnerable people supposed to make ends meet? I'm pretty sure they can't take that government promise to pay the bill.

Mr. Struthers: I wonder, then, how he can justify voting against the budget with Rent Assist built right into that budget. I wonder how he can justify that.

Mr. Speaker, as we speak, members of—as we speak this afternoon, members from Hydro are on Aberdeen Avenue in Winnipeg in Point Douglas and they're going door to door to help people apply for, help people take advantage of the affordable energy program, which for low-income people means that they can make investments in their homes that saves them hundreds and hundreds of dollars every year with low rates.

Not only do we have the lowest rate, but we're working with low-income people to make sure that they—their homes are as energy efficient as we can get it. I only wish members opposite had that kind of a long-term vision.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order, please.

Time for oral questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Mr. Speaker: It is time for members' statements.

The honourable member—[*interjection*] It is time for members' statements. Oral questions has expired.

North Kildonan Cobras Hockey City Champions

Hon. Erna Braun (Minister of Labour and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, today I am thrilled to welcome teammates, coaches and parents of the North Kildonan Cobras 10A3 hockey team. This spring, the Cobras were undefeated in the playoffs and went on to win the city championship.

While the city championship is a wonderful achievement to end the year, the Cobras played great hockey throughout their entire season. The Cobras were the winners of the Blake Wheeler Division at the Winnipeg Jet Challenge Cup at Christmastime. They also finished third in their division during the regular season.

The Cobras were undefeated in the playoffs, defeating the top teams from both sides of Winnipeg to win the championship with a record of 6 and zero. The Cobras' spectacular season was thanks to every member of the team coming together. The boys worked incredibly hard and played respectful and sportsmanlike hockey. The coaches and parents were the support the boys needed to pull through and play some exceptional hockey.

It is such a pleasure to see these young players come together, believing in themselves and each other. The team was made even stronger thanks to the dedication of their hard-working coaches and parents. Those early morning hockey practices can be a trial on everyone on the team. It's fantastic to see that hard work pay off with the Cobras' championship win.

In the words of Coach Rob Schrofel, the Cobras were champions before the finals because of how they played and worked together, winning the title was an added bonus. Congratulations to all team members and coaches on your achievements this year. Go Cobras.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for—the honourable Minister of Labour?

Ms. Braun: Leave to put their names—

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable Minister of Labour have leave to include the names of the players of the team she's mentioned in her statement? [*Agreed*]

Thank the honourable minister.

North Kildonan Cobras 10 A3 Hockey Team Members: Erik Schrofel, Konrad Heinrichs, Nathan Thomsen, Trey Ross, Matteo Pescatore, Keaton Walkof, Bryce Semeniuk, Nathaniel Millar, Alex Vitolin, Ryan Tabor, Sylas Walker, Robbie Aime, Gaige Tetrault, Kolby Wiebe; Coaches: Rob Schrofel, Tom Walker, Shelby Wiebe, Kelsey Walkof, Jake Slobodian; Manager: Robert Aime

* (14:30)

Raelee Fehr

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): It's my honour to rise in the House today and acknowledge a very deserving student from Emerson. Raelee Fehr is a soon-to-be graduate of Roseau Valley School in Dominion City, was recently named a recipient of a very special award.

Over the last three years Raelee has been involved with Out of the Blue, a program at Roseau Valley School that helps to encourage mental health awareness. Through this program, Raelee helps fellow students find ways to safely respond to depression and other mental health issues, helping to erase the stigma of mental health in a high school setting.

In 2012, Raelee began participating in We Day, attending as a participant. In following years, she served as a booth volunteer, helping to educate youth and adults about the important work Me to We does in countries all over the world.

Through Me to We, Raelee was able to travel to Ecuador, helping to build a school and helped to give the gift of education to students who may never receive it. This summer, Raelee will travel to Nicaragua, where she will do more humanitarian work. Raelee worked hard through her jobs as a cashier, odd jobs and fundraisers to be able to go on these trips and do the important work in other countries.

Raelee is truly one of the most humble young people you will ever meet. Her work has not only benefited students at her own school in her own community, but students all over the world have benefited from the important work that she does each and every day. She is an incredibly hard worker and deserves each and every accolade she receives.

Mr. Speaker, recently, Raelee received a Young Humanitarian Award, sponsored by the Manitoba Teachers' Society, awarded to students who work to

benefit others not only here but abroad. I can think of no more deserving award winner than Raelee.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all members of this House, I want to thank and congratulate Raelee for all the work she has done over the past few years whether here or abroad. I wish her nothing but the best in the future, where I know she will only continue to do great things.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Dr. Joseph Du

Hon. Flor Marcelino (Minister of Multiculturalism and Literacy): Today, I would like to welcome Dr. Joseph Du and wife Jeannine and also today to recognize the enormous contributions Dr. Joseph Du has made to our province.

Dr. Du is a leader in Winnipeg's Chinese community and has been a driving force behind the development and revitalization of the Chinatown district. When Dr. Du arrived in Winnipeg, the Chinatown district was a small collection of restaurants. Wanting to create a cultural centre that Chinese-Manitobans could be proud of, Dr. Du formed the Winnipeg Chinatown Development Corporation in 1981. Over the next 10 years, he worked with various levels of government to build the Chinese garden and the gate on King Street and the Dynasty Building that houses the Winnipeg Chinese Cultural and Community Centre.

There are other buildings in the Chinatown area that Dr. Du helped build, the most recent of which is the Peace Tower. It is a seven-storey housing development on Princess Street that features 48 apartments, half of which are for low-income clients and six specifically designed for people with disabilities. The building utilizes geothermal energy for its heating and cooling systems.

In addition to his community activism, Dr. Du operated a successful pediatrics practice at the Winnipeg Clinic. For 33 years, he also joined a group of doctors in a northern Manitoba outreach program, flying to remote communities to treat First Nations and Metis children.

On May 15th, the University of Manitoba's faculty of medicine honoured Dr. Du with an honorary doctorate of law for his pre-eminence in community leadership and philanthropy.

Mr. Speaker, when you walk through Winnipeg's Chinatown today, you will feel the vibrancy of Chinese culture and the pride of Chinese-Canadians.

I want to thank Dr. Joseph Du for everything he has done to help build Winnipeg's Chinatown and most especially for his many, many contributions to the province of Manitoba.

James Moffatt

Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise today to honour and commend James Moffatt for receiving the Town of Virden's Citizen of the Year Award. At the spry age of 98, Jim is an enthusiastic contributor to the community for nearly four decades.

James Moffatt was a soldier of the Second World War. After he left the army, he travelled all over Canada working for a construction company located in the town-city of Weyburn, Saskatchewan. During the construction project in Virden, he met his future wife, Emily, who was working at the hotel where he was staying. He stated that he married the cook

Since he came to live in Virden, Jim has been a significant member of the community and has a wall of awards to show for it. One of the major projects that he contributed to was the restoration of the Auditorium Theatre, which was originally built in 1911. Before the restoration, the building was used for a movie theatre until it fell into disrepair and was slated for demolition. Wanting to ensure that the Auditorium Theatre would live for—to see another era, Jim was one of the leading members to save the historic building.

As a World War II veteran, he also was an active member of the Virden legion and chaired many committees over the years for the legion. Jim was also—sat on other committees including the Sherwood Nursing Home, the Virden Cemetery, the Virden Curling Club and the Remembrance Day service committee.

Last week when Prince Charles and Carmella [*phonetic*], the Duchess of Cornwall, came to Manitoba for the royal visit, Jim Moffatt was invited to attend the reception at the Lieutenant Governor's residence. Our local paper were able to get pictures of Jim visiting with Prince Charles and Carmella [*phonetic*].

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would like to take this time to applaud James Moffatt for his contribution to

our community, to the province of Manitoba and to our country.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

At Home and Away: Remembering the First World War

Ms. Deanne Crothers (St. James): As the world marks the 100-year anniversary of the First World War, Manitobans are reflecting back on this significant period in history.

The Archives of Manitoba is helping us learn more about the First World War with an initiative called At Home and Away: Remembering the First World War. Over the next four years, original war time records will be displayed on the Archives' new blog, as well as in exhibits at 200 Vaughan Street. The collection includes original photographs, letters and diaries that tell the story of the First World War from the personal point of view of those who lived through it, both here in Manitoba and overseas.

The first exhibit, At Home: Winnipeg, 1914-1915, features 100-year-old photographs taken by Lewis Benjamin Foote. The photographs capture adults and children at work and play, as well as people in the military at the outbreak of the First World War. Also on display is a slideshow of Foote's photographs that document the construction of our very own Manitoba Legislature between 1915 and 1916.

The Archives is also highlighting the records of the Battershill family. Two sons serving in Europe regularly wrote letters home to their families describing the living conditions, their activities and their feelings about the war. It is incredibly moving to view these firsthand accounts of such a pivotal period of time. They help us understand the complex emotions tied to war and the stress that families endured.

Mr. Speaker, 100 years after the First World War, it is important that we honour the memory of those Manitobans who lost their lives and remember the brave men and women who shaped our history. I invite all Manitobans to visit the Manitoba Archives to experience these powerful stories for themselves. The exhibits will continue to evolve over the next four years, so there is always something new to discover. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Grievances? Seeing no grievances.

ORDERS OF THE DAY*(Continued)***GOVERNMENT BUSINESS****House Business**

Hon. Andrew Swan (Government House Leader): On House business. I'd like to announce the Standing Committee on Justice will meet on Tuesday, June 3, 2014, at 6 p.m., to consider the following: Bill 49, The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act; Bill 52, The Non-Smokers Health Protection Amendment Act (Prohibitions on Flavoured Tobacco and Other Amendments); Bill 57, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Countermeasures Against Drug-Impaired Driving); Bill 60, The Restorative Justice Act; and Bill 66, The Statutes Correction and Minor Amendments Act, 2014.

Mr. Speaker: It has been announced that the Standing Committee on Justice will meet on Tuesday, June the 3rd, at 6 p.m. to consider the following: Bill 49, The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act; Bill 52, The Non-Smokers Health Protection Amendment Act (Prohibitions on Flavoured Tobacco and Other Amendments); Bill 57, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Countermeasures Against Drug-Impaired Driving); and Bill 60, The Restorative Justice Act; followed by Bill 66, The Statutes Correction and Minor Amendments Act, 2014.

* (14:40)

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition—House leader of the official opposition.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): Career limiting again, Mr. Speaker.

On House business.

In accordance with rule 31(9), I'd like to announce that the private member's resolution that will be considered next Thursday is the resolution on freedom and dignity in Syria, brought forward by the honourable member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler).

Mr. Speaker: It has been announced that, in accordance with rule 31(9), that the private member's resolution that will be considered next Thursday is the resolution on freedom and dignity in Syria, brought forward by the honourable member for St. Paul.

Hon. Andrew Swan (Government House Leader): Could you please call the Opposition Day motion which is in name of the honourable member for Lakeside.

OPPOSITION DAY MOTION

Mr. Speaker: We'll now call Opposition Day motion.

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): I move, seconded by the member from Midland, that the Legislative Assembly call on the provincial government to respect Manitobans as the real owners of Manitoba Hydro by immediately reconsidering the plan to at least double hydro rates for Manitoba families over the next 20 years in a risky hydro development scheme that has already cost taxpayers \$2.6 billion dollars to create the power that independent experts conclude will not be required to meet domestic needs until as late as 2034, and serves only to funnel billions of dollars in additional hidden hydro taxes and fees to the provincial government.

Mr. Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable member for Lakeside, seconded by the honourable member from Midland, that the Legislative Assembly call on the—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense? Dispense.

Mr. Eichler: It gives me as a great pride to stand here today in this Assembly and talk about something very passionate about, that all members on this House should be thinking about and the impact that it's going to have on the years and years to come not only our lives, but our children's lives, our grandchildren's lives and the impact that it's going to have on those generations to come.

When we look at the \$34-billion amount of what it is proposed cost, that is \$27,000 for every man, woman and child in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker. It's an investment that is larger than the original cost of all Hydro's present, in the process, capital assets.

Manitobans have already felt the sting. Since 2004 rates have risen quicker than the rate of inflation, despite demand increase. Since 2012 we have seen hydro rates increase by 10.75 per cent. That's according to Manitoba Hydro's most current financial forecast, and expect at least 4 per cent hike over the next 20 years. Which will mean, Mr. Speaker, those rates will double, at minimum, and you put the compound on top of that, when you do the real calculation it will work out to almost

157 per cent each and every Manitoban in this province is going to have to pay.

Now, that's assuming, Mr. Speaker, that these projects all come in under cost, and I'd like to put forward to you, what could possibly go wrong? When we look at what has happened in the past, and history has a tendency to repeat itself, obviously, under this government.

We heard earlier from member from Morden-Winker about the head office cost. The government projected a cost of \$75 million. What was the actual cost to that: \$283 million, what a difference. Wuskwatim, original cost, \$900 million, went to—that was a proposed cost—the actual cost was \$1.8 billion. Unbelievable.

And, if you remember, Mr. Speaker, when I got up in this House not that many weeks ago, and I asked the minister at that time, there was a study done by a university, a well-renowned university whereby they studied—they studied—65 countries. And what did they find out of 265 dam projects? They found that those costs were over estimated cost by 97 per cent. So we know those projects, those dam projects that were brought forward by this government—and we know what's going to happen. They'll—they're going to be coming back and saying, Mr. Ratepayer, Mrs. Ratepayer, your children, your grandchildren are going to have to pay for those increased costs. There's only one ratepayer. And this government has the audacity to stand in this House each and every day and say, we have the lowest rates in Canada. Well, guess what? Alberta has all the oil. Does that mean they got the cheapest gas? No, they don't. This government has, actually, no credibility.

What did they also say in the last election, Mr. Speaker? They said that the cost of Bipole III would be borne by the customers of which they were going to be selling to. They reneged on that too. In fact, they put out a bulletin. They pull out a press release, one that was approved by every member on that side of the House, that said it would not cost Manitoba ratepayers 1 cent. They were right. It's costing them billions and billions of dollars.

They have, actually, no credibility whatsoever. And on top of that, we all know that they also said they wouldn't raise taxes. What did they do? They went out and raised taxes. But I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, true as I'm standing here, whenever this government says something and then does another, there have a real integrity problem. And they have

not been listening. They have not been listening to the real experts.

In fact, I want to talk about one of them that was ruled out of order, a very professional company called Whitfield Russell Associates, internationally renowned leader in electricity and regulatory issues. And what did they talk about? They said Manitoba Hydro admits that these hydro-intensive plans cause the need for rate increases in the next 20 to 35 years, substantial increases.

And what are we going to see is that, as a result, because this government seems to have put out the idea that lights are going to go off. We're going to be in the darkness. And I normally don't side with the Liberal Party too much, but they have brought forward many ideas. We have brought forward many ideas about how to conserve hydro. What have we seen from this government? They've done nothing. In fact, they've cut 20 per cent of the energy-efficient savings of what they could've done to help save more hydro.

Now, when we look at the overall cost and the savings of what—that could be there, we—what we've heard from the experts, that 2034 is when we may need more hydro. Now, that's based on today's numbers. If we started to save more hydro, and we know that—everybody in this House knows that we have more efficient washing machines, fridges, dryers, furnaces. And we know—we know on this side of the House, and obviously the government must know it too, but they don't want to admit it.

But what the real factor is, Mr. Speaker, is that they just don't want to listen. They don't want to listen to those experts that have said, time and time again, that the time is not now, and it don't have to be rushed. But this government is intent on spending between three and nine million dollars per day—per day. They spent \$2.6 billion to date on a project that has not even reached approval by the PUB.

They are a runaway train that has made up their mind it doesn't matter about Manitoba taxpayers, Manitoba hydro payers or the people of Manitoba because they know best. Unfortunately, they don't. They don't know best because what have they said? What have they said, Mr. Speaker? We know that residential customers are paying 7.5 cents per kilowatt. Now, if they go ahead with their plan, what is that going to look like? It's going to look like between 16 and 20 cents per kilowatt. And we know that we have said, again, already, this is going to take

at minimum \$100 million out of Manitoba families based on the increase right now.

Now, if that doubles and that doubles, and we know it will, because we believe that the experts and the people that have had the opportunity to study this—far more intelligent than I am, and I don't pretend at 1 cent to be able to say that I can talk like the experts have who know—who know—this side inside out. And I can tell the members opposite that they should be listening. They should be listening.

* (14:50)

And what else did they say?—whenever we talk to other utilities, and especially the ones that they pretend to be selling to down in the States. Northern States Power Co. averages a estimated growth of about 1.5 per cent, and what has the government done? They're going to build them a line, a transmission line which they, again, have had a few meetings across the southern Manitoba and they haven't reached out to them in a proper way either.

And, if they would just pay attention and look at whatever is out there, and we know that a expert, an engineer in this field, Dennis Woodford, has designed a pole that would be able to carry the load that we're talking about along the highway route. And we've brought this up, and I know members opposite know about it, but will they listen? No, they won't.

What we've also found, Mr. Speaker, is that whenever this government decides to forge ahead, they don't really care about what Manitoban's going to look like. If they truly had the ratepayers of Manitoba's best wishes, they would listen to the experts, wait for June 20th for the PUB to come out with a report before they forge ahead anymore. I mean, like I said, between three and nine million dollars a day has been spent by this NDP government on the backs of all our ratepayers, our ratepayers in Manitoba who can't afford it. There's 10,000 people right now that cannot afford the rates that they are paying right now, and we know that with the rates doubling, this is going to be opportunity for every member on that House to stand up and vote with us on this resolution whereby they can actually say we made a mistake. Will they do that?

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro): You know, Mr. Speaker, Manitoba has a bright future. It has a bright future because—[interjection] I sat nice and quiet and listened respectfully to the member opposite while he

stated his case. I would ask him to do the same in this instant as well.

We have a very bright future in Manitoba. We have a very bright future in Manitoba because our economy is growing, our population is growing. We have a strategy to train and educate people to take on infrastructure projects over the next number of years in Manitoba. We have a tried-and-true formula for keeping hydro rates the lowest in the continent, Mr. Speaker, even the rate increases that are referenced by the member opposite are the lowest increases of any jurisdiction on top of already the lowest rates—hydro rates on the continent.

Mr. Speaker, I think members opposite need to get over their fear. I think they need to get over their fear of the future. We in Manitoba have some opportunities ahead of us if we are courageous enough to make the decisions that are necessary to take advantage of those opportunities, and growing Manitoba Hydro on behalf of Manitoba families is one of those opportunities, and I realize that actions speak a lot louder than words.

Now, I disagree with a lot of the words that are put on the record by the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Pallister) and the critic and members opposite, and that's fine, that's democracy. But let's look at the actions that the Conservatives have taken not just recently, but over the course of decades, Mr. Speaker. Let's go back a number of decades to the lead up to the building of Limestone. There's a pattern that develops with the Conservative Party. They look so narrowly, so myopically, so short-sightedly at this business opportunity that exists and existed back in the late '70s and into the '80s called Limestone. They belittled the project. They said, oh, we can't spend this money on Limestone because it's a big risk and it's a big risk for Manitoba taxpayers. It's a big risk for Manitoba ratepayers who consume hydro. That short-sighted, small thinking led the Conservative Party to oppose Limestone.

What's the outcome of Limestone? Yes, okay, we spent \$1.6 billion on Limestone, and I guess that really bugged the Conservative Party at the time, Mr. Speaker. I remember those days vividly, and they were worried. They thought the future was dark. They thought things were going to fall apart.

How did it turn out, Mr. Speaker? Limestone, the construction of Limestone put Manitobans to work. Good jobs. It—people that I knew in Norway House when I taught there got education and training

and jobs based on Limestone. Limestone produced \$6-billion worth of revenue for the people of Manitoba. That \$6 billion has been used to keep rates the lowest on the continent. That \$6 billion has been used to pay off the construction of Limestone. That's a positive thing. That's a good thing. Members opposite didn't see it that way.

Let's move along a little bit. What about Conawapa? Members opposite had a perfect, a glorious opportunity to make up for their mistakes on Limestone and embrace Conawapa and make some investments in hydro on behalf of Manitoba Hydro ratepayers. They had that opportunity in the '90s, and you know what they did, Mr. Speaker? They chickened out. They blew it. They backed off because they thought, oh, it's—we're going to put too much money into this, and we're going to put—oh, it's too risky. We can't, oh, we can't do that. We can't invest in this and have it pay off for Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, Conawapa still has been on the Preferred Development Plan of Hydro for a long time. It's still on that. And NFAT is looking at that as we speak. They didn't go out, the Conservatives at the time, go out and nail down some long-term, solid contracts in order to help move that project forward. They got scared, and they didn't have the courage in the '90s to stand up and make some decisions to move that project along, so that opportunity went to the wayside as well.

Comes the 21st century. Seems everybody else enters the 21st century. The Conservative Party is still stuck previous to that. When Wuskwatim—the advantage, the opportunity of Wuskwatim presents itself, what do the Conservatives do? They run and hide, Mr. Speaker. They back off again. They get scared because, oh, we can't take a little bit of money and invest it. We can't put that money into investing into generation stations and the transmission lines to take that northern clean, green power and take it to our paying customers south of the border.

They backed off again, Mr. Speaker. They opposed Wuskwatim. They opposed the fact that we sat with Chief Primrose of NCN. They opposed the fact that we were going to share some of this wealth with First Nations in the area.

Well, we went ahead and we built Wuskwatim. We went ahead and we built Wuskwatim so that we can build our economy domestically. We built Wuskwatim so that we can sell power, long-term contracts to Wisconsin and to Minnesota, Mr. Speaker.

Here we go again, Mr. Speaker. We have a group of Conservatives across the way who, again, fear the future. We have a group of Conservatives across the way who are not willing to invest money into something that is tried and true in this province, something has worked decade after decade, generation after generation. And the Conservatives across the way are worried about taking money and investing it in our future, investing it in that next generation that's going to see the—who's really going to see the benefits of the Preferred Development Plan that Hydro has put forward.

Mr. Speaker, it would be like asking a farmer not to spend money on fencelines. It would be like asking that same farmer not to invest in his barn. Stand back. Watch your fences collapse. Watch your barns fall apart. Watch your cattle roam the whole township. Don't put that money—don't invest a nickel in your farm operation and see how—where that gets you. See how that helps your business case on the farm.

Or if you have a small business, would you decide to go 40 years without investing in your small business, without looking to expand? Of course not, Mr. Speaker, but I guess if you're a Conservative, that makes sense. You hang on to your money that you would invest and you don't invest it, and then you watch your infrastructure collapse around you.

*(15:00)

That is not, I would submit, a vision for the future, Mr. Speaker, unless your vision is a little bit different than the vision that we have across on this side, unless your vision is to not sell into the export market so that you say no to projects that we're doing now and not export, so that you say no to demand-side management Power Smart programs. Unless your vision is to say no to all that, because your final vision is to do exactly what you've done with the Manitoba Telephone System, exactly what you tried to do with home care, exactly what your position is in the last election on MPI, exactly what your position is in terms of health care, and that is to turn a publicly owned corporation to your friends in the private sector, because your ideology says very clearly that the private sector is the only sector that can come in like a knight on a white, shining horse and save the day.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to assure members opposite that we're not giving you the chance to do that. Our vision, which Manitobans understand and Manitobans agree with, our vision is to keep

Manitoba Hydro in the hands of the people of Manitoba. Our vision is in fact to build hydro and invest in hydro, invest in generation stations, invest in transmission lines so that we can fulfill our domestic obligations, so that we don't run out of power and have to bring in natural gas in 10 to 12 years, so that we can make some money in this province so that my son can enjoy the benefits of the lowest rates in all of North America, so that my son can live in a province where private sector and industry chooses to invest in Manitoba, chooses to move to Manitoba and create employment because that's good economics.

Mr. Speaker, our side and our vision I will stack up against their vision any day.

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland): I certainly welcome our guests in the gallery today who have, like all Manitobans, have a real vested interest in Manitoba Hydro. And when you look at the history of Manitoba Hydro, and I know this government likes to go back in history rather than look forward, but let's revisit the purpose of Manitoba Hydro and that was to provide power to Manitobans first at an affordable rate and then sell any export.

But this government now has decided to change course. They've—they are—the—decided to Americanize Manitoba Hydro by building power, building dams now and exporting power ahead of Manitobans' needs. And if—they could possibly make the argument for that if power prices were actually a paying proposition, but they forgot to look at the changes in the energy market. The energy market has changed substantially in the last number of years, both from policies within the American administration and just the technology of the energy market from shale gas production. Most Manitobans have heard of the Bakken oil fields and the vast amounts of oil and natural gas that are coming out of the Bakken fields. The solar and the wind power, there's—you don't have to drive very far south into North Dakota or Minnesota to see wind farms, and they are—the US administration has decided to subsidize those and there is a great deal of them that have been built and many more that will be built.

And therefore what's happened in this Midwest energy market is that we have a glut of electricity power, and when you have a glut of any commodity, the prices fall. So now we have a government here that wants to build Manitoba Hydro to export power into a losing market and Manitobans will have to pay for that. And, of course, the first example we have is

Bipole III. The Premier (Mr. Selinger) promised in the last election—although we know how those promises have gone. This is another one of those promises where he promised that Manitobans would not pay 1 cent to pay for Bipole III. Now, in the last two rate increases, Manitoba Hydro is putting money aside from Manitoba ratepayers to pay for Bipole III, and we haven't even started construction of Bipole III.

Mr. Speaker, these rate increases that this government is forcing on Manitobans to pay for their reckless plans, the double-your-rates plan, we'll call it. This is going to have a major impact. In fact, it already has a major impact on Manitobans when you consider the other tax increases, the widening of the PST on many purchases and then the increase in the PST to 8 per cent, and now hydro rates are increasing as well. And I believe my colleagues were talking about 10.75 just—per cent, just in the last two years. And that's a serious impact on all Manitobans, on seniors, on fixed incomes. This affects them. They have limited funds. They can't go out and increase their income as this government continues to increase theirs.

The low-income Manitobans, the majority of them, which, by the way, happen to use electricity for their heating, this has a direct income—a direct impact on those low-income groups. And, of course, businesses and homeowners, whether it's business—large consumers of power or small businesses, they all depend on accountable hydro increases that will better their lot in Manitoba. But this government seems to be very intent on making sure that they, the NDP, are the only winners in this because we know that the government receives a lot of money out of Manitoba Hydro. And it will, as they ramp up their capital program here in terms of debt-guarantee fees, water rental fees, capital taxes, payroll taxes—there will be lots of that on the construction of this \$22-billion capital construction—PST revenue from materials purchased for these dams. The government is going to be the real winner.

So you see why they have this just incredible push to not listen to the experts. And there's been many experts from even—presenting to the PUB, even in their limited scope, that they try to shut down as much as they could in the PUB process. They're still hearing from people who tell them that this is the wrong idea that they have.

And, of course, when you—they wouldn't even allow Bipole III to be part of the PUB review here.

And, of course, this Bipole III, it reminds me—and I—as the minister was—Minister responsible for Hydro was speaking to this resolution here today, I had this vision of him out there mowing his grass in his yard in the city here, in his house. And he's got—and it—I was thinking Bipole III, okay, they're going way around the far side of the province. So now I can see the minister out there mowing his grass on his yard and his house, but he's got an extension cord that goes three blocks down the road and comes back in order to plug in his lawn mower. Does that make sense? Have you—and then he's wondering, kind of, why his lawn mower really is kind of powering out when it hits a piece of grass. You're losing so much power on that. But, you know, I suggest to the Minister of Hydro, try this. Go down to Canadian Tire, and I know Canadian Tire's a good place to buy. He likes Canadian Tire, likes putting money into Canadian Tire. Go to Canadian Tire, take your Canadian 'toller'—dollar—money, go and buy three blocks' worth of extension cords and then plug your electric lawn mower in and see what happens.

That's only, you know, it may be then he will begin to understand when you go 300 miles out of the way to build a power line, your losses are going to become higher. And, when your losses are higher, you have less revenue, never mind the capital cost of building this line 300 miles farther, the impact that it will have on all Manitobans in terms of the extra capital cost. And, given their record on Wuskwatim, where they started out at \$900 million and ended up at \$1.8 billion—that's twice as much—so if they are talking at, I don't know what is—what's the latest the number? Four billion dollars for Bipole III west route now? What is it going to end up at? Eight billion dollars? They have—can't even predict the Manitoba Hydro and this government's rate of—or estimates of their costs are—been very poor. So we don't know what the final cost of this will be.

* (15:10)

And, of course, the minister refuses to acknowledge the impact that it has on agriculture when he runs through the best farmland in all of Manitoba, cutting into the irrigation potential we have across southern Manitoba. Irrigation's increasing every year and he wants to run his line through the middle of this area where irrigation is expanding into, and with the irrigation comes high-value crops, lots of investment. The minister should realize that, when farmers invest, they pay a lot of PST too, so maybe we can get some revenue out of that instead of losing money on a hydro line.

So, Mr. Speaker, this—it's unfortunate that this government will not stand back, take a step back, take a look at what they're doing and realize that the impacts that they're going to have on Manitobans. I understand that they want the revenue. I understand they have a spending problem. They have a spending addiction. They need money to feed that addiction, but what they're—where that money is coming from is off the backs of Manitobans who have been hit many other ways by this government, and you cannot continue to break the financial backs of Manitobans just to feed their own spending addiction.

So I would certainly encourage this government, what's the rush? Step back, allow the experts to have a second look at this project. If it really is as good as what they say, then we can still do it. But we're into a depressed energy market right now, you don't need to rush into a depressed market. Yes, you want to build for markets coming up, but take a better look at it and don't just think of yourselves and your own revenue. Think of the people that you're going to hurt by doubling hydro rates in the next 20 years, those people are going to have to pay. I don't want to see my grandchildren having to pay for mistakes made because you rushed into something that was far too rushed. Thank you.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Mineral Resources): There's so much to say in such little time. But let me read some quotes to you. Let me read some quotes for our visitors and for everyone in the House: Borrowing billions in the building of power dams two or more years before you need it will create some jobs for a while and it will also increase our power rates dramatically and we'll all pay that price. The jobs will last five years, the debts will last forever. Can there be economic life in Manitoba after Limestone? That's the honourable Gary Filmon, that's 1985. That's after building a dam that's made billions of dollars for Manitobans. It's the same tired, simple, small-minded, small-town Tory argument.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I never heard a word about the environment. You know, if it was only dollars and cents, if it was only that simple. But as the member talked about, have they thought about the fact that we have the only intact boreal forest in the entire North American continent that we can preserve so that 100 years from now—not just children, but our children's children will say these people had some foresight to not cut into a boreal forest. It's not just the fact that it's a better economic plan.

You know, Mr. Speaker, right now the arrangements we have with the United States are we transport electric–hydroelectric power to them in the summer time, and in the winter time through wind farms they send it back to us; that's a pretty good arrangement. It would put—that would put the entire environmental advantage at risk. They buy hydro because it's clean and it offsets dirty coal. That's why Saskatchewan's spending 15 to 20 billion dollars to renew coal. We have a chance to renew clean, green hydroelectricity; that's why Saskatchewan's buying from us.

Mr. Speaker, there is so many facts that are wrong. There are so many facts that are wrong from members opposite that it would take me an hour to go through it.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I'm looking at the hydro report. Do you know that when you adjust for inflation we are paying less for hydroelectricity today than we were in 1994. We pay less for hydroelectricity today than in 1994 when you adjust for inflation.

And by the way, Mr. Speaker, I've tabled many times in the House cost comparisons to other jurisdictions. Let me repeat for members opposite per kilowatt hour: 6.23 cents in Manitoba; Wisconsin, 12.11 cents a kilowatt hour. Let's see where their—oh, Saskatchewan, I think they just increased their rates by 5 per cent. Let's look at—oh, let's look at British Columbia, even though they have hydro, 7.37 cents a kilowatt hour. We have the lowest electricity rates per kilowatt hour. Now, why is that?

One of the reasons, one of the main reasons we have it is because the higher rates we get in the United States offset the cost of our own domestic hydro, Mr. Speaker. And, you know, the members opposite confuse the argument so often about buying on the spot market. Yes, prices are lower on the spot market, but that power would be spilled anyway. In fact, we're getting complete profit from that power, even if it's lower in price, because that would go nowhere in the spot market. No one talks about that. They stick to simple, you know, Adam Smith's supply-demand, 17th-century philosophy that just doesn't work.

On the environment, Mr. Speaker, you know, members opposite say, why don't you go natural gas, which has been increased twice in the last six months. Natural gas prices have gone up, they're projected to go up, and they want us to become

dependent on natural gas, to substitute natural gas? A natural gas plant in—will pollute, in terms of greenhouse gases, in 177 days—one natural gas plant will pollute the equivalent that it will take a hydro dam 100 years—one natural gas line.

Now, demand. Members say, well, we don't need power 'til 2033. Why don't you talk to companies across the country? Talk to Carlisle gold who have—who are now looking to build a mine and develop a mine in Manitoba, and who, in their prospectus, that has to go through the exchanges, have put a chart of the Manitoba advantage. They call it the Manitoba advantage. It's the lowest power costs in the—oh no, I'm wrong. There's only one other place that has lower costs, according to them: Kuwait. Kuwait, Mr. Speaker. And every province and every country has higher rates.

Now, why is that? Is that because we stumbled into this, Mr. Speaker? It's because we have hydroelectricity. It's because we have—we're a naturally hydroelectric province. We don't have—we have part of the Bakken but we don't have the resources that other places have.

Frack. Members talked about frack and natural gas. Do they know that the Monterey play in California has now been reassessed by US Geological Survey to say that 95 per cent of the potential fracked natural gas is no longer there, notwithstanding the environmental concerns? Do they not know that this is a bubble? Do they not know that natural gas prices, only five years ago, we were concerned would go through the roof? Why would we rely on fossil fuels when we know it's a problem in the world, when we have access to develop hydro that lasts for 100 years? A hundred years is the lifespan of a dam. And in 100 years, that dam will pollute as much as a natural gas in—a natural gas plant in 177 days. Talk about the future. Talk about children. Talk about building the Manitoba advantage. Why, it would be foolish not to develop our hydro.

The members say, take a step back. Take a step back from Bipole III. We've already waited too long to develop the alternative, Mr. Speaker. Bipole III is for reliability, for heaven sakes. Bipole III, if we don't have it, and we lose both lines, we would lose billions of dollars, not to mention all of those people in rural and northern and Winnipeg would not have access to electricity. Electricity is now increasing in demand dramatically. Now, we've—I—you know, it's going to, I think, I'm trying to remember, now,

I think it's 80 megawatts right now a year we're increasing. That's half of Wuskwatim.

Mr. Speaker, if any of the pipe loom–pipeline projects that are presently being asked for in Canada go forward, that'll be over 100 megawatts of power. That's half of Wuskwatim. How do we—now, why would the oil companies want to come to Manitoba Hydro and use Manitoba Hydro to use those pipelines, rather than natural gas? Because they can see the future. They know there's a problem with greenhouse gases. They know there's a problem with price stability. They know that Manitoba Hydro prices will stay the lowest in the country. That's why they're coming here. That's why Alberta wants to have our hydroelectricity. That's why Saskatchewan is buying hydroelectricity from us. That's why Saskatchewan is negotiating a contract with us.

* (15:20)

That's why the Leader of the Conservative Party in Ontario says, and I quote, that, quote, if Manitoba and Quebec can supply cheaper hydro power, the province should explore buying that up, Mr. Speaker. That's the Leader of the Conservative Party in an election in Ontario: Buy Manitoba power. Good heavens, I hope they don't talk to members opposite. I sure hope they don't want to talk to members opposite.

You know what—[interjection] Oh, the member likes to talk about US partnership. Canada is an exporting country, for heaven sakes. Where does our oil go, Mr. Speaker? We export. We're proud to export. Members opposite talk about exporting pork and cattle to the United States. We're happy to export, particularly when we can get a bigger price than we can domestically. Hello, is that not common sense?

You know, Mr. Speaker, it's remarkable that members opposite, who feel that their economic geniuses could get it so wrong—they can get it so wrong. Profits are up \$130 million at Manitoba Hydro this year. You know, it's—profits are up and natural gas prices of a natural gas company the members opposite bought—they bought a bunch of pipes, but natural gas prices—they didn't buy any quantity, by the way; they didn't lock any prices.

One of the experts that I had in my office from United States who was an expert in oil and natural gas came in and said you are the luckiest people in North America to have hydroelectricity. He said, you know, they're—whenever they drill for—they say

they're drilling for natural gas. They're really drilling for oil. He said, you know, don't be fooled by this natural gas bubble, he told me. Don't be fooled by that, he says. If natural gas was so good, why don't they take out 20-year contracts like they used to? They're not. You can't get a 20-year contract in natural gas, Mr. Speaker, and he said you know what, he said. That's why you have the hydro advantage, and he said the best thing you can do, don't listen to the Liberals; don't listen to Conservatives. Develop your hydro. It's natural for a province like this with hydroelectricity plus you spread the wealth around. You create thousands and thousands of long-term jobs. You create communities to have access to jobs and training, and that's what this province is about: sharing and being fair to each other and growing for the future so people can stay here; we can continue to attract over 100,000 people to this province, as we've done the last—

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

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): Indeed, it's an honour and a privilege for me to rise in the House today and put a few words on the record with respect to this motion that was brought forward by the member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler), and I want to thank the member for Lakeside for bringing this forward today. This is a very important debate that we are having here in this Chamber, a debate about the future of our province, a debate that is about our children, a debate that is about an NDP vision that is going to have a very negative impact on future generations in this province. So this is a very important debate that we're having there today, and I want to thank the members in gallery who are here to listen to this debate today and for being here today.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot talk about hydro without looking at what the impact will be to the ratepayers here in the province of Manitoba. We know that just in the last two years alone that hydro rates have increased by 10.75 per cent just in the last two years alone. And experts have said that over the course of the next 20 years we will probably see Manitoba—the Manitoba hydro rates more than double, and that is very alarming to Manitobans and future generations of Manitobans who will be saddled with the debt left by—in the legacy of this NDP government.

And I think it's unfortunate because that's not what we should be doing for future generations in this province. We should be encouraging them to

stay here, to work here, to raise their families here. But if this is the kind of thing that's going to be left for future generations in our province, they won't stay. They will move elsewhere. They will not be here to take on this kind of a debt burden that will be left to not just our grandchildren, but probably our great-grandchildren. So that is an extremely unfortunate thing.

But why are these rates going to be increased, Mr. Speaker? Because we're talking about two things here. We're talking about a mega project that the NDP government is forcing on Manitoba Hydro and, again, it's not the workers of Manitoba Hydro. It's not the people that are working hard at Manitoba Hydro, because I want to praise them for all the work that they do in this province. I want to thank them for what they do.

But I think it's unfortunate when the NDP government politicizes our Crown corporation, uses our Crown corporations for their own political purposes, Mr. Speaker. And I think that's unfortunate, because the only reason why they want to push forward with this multi-mega-billion-dollar projects is because they need to make a political announcement just prior to an upcoming election. That's what this is all about; it's nothing more than politics for members opposite. And, unfortunately, the people who are going to be forced to bear the burden of this mega project are our children, our grandchildren and our great-grandchildren, the future generations of this province. They will be forced to pay for an NDP political agenda, and I think that's extremely unfortunate.

All we're asking, Mr. Speaker—and I don't think members opposite should really have a problem with this. Just take one step back, have a look at this. Make sure when we embark on this kind of a project in Manitoba that requires billions of ratepayers' dollars and for future generations, let's get it right. That's all we're asking for. That the NDP government is plowing ahead, they haven't even received the okay from the Public Utilities Board, yet they've already spent more than 2 and a half billion dollars on this project. They haven't even received the approval, yet they've spent that kind of money already, because that's the NDP way. They will plow ahead to force Manitobans and ratepayers in Manitoba to pay for their own political agenda, and that's nothing more than what this is.

But I think we only need to look at, also, other projects. Again, the Premier (Mr. Selinger) likes to

say that past behaviour is indicative of future behaviour. And we know that the kinds of mega projects that the NDP government has already forced on Manitoba Hydro to plow forward with, we know that the costs, the original cost versus the end cost—and we call that NDP math, because we know any time they make an announcement about how much money they're going to put into a project, we know it's going to be double, triple, four, five times what that amount is, in fact.

And we need only look at their, oh, their head office, their new head office. Original—the original cost for that project, the original budget that was set aside for that project, \$75 million. Well, what did it come in at the end? The actual cost more than \$283 million. That is huge, way, way over budget. So what else was over budget, Mr. Speaker? What did they originally budget for Wuskwatim, \$900 million, and what did that come out? What was—what did that end up being in the end: \$1.8 billion, double what the original cost.

In Pointe du Bois, under \$100 million was the original budget and—was the original budget for this project. What did that come in at in the end: \$2.4 billion, way over budget. Bipole III, \$1.9 billion to \$3.3 billion, and it's likely to exceed \$4 billion and probably beyond that. We need to only look at Keeyask, \$3.7 billion to—what was originally budgeted and came in at \$6.5 billion. Conawapa, \$5 billion to \$10.7 billion. I think you can see where I'm going with this. The overall major projects, \$9.7 billion to \$22 billion. It's hugely over budget—or hugely over budget, all of these projects that were so badly mismanaged by this NDP government who forced these projects on the—on Manitobans.

*(15:30)

And I think we need to go back as well, Mr. Speaker, and we need to talk. I mean, members opposite, I know that they want to talk about—and the previous member who spoke, he talked about exports, and we know that the No. 1 export that we have is our future generations in this province under this NDP government. It's too bad. But when we're talking about exports, what they're doing with Manitoba hydro is they're exporting hydro to the United States at a loss. That's what they're doing. *[interjection]* Yes, it is true. The NDP doesn't seem to understand that. And not only are they exporting at a loss, but now they want to build a line, a hydro line, in the United States in order to continue to send that hydro down to the United States at a loss.

They're going to build a line in the United States. It makes no sense at all.

And I know members opposite are—they want to get up and they want to put their own words on the record, Mr. Speaker, but what's unfortunate is that we've seen the past behaviour of this NDP government and how they've so badly mismanaged Manitoba Hydro. We've seen the over-budget on major projects in Manitoba Hydro in the past, and we know that this—that the budget for these—this major project is more than \$34 billion. And we know that over the course of the next 20 years, based on what experts say, that rates will more than double. And again, that is going to be left on the backs of seniors in the province of Manitoba who live on fixed income, who are—who have already had to realize the 10.75 per cent increase in hydro rates over the last two years alone. And we know that those seniors and low-income Manitobans, Manitobans who live on fixed income, cannot afford this NDP government's mismanagement of Manitoba Hydro.

So, Mr. Speaker, I just am asking members opposite—and I'm looking forward to listening to what others have to say. But this is a time when you're embarking on one of the largest projects in the history of the province of Manitoba. It's time to take a step back and make sure that they get this right. It is not the time to plow ahead just for their own NDP political purposes. Thank you.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): The more things change, the more they stay the same. Since 1969 in this province, there's been a debate over Manitoba Hydro, and you'd think, Mr. Speaker, that looking at the facts, looking at what's happened, there might be a consensus would have developed. And I want to give you a quick summary of really what that debate has been all about.

Since 1969, we've had two visions for the development of Manitoba Hydro. That put forward by the New Democratic Party, Ed Schreyer came into government. Ed Schreyer built Hydro. Ed Schreyer was the first premier to really look at some of the environmental impacts, particularly in South Indian Lake and reduce the flooding impacts. It was the Schreyer government that began the negotiation of the Northern Flood Agreement which was completed in 1978.

There was a vision for the development of one of Manitoba's greatest assets and that's our hydro potential. That's the one vision.

Now here's the second vision, and I—maybe I'm kind of following from the style of the Leader of the Opposition earlier who seemed to be rehearsing, you know, as a game show host here. But there's actually two questions I like to ask Manitobans to remind them of the Conservative vision. The No. 1 question I ask is—not talk about the '90s but you could talk about that short period of time in the late 1970s, and I ask people, what did the Conservatives ever build when they were in government? Actually, Mr. Speaker, it's a trick question because the answer is nothing.

The other question I ask is: What hydro dams did the Conservatives develop, Mr. Speaker, from 1969 until today? Again, the answer is none. It's another trick question because since 1969, in this province, here's what the Conservatives have done in terms of hydro. This is how far their vision will go to put forward a narrow-minded, ideological vision of hydro development in this province.

What did they do when they got elected in 1977? The first thing they did is they cancelled the Limestone project, Mr. Speaker. They cancelled the Limestone project. Now they were in government for four years. What did we do when we got into government? We negotiated a number of significant sales to the U.S. We looked at Manitoba demand, and we, in 1985, started moving ahead with the Limestone dam.

What was the position of the Conservative Party? Well, it was twofold. First of all, as the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) pointed out, they said, well, this is going to be hugely costly. This is going to be a huge burden for future ratepayers and citizens.

Well, actually not true. As it turned out, it was built a billion dollars under budget and it's one of the most profitable investments we've ever made. But what was their alternative? They proposed importing power from the United States. It's on the record, Mr. Speaker. I just want to make sure Hansard got this straight because even our recorders at Hansard may have some difficulty understanding that anyone would ever suggest that Manitobans should buy power from the United States. Well, they were talking about a—you know, an American view of hydro. I couldn't think of anything that would fit that description more than their vision in the 1980s, and I'm not going to leave the Liberals out, by the way. What was the position put forth by the Liberals? There were actually—there was more than one

Liberal. They called it Lemonstone. It's on the public record.

Now, what did they do when they came to government in the 1990s? Here's how far they went to jam on the brakes in terms of hydro in this province. We had a vision that started with Limestone and continued with Conawapa. We had sales to Ontario, Mr. Speaker. What happened in the 1990s was that the government of the day decided—because Ontario came and said, you know, there's a recession. We're still interested in, you know, in the power, but we need to delay perhaps by a couple of years purchasing the power. They had two options. They could've delayed it. They instead wanted to get the penalty clause. They ended up in court with Ontario Hydro, and to this day we still have the legacy of the Conservative government that poisoned the well in terms of sales to Ontario. So what did they do? They shut down Conawapa.

Now, when we got into government—again, Mr. Speaker, and our mandate starting in 1999—and what did we do? We immediately started a historic process of not only dealing with flood claims, but negotiating partnerships with First Nations. The first such dam was the Wuskwatim dam and I'm proud it represented NCN for many years, and I can tell you it was not an easy decision. And I would say I respected the view of many people on both sides of the issue, but they entered into a historic partnership. What did the members opposite do? They criticized it. They even called it privatizing Manitoba Hydro. Well, they would know what privatizing is because they sure did it to MTS. But it was a partnership with a First Nations' government, and I want to say I'm proud to be a part of a government for the first time that built a hydro dam in partnership with NCN. That is a legacy for all of us. By the way, that dam was the first dam to go through a full environmental hearing. It had negligible impacts on the environment, and that is an important consideration as well.

Where are we at now? We now have further hydro sales. We now have a new partnership; it's the Keeyask partnership. I'm proud to represent three of those communities, Mr. Speaker: the Tataskweyak Cree Nation, York Factory First Nation in York Landing and the War Lake First Nation, and I know the Minister of Northern and Aboriginal Affairs represents Fox Lake. Those four First Nations communities have all suffered from flooding in the past. They dealt with that flooding, yes, by signing onto the Northern Flood Agreement. There has been much work done to reconcile in terms of that, but

now is their chance to benefit from hydro development.

And what do members opposite say and what do members opposite do? I thought the lowest level I'd seen was when the member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler) last session kept harping away on the Keeyask centre that was scheduled to be built in Tataskweyak Cree Nation, Split Lake. He didn't visit the community. He didn't phone the chief. I tell you, I visited the community. I visit on a regular basis with the Minister responsible for Hydro, and what do we see? The Keeyask centre being built in Tataskweyak. But, again, Mr. Speaker, this is part of the way the Conservatives have always been. They don't care about northern Manitoba. When they get into government, the first thing they do is they cut everything in sight and the first thing they cut is the hydro development that is important for people in those communities.

* (15:40)

Now, I want to deal with the other mythology of members opposite. They talk about rate increases. What they don't look at is the fact that our vision, going back to the Schreyer government, is one of the reasons we have some of the lowest rates in North America and the lowest rates in the world. What they then do, Mr. Speaker, is they try and spin this idea that somehow the modest rate increases we're seeing now—which are, again, the lowest across Canada, way lower than many other jurisdictions around the world, again, because of the planning, the future planning of that NDP vision—they try and suggest this is somehow due to the capital construction.

Well, Mr. Speaker, again, they don't know much about construction, whether it's on highways or hydro. But, you know, Manitobans know that salary costs go up year over year. They know you have to—you know, if you own a home, you have to do work, you know, maintenance, you have to do repairs. We have a very good program with Manitoba Hydro. It's dealing with converter stations, it's dealing with many elements of the system. So costs do go up, but the reality is when it comes to power in this province, not only do we have low rates, we export it to the US, and that helps keep the rates down and build new dams.

So, Mr. Speaker, I was being a little bit generous earlier and I—maybe I'm going to withdraw this comment now. I actually suggested they had a vision for hydro. I think what it really comes down to, is as follows. You know, they're a party that's stuck in the

'90s, I would say, 1890s on social issues—I'm going to increase that one, actually—maybe in the 1890s on economic issues as well. But the reality is, since 1969, in this province, they've got it wrong. Anytime they got in government, they jammed the brakes on, and they got it wrong. And I want to say to members opposite, I welcome this debate. I will debate, anywhere in the province, members opposite, when it comes to their lack of vision for hydro, because our vision in the NDP is clear: hydro is our asset. It's our gold, it's our oil and we're not going to let the Tories put the brakes on. We are carefully—

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

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise today and to put some words on the record with respect to this important debate taking place today in the Manitoba Legislature, and I know I'm very grateful, as my colleagues are, that this time has been taken so that we can get this right, so that we can put these important comments on the record.

Mr. Speaker, as a—my colleague previously indicated, this is a legacy issue. We have one chance in this province to get this right, and for all of the railing of the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), it will not replace the fact that there are serious reservations that experts continue to express about this process and about this project and these series of projects. There are serious reservations that Manitobans continue to express about the process and the project. There are serious reservations that people in other jurisdictions, looking from the outside in, continue to express, and this NDP government is ill advised to proceed unilaterally in isolation, sticking their head in the sand and pretending that if they keep saying things in a noisy way, they will convince themselves and others of the veracity of their arguments. It's not a path that they should continue on.

Mr. Speaker, we had the opportunity today in question period, we have the opportunity now again in this House, to talk about the fact that this government has continued to proceed on a path based on an analysis that was done a long, long time ago. And they are happy to continue on that same path with this full-speed-ahead kind of mentality with the blinders on. But we know and others will continue say, from our party, that the fundamentals have changed. The environment has changed. Energy needs of North America has changed. But there has

been, in all of this, in all of this conversation, in all of this dialogue, there has been one thing that has been consistent, and one thing that was—that it was consistently done was the fact that this government has consistently got it wrong when it came to any capital project for Manitoba Hydro and the expense.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, they've gotten it very, very wrong along the way. That's why—I know that just a while back, it was an article in the Free Press that talked exactly of this, and they said that during a review of the Wuskwatim dam—and this came from an article in the Free Press on—it was actually August 19th, 2013. It was an article by Will Braun, who's actually a constituent of mine, but he works with various organizations across Manitoba, including the inter-church council on Manitoba Hydro. And I like the way he said this, because he said that, during a review of Wuskwatim dam, Hydro said that the cost estimate of \$900 million came with a 90 per cent confidence level that the final price would be within minus 8 per cent to plus 9 per cent of that figure. Now we have to analyze that. We must understand that when they use those kinds of figures that's extraordinary. They are demonstrating that with—beyond a shadow a doubt this thing is going to arrive at a price that they have stated publicly: a 90 per cent confidence level.

So what was the final analysis of the Wuskwatim dam project? The final price actually doubled, a 100 per cent overrun on the cost of the project and, Mr. Speaker, that cannot be set aside. And I noticed that the member for Thompson is not chirping now. So that when this government now talks about a \$25-billion, NDP-driven capital plan for Manitoba Hydro which is not one construction project, not two construction projects—three construction projects, a transmission line, conversion station, oh and I forgot, also building line capacity in the US at this point. We have to understand that there is one consistent factor in this debate, and it is that the member of—for Thompson and his colleagues will get it wrong.

And that is why we have Manitobans in the gallery today, because they have that confidence eroded that when this government tells them it will be \$25 billion, you can take it to the bank. They know they should strongly suspect the figures that are put out by this government. Why should they strongly suspect them? Well is—could it be because this is the same government that even this year said this is the year that we will eliminate the deficit in Manitoba. Twenty-four months ago the former

Finance minister said you can take it to the bank; we will be in surplus in 2014. How are we doing? Even the estimate of this government, which is not to be believed, is around \$384 million, that's a long way off a projection made just 24 months ago. Imagine how enormous the disparity between budget and actual could actually be on any one of these hydro projects, never mind the conglomeration of these projects put together.

Mr. Mohinder Saran, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

That is why, in the independent inquiry into Manitoba Hydro's expansion plan published just this week, there has been a listing of other projects where this government said one thing and did another. And as my colleagues have said, the Manitoba head office: estimate \$75 million, actual \$283 million. Wuskwatim, like I said: \$900 million estimate, actual \$1.8 billion. Pointe du Bois: estimate \$100 million, actual cost \$2.4 billion. They are getting it wrong.

Manitobans should not believe this government when they say you can trust us this time. Even now the assumptions they are basing the project on are false. They are wrong. They are basing projections on an annual usage of 1.5, 1.6 per cent. Now we know that in other jurisdictions the annual increased projection is much, much lawyer-lower than that. In the US most of those projections are based on 0.4 per cent, 0.5 per cent annual. But even if you would take the NDP government at their word that this projection is accurate—and I would advise not to do it—even so, experts show and others show, even local advocates show that if you would focus on an area that this government has decided to wholesale ignore—which is demand-side management—you could achieve the same results.

* (15:50)

There are two ways to go about this project, either put Manitobans at jeopardy for generations to come and embark on an NDP political, ideology driven, half-baked idea that puts Manitoba Hydro ratepayers at risk—you could do it that way, or you can simply do Power Smart. We are worldwide renowned for some of the things that have been done for years and years and years in Power Smart. But what experts now show is that this government is giving a direction to fundamentally diminish the capacity of the Power Smart projects. And the—I would even suspect that this government might be developing policy to go into homes and deliver old fridges. Or maybe they'll be going into homes and removing insulation from the attics, because that

would also drive this minister's argument that somehow we will all freeze in the dark in less than 10 years. They are using, Mr. Acting Speaker, arguments of profound fear and desperation to drive a political ideology that says you have no choice; you have to do this now; full speed ahead; anybody who disagrees with us is the enemy.

I think that Manitobans are more and more rejecting the lies. They are rejecting the untruth, but they are also doing the analysis. Manitobans are looking at the record. Manitobans are considering the cost of past hydro projects. As the Finance critic for this province, I can tell you we are aware that the ratepayers pay more—11 per cent increase in rates since just 2012, many, many more increases to rates all coming in the future. Business pays more. Families pay more. Industry pays more.

This plan is a plan that puts money in the coffers of government for years and years and years and years before any kind of benefit would come to ratepayers. It is a plan that could result in the eventual credit downgrade that would affect all of our provincial borrowings. It is a plan that is based on a government's record of not meeting their own projections on costs for dams and transmission lines, and it is a plan that more and more Manitobans are waking up to and saying what is needed is a sober second thought.

If this government had the courage of their convictions, they would put the whole process out for an independent analysis, a comprehensive analysis of the cost, the needs for and alternatives to. They have refused to do it. That's why I thank my colleague today for bringing this debate to the House, and we thank those guests who have joined us today to be present to witness and to call on this government to do better than this, to do more for Manitobans to keep rates down. Thank you.

Mr. Clarence Pettersen (Flin Flon): I'm glad that you've given me the opportunity to kind of bring this all together in a positive way. I know I'd like to thank the gallery members for being here. I'm a member from the Flin Flon constituency from the North, and it's great to represent the North, and it's great that you're here today to witness this debate that has been going on.

And I think it's fairly easy to see that there's two sides to this debate. There's a debate on this side, led by the Premier (Mr. Selinger) that is optimistic about the future of Manitoba. Not only is he optimistic, he is building Manitoba. You in the gallery—you've

driven by the MTS Centre. You've driven by the football stadium. You've driven by the Hydro building. You've driven by the building going on. What?

An Honourable Member: Hospitals.

Mr. Pettersen: The hospitals. We are the party of building.

Now, the party of doom and gloom is saying, shut it all down. Shut her down today. We got to do some more studies. We got to do some studies. Well, they did a study of Limestone. They did a study of Limestone and they said, shut it down. The Liberals right here called it Lemonstone. You're right, but we've made billions of dollars. We've passed it on to the taxpayers of Manitoba, not just the northern taxpayers where they're paying the same rate as you guys in the south. We're paying the same rate all over Manitoba and we're sharing in the benefits of hydro.

In the gallery, I've sat here—I've sat here and I've listened and I've heard the nonsense of this side saying, you know what? Let's not build it. Let's not build it. Let's buy power from the United States. Let's not build it. Let's go and buy gas from Alberta. Let's not build it, and we will be in a crisis. Let's not build it— and I'm talking about the bipole lines. Let's not build it, and we could be spending up to a billion dollars a week. Let's not build it.

And then they say they care about the people of Manitoba? Give me a break. Stand up for Manitoba. Stand up to your cousins in Ottawa. Stand up to your cousins in Ottawa and say, you know what, Manitoba deserves better. Manitoba deserves better representation. They deserve a better leadership. And thank God we've got a party that thinks about Manitoba.

I've seen, with our hydro development, we are offering opportunities, not just in the south but in the North. We will—offer right now the lowest rates, not only in Canada but North America. They complain about the rate increases. The rate increases are the lowest in Canada. I don't know what they're complaining about. Then they say the taxpayers of Manitoba are paying for the dams. No, the Americans are, through the investment.

I mean, they got to get their facts straight. They keep on basically scaring Manitobans. And I tell you, Manitobans are wondering, who are these people? We've won three elections on hydro. And you know what, they keep on saying, cut it, cut it, cut it. Well, you know what, we should shut the lights off, but

with our gallery up there right now, we don't want to shut the lights on all the stairs that you have to walk. But they would shut the lights on there.

Our population is growing. In 10 to 12 years, we could run out of power. Where do they want us to get the power? From the States, from Alberta. They want—and you know what, this is what I figured out. All this debate, you know what they want to do? They want to drop the hydro shares down so low, then they can say, let's sell it. Let's sell it. Let's privatize it. They are saying, let's privatize it so we can make money, like they did at MTS.

And don't look at me, ladies and gentlemen. Look at yourself in the mirror. You are the ones—you are the ones. You are the ones that sold MTS. You are the ones that went to the people of Manitoba, every one of you went to Manitoba and—

The Acting Speaker (Mohinder Saran): Order, please. Order. Order. Order. Order, please.

Members have to speak through the Chair, not directly to the members.

Mr. Pettersen: My apologies. Don't people want to hear the truth? People want to hear the truth.

I have to say that you guys have went to the people of Manitoba and you told them—

An Honourable Member: Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Pettersen: You told them, Mr. Speaker.

An Honourable Member: They. They. They.

Mr. Pettersen: They went. They went. Somebody went. They went and—to the people of Manitoba and they said that they wouldn't sell MTS. And they did. And we're all paying for it now. It's not just you, Mr. Member from Emerson, that has poor connection but even up north. MTS does not want to invest in the small communities. We know that. But if we would still own it, we would be investing in Manitoba, just like hydro.

They didn't want the North to get the same deal as the south in hydro. But we wanted the same deal. And through our party, we've given it the same deal.

So I wonder, are they standing up for Manitobans? Are they standing up for Manitobans?

I see the member of Midland there pointing his finger, but you know what, get a mirror and look at your face. It's an angry face. It's an angry face and it's a face that says, you know what, I have to be true to myself.

And I am 'agoth', I guess what you could say, that they think they're representing Manitoba. They don't want to build anything in Manitoba. They criticize everything we do.

Being a teacher for 33 years, you have to be a teacher of optimism. And the one thing—the one thing—that has hurt me being in here is I've seen the negativity that have come from this side of the House. Anything we say or do is 'critis'.

* (16:00)

I—like I say, I think what they have to do is sit down and re-evaluate. They have to get a plan for the next election, because they're using the same strategy they used over the past three elections. And, you know what? They think they're telling the truth, but, obviously, they lost election after election after election.

And I think what the people of Manitoba are waiting for is a vision. We have a vision. We have a planning. We are moving forward with our vision. We plan on making Manitoba one of the best provinces in Canada.

So my challenge to you is to stand up for Canada. Stand up to your big brothers and sisters in Ottawa, and stand up so that you can be a proud Manitoban like the rest of us.

When I hear your nonsense about loading up your trucks and moving to Calgary, I can't believe that. You know, you want to go to Calgary, you want to go to Saskatchewan. We have a great province right here—a great province—a great province—that we can build together, that we can build our dream. We all have a dream, like Martin Luther King says, but we have a dream that all of us can get together and benefit.

So thank you for letting me have a few words. Thank you.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I want to make it very clear that there's not just two visions; there's three visions of where we need to go. We need to be—understand that when you go back to when there was a Liberal government here in the '40s and '50s, the getting of hydro to all Manitobans, to everyday Manitobans throughout the province was a very important part of the Liberal approach.

Liberals are concerned about the needs of everyday Manitobans. At the same time, we want to make sure that there is caution, that there is good planning, that what we are doing today will be good

not just for the next day, not just for this—a few NDP MLAs, but good for all everyday Manitobans.

As I see this issue, a major concern is the government and Manitoba Hydro's projections that Manitoba hydro rates will be going up 120 per cent—that's more than doubling—over the next number of years. And this is after increases above inflation over the last few years. We don't want to lose the Manitoba advantage that we have and that we have built.

Day after day we hear from the NDP government that they want to spend billions and billions of Manitobans' dollars. Cumulatively, those billions and billions add up to a lot of money, and we need to make sure, carefully sure, that the billions being proposed to be spent by Manitoba Hydro over the next few years are really needed and that they will be spent in a way that we will get a return from them, not producing power that we're going to lose money on. The increased costs from these billions will come from the pockets of everyday Manitobans, either as taxes or as increased hydro rates.

We are in an era where there is significant uncertainty, particularly with what's happened with shale gas in the United States—uncertainty about what the cost pricing is for building the Keeyask dam, given what's happened in the last few years, and we need to be cautioned.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the government has commissioned a review called an NFAT review, a needs-for-and-alternatives-to review, of the billions which Manitoba Hydro is proposing to spend. It's unfortunate that this NFAT review included only the Keeyask and the Conawapa dams, and their associated AC but not DC transmission lines, and the new proposed Canada-USA transmission interconnection.

The fact that the NFAT review excluded any consideration of Bipole III has greatly limited the usefulness of this review. This is particularly true since the rationale for Bipole III is partly for reliability and partly for additional power produced by the Keeyask and Conawapa dams.

And the timing of Bipole III can be affected by the timing of the need for the Keeyask and the Conawapa dams as well as how we plan for reliability because, for example, the Canada-USA transmission interconnection can also be important in terms of reliability of our whole system.

Additional items would have benefited from being considered if there had been the NFAT review looking at bipole as I've talked about recently in terms of compact line technology, for example. But very critical to the development of the Keeyask and the Conawapa dams is the timing for the need for increased electricity generation for everyday Manitobans. The timing is very dependent on the projections for Manitoba electricity use, and critical to the growth in electricity use is the extent to which Manitoba uses demand-side management as other jurisdictions are using as part of an integrated resource planning approach.

Sadly, as the Consumers' Association of Canada, Peter Dunsky [*phonetic*], and Commissioner Graham Lane's independent review have shown, the NDP government has fallen far short of what should have been presented in terms of their approach to demand-side management.

Indeed, if one looks at electricity targets, that is, the average annual savings as a per cent of sales, Manitoba is now 25th out of 27 jurisdictions assessed. We're way behind places like Massachusetts, which are going to reach 2.5 per cent of savings and above and way behind many other jurisdictions in the United States and those in Canada, including British Columbia and Nova Scotia. We're down at only between zero and 0.5 per cent of savings as a per cent of sales. But we should be doing far better, and we should have a reliable projection moving forward so we can plan properly. There is a much greater potential for savings from demand-side management, and the government should be doing far better as are many other jurisdictions now.

As was made clear by Garland Laliberté and others at the independent inquiry into Manitoba Hydro's expansion plans, a modest improvement in demand-side management can dramatically increase the time before Manitoba will need the additional power from the Keeyask and the Conawapa dams.

The NDP, of course, have apocalyptically indicated that Manitoba will run out of power by 2023. First, this is nonsense because no matter what the NDP say, Manitoba Hydro will be still be producing lots of power in 2023. We won't run out of power, and all the indications are that the amount of power being produced, even without the new dams, can fulfill Manitoba's need well into the 2030s if we invest adequately and appropriately in a demand-side management effort.

It's important to talk about the uncertainty today, the price of power being sold into the United States. There's uncertainty because of the cost of shale gas and its production of electricity. There's uncertainty over the cost of the Keeyask dam. There's uncertainty to the extent to which US will be switching from coal and need clean Manitoba electricity. There's uncertainty about the forward pricing of wind and solar power. In a time of much uncertainty, we need to look carefully at the risks and address those risks directly and with sufficient flexibility to ensure that Manitoba Hydro will prosper and that Manitobans will prosper, and we won't find ourselves on the wrong end of a big bill and high costs.

* (16:10)

We need to ensure as well that maintenance is done when it's needed. This government is very—has been very poor. We need to make sure, for example, that power poles are being replaced, that we're not short of IBEW workers and have to contract this out to other jurisdictions because we planned poorly.

We need to be honest about what we can achieve with much better demand-side management, and we need to include that in the plan, as people like Garland Laliberté have done. We need the flexibility of options—wind and solar—where it can come in. We need to be careful about spending millions of dollars on projects before they have received final approval—bad management.

We support this resolution today. We report—support it not to say that we don't ever want hydro dams, but rather to say that we need to be careful in the timing of when we build them. We support hydro dams when the conditions are right, when we know for sure we can make money on power exports because we know we can sell the power for more than it is being produced. The uncertainties today suggest caution in making quick decisions now, caution in making sure we address not only these financial issues but the environmental and the issues around the benefits to First Nations communities.

We need a vision in which Manitoba Hydro can contribute positively to Manitoba well into the future and doesn't become a burden because it's been poorly managed by the NDP.

We support this resolution; we support it because it needs to be done. We need to reconsider what's being done at the moment. Thank you.

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): It's a pleasure to rise to put a few words on the record in support of this resolution brought forward by my colleague from Lakeside.

And I think we should all be very concerned about the future of Manitoba Hydro, because it has an impact on virtually every household and every person here in Manitoba. And, in particular, and I did bring some of these issues up in question period, those that are on fixed incomes, such as many seniors are and those that are on limited income, are very vulnerable to any increase.

And I know the member for East Kildonan was very quick to point out that at some brief period in history the rates were actually less than they had been back in the '90s, but the increases that they're talking about—a 4 per cent per year and the 10 and a half that's already increased—are well beyond the rates of inflation. So, clearly, they're taking money out of people's pockets. And the forecasted increases of 4 per cent per year over the next 20 years is going to take an awful lot of money out of people's pockets.

And pensions, though a few—there are still a few out there that are indexed; most are not, and I think what we're seeing, then, is a very significant erosion of people's ability to handle it—their—the cost of energy in their household. And there are some guidelines as to what you should try and look for for that, and it's usually runs about 10 per cent of your total monthly disposable income should go towards energy costs, and that includes heating.

So many households, frankly, in our cold conditions, find that very challenging to get anywhere near that number. And that actually points out further the opportunities to do things in terms of demand-side management: to put in more efficiency in the household, to put in better windows, better insulation and all of the things that can be done to improve efficiency. And we see appliances all the time, for instance, that come onto the market that are much more energy efficient than the generation before was, but that all costs money. Even with programs that may be available in the future—there are some now with hydro, but they are more limited than they were.

But most people don't have the disposable income to do that, especially once you get to the point where you're in retirement and you're trying to manage your money very carefully into the future. And for those that are on really limited incomes and supported by EIA and other forms of disability

support, it is really tough; it's a day-to-day existence for many of them, and any little increase can upset their very tight budgets and make it very difficult for them to manage. And, certainly, it's a very sudden burden increase to them without any increasing supports.

So it puts them under great pressure, and that's why we have so many people going regularly to food banks here in Manitoba—over 50,000 and the number's still rising—and, certainly, many of them are children, which is even a sadder reality.

So we're very concerned that the management of hydro under this government will put more and more people at risk.

Now they like to talk about, well, we're selling it in the US and we're making money because it's just running over the dam. Well, the reality is nothing costs you nothing in the world. There are costs associated with—even with that water running over the dam, because the management of the dam is still out there and still has to be in place, so there's staff associated with that. There is overhead. Administration certainly has to be kept track of, and there are water-use fees, which is if the Province charges them for the use of that, so everything costs money and you have to take that into account. And I'm disappointed that I keep hearing, well, you know, it doesn't cost us anything. It does cost money, and to not recognize that there is cost associated with that is just fooling yourself and trying to fool Manitobans. And I think we're all very disappointed with the frequency that they fool Manitobans.

Over the years, when I was involved with some alternate energy projects that we were hoping to get going here in Manitoba, and very few did because Hydro was simply 'intransigent' on what they were prepared to pay for alternate energy, nice green projects that this government would, you know, certainly in theory, support. We did tour a few in the US, and I remember one in Wisconsin that was a really good project. They were burning turkey litter, and controlling the emissions and generating energy, and the by-product, of course, was fertilizer, which was even nicer, you know, nice well-rounded program, and on top of that they were actually—*[interjection]* Yes. They were actually able to help with the manure disposal problem too because they were in an area where there was an awful lot of poultry operations. And using nutrient guidelines, nutrient application guidelines down there, which are kind of similar to the ones here, they discovered that

they were actually pushing the limits for that particular area. So this was an alternative that worked for anyone.

So I touched bases with them a year or so ago. So how are things going, you know, are you doing well with this very creative alternate energy process? And it was farmer owned and, of course, I'm very sympathetic to farmer-owned projects, and he said, well, we're still going, but our biggest problem is that you guys sell hydro way too cheap down here. We find it very difficult to compete. And I said, well, how so? I mean, they're looking for direct contracts with businesses, preferably light industry or heavy industry that would locate in the region that they can sell their hydro to at a very consistent price that works for them and probably works for the light industry, actually below demand in terms of—below the normal market price in that situation, and they haven't been able to find any simply because we're offering hydro at such low rates. But it's turned around because it actually flows through their hydro company down there, and those rates are offered to other companies and it's an incentive to come to that area.

So what we're effectively doing here is we're selling it for well below cost to our competitors, who are using it to attract businesses that might well choose to locate here in Manitoba. So it's almost like two edges of the sword and you're getting both of them. So it's certainly cause for concern that that's the reality of what we've done. It's what we used to call unintended consequences to policy. Some of the things that you looked for that actually could lead in the wrong direction, and this is clearly one of those ones. It's an unintended consequence.

The other side of that coin, of course, is we could never make the numbers work for any alternate energy projects of any significance here in Manitoba. And I know we have a couple of wind farms which have investors, and some of the investors actually are farmers and certainly some of the beneficiary are farmers. And we talk about buying wind energy back in the winter. I hate to break the news to this government, but the wind blows here in the winter too, in fact, fairly frequently. So, if we wanted to have those wind farms up here, we wouldn't even need to be buying that stuff back from the US.

I know there are many people here that want to speak to this, but I did want to make the point that this is an ongoing burden on those with low income and fixed incomes, and it will become an increasing

burden into the future if we do not manage this resource properly. There is great opportunity, but we have to be able to manage, and certainly there's no indication that this government's been able to build hydro dams and hydro projects for anywhere near what they estimate the cost.

* (16:20)

So I think we all need to be very aware that, no matter what it is that they say they're going to do, it's going to cost more on the bipole line, of course, and it does run through part of my constituency and I know there are people in the gallery that are impacted by that. It's in the wrong place. We all—I think we all know that, but what is even scarier is, if you look in the future plans for bipole project, it wouldn't be alone. There would be additional bipole lines there with it. And so that interferes even further with some of the best farmland in this province.

And at what point—farmland is somewhat renewable, but they quit making it an awful long time ago. We cannot go into the bush and carve anymore. So we need to start thinking about looking after the valuable asset that we have here in Manitoba that is the farmland that we are blessed with in this province. And this whole process completely ignores that concept.

So thank you very much, and I know there are many others that wish to speak to this.

Mr. Dave Gaudreau (St. Norbert): You know, I feel a little bit like the movie Groundhog Day where we, you know, Bill Murray wakes up every day and he's to—he goes through the same day over and over, I think this debate happened well before I was born, actually. This debate has happened, and it keeps happening over and over where they want to put the brakes on building it. They called Limestone Lemonstone, and so did the Liberal Party at the time; Ms. Carstairs called it Lemonstone. They both were against it. And now they're against it again. It—over and over and over, we keep hearing the same debate. They say, put the brakes on, stop, oh, let's look what it's—right?

You know, maybe they're looking—maybe they're believing the polls a little too much and they're actually thinking that, you know, they're going to get their hands on the government because then, you know, 30, 40, 100 thousand people might leave the province and there will be no need for power because right now our province is growing. We are gaining people. Our economy has doubled in the last

14 years. It's doubled. Now, I know that when, you know, they had their hands on the helm, they didn't have that problem, so they don't understand why we would have to build something because when they were in power, they were closing things like schools and hospitals and ERs and daycares. Those are things that they did when they were in government, and they like to say they're proud of their record under the Filmon government. We hear them get up and clap like trained monkeys every time we say Filmon.

But, when we actually point out what they did, they like to run away from it, a lot like the Leader of the Opposition who likes to run away from everything that he's ever done. He's like, oh, I'm very proud of my record. When we point it out, he goes ballistic and tries to justify all the people he's fired and all the people that were laid off underneath him and all the people who left the province. Well, that's not how it is right now. The province is growing. Our economy's getting bigger. And, bipole, side by side—right now we have two bipoles, and in the event of an ice storm like we had in the '90s or a tornado, when that goes through that area there, it rips those two bipoles out; we're looking at over a billion dollars a week in lost productivity to our economy, over a billion dollars per week.

Now, they might—that might not make sense to them because I know they're not very good with math and numbers, but the other part that might make sense to them is that we're actually selling hydro to the western provinces like Saskatchewan, and Alberta's very interested in our power because they're trying to offset all of the pollution they have from oil. Now, we know that they like to side with Alberta and the Conservatives in Alberta. They want us to have natural gas. Where does that create jobs, Mr. Acting Speaker? In Alberta. They ship the natural gas to Manitoba by a pipeline. So a bunch of people are put to work in Alberta. Gee, who runs Alberta? The Conservatives. It's a wondering where they're aligning with. They align with their federal party. They're now aligning with the provincial Conservatives in Alberta.

You know what I support? Building Manitoba Hydro which keeps clean, green jobs right here in our province. People will be coming back from the oil fields to work here building dams in northern Manitoba,. That creates jobs right here at home. Why would we want to create jobs in Alberta? And then, you know, I know they don't even like that argument because I know all of them think that Alberta's the

land of milk and honey, and Saskatchewan, they always, oh, look it's all better over there.

How about the argument that last year natural gas went up 40 per cent? Had we have listened to them and went with a natural-gas-fired plant, not only would we pollute the world, in a hundred and—what was it, 147 days, one natural gas plant is equal to 100 years of a dam? That doesn't matter to the Conservatives because they like to just open-pit mine the province if it was up to them.

We are looking at creating a clean, green power, and we're shipping it, just—you know what? Just today, there was an interesting article in the Midwestern energy news, and it talked about the carbon offsets and the carbon rules 'loob'—the carbon rules that are changing and they're looming in North Dakota. And North Dakota is clinging to coal. So, you know, North Dakota is on the verge of a crisis because of all the carbon rules and the—how much oil they're pumping out and how much 'quill'—coal they burn for their energy. They're on the verge of a crisis because they're going to be underneath the new rules for pollution. They're going to be stopped. So you know where they're going to turn to? They're going to turn to Manitoba, where we have clean, green hydro.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

And I hear the member opposite saying gas. You know what? I just don't—I don't understand how they don't get it. Natural gas—burning natural gas is a pollutant. The pollution that is created from burning natural gas in 147 days equals 100 years of natural—of a dam. It's unbelievable, Mr. Speaker. They just don't seem to get it. Over and over; it's like Groundhog Day. I'm just floored by it.

You know what else tells me something, Mr. Speaker? When you look at President Obama, who went and said, you know what, you can build that transmission line. And, you know what, that approval process took very little time. You know what he's not doing? He's not approving Keystone right now, because he's looking at the offsets of carbon. And he's saying, you know what, it's clean, green hydro. Let's build that. It's really good. It's going to be great for the environment. It's going to offset all the coal we're burning. He's not saying yes to pipelines.

I know the members opposite would run a pipeline through every one of our houses if they could to export everything they could to Texas and to

the United States, or to Alberta, where they think it's the land of milk and honey. But, you know what, Mr. Speaker, we want jobs here in Manitoba. We want clean, green power in Manitoba.

And, you know what else? We want the lowest rates in North America, which we have. And the members opposite play all these games with the numbers. But what they are failing to say is that every other province is seeing increases—actually, larger increases than ours, and they already pay more. So, when you're putting 5 per cent on somebody who already pays 60 per cent more, that's a bigger increase than what we're seeing here. But they just don't seem to get it. I guess math isn't their strong suit; the schools were closed during their generation when they were in power, so they didn't get the education on math. That must be what it is, because it just doesn't make sense.

We're going to be building something that's clean and green and pays for itself over and over and over, like we've seen with our dams already. Hundreds of years—these things are good for over 100 years, and they pay for themselves, and they're clean.

Now what they want to do—they want to build something that pollutes. They want us to go to what Saskatchewan's doing: \$15 billion on coal. Why would we do that, Mr. Speaker? We have the power here, and we have the resources to build a great power system, that we could supply power to all the western provinces, and we could supply power to Ontario.

You know, if you look back into the days when a Liberal and a Conservative were at the helm, unfortunately, they couldn't get the power deal done to export power to Ontario, but, you know, we've been—we're now working with Saskatchewan and we're exporting power there. And there's more to come, Mr. Speaker. It's just unbelievable that their so short-sighted vision—that they don't understand that we need to keep building, and it's good for the province.

And, you know, the member for Morden and Winkler was talking about how, you know, who lowered rates and all these lower rates. Well, who's the ones who made sure that the rates were equalized across the province?—for his constituency? Who did that? That was us. Manitoba Hydro, being kept a Crown corporation, we were able to stabilize the rates and make it the same for everybody, whether you are in the north, the south, the east or the west—

not just in Winnipeg. But that's because we look after the whole province, Mr. Speaker; they're not at all interested in that. They have very short-sighted vision on what they want for this province.

You know, who took away MTS? Who's the one, Mr. Speaker, who's the one who took away MTS? And 700 jobs were lost. Well, it wasn't our side of the House; it was their side of the House. Who's the one who took away the pension plan for MTS? How many years, how many decades did those employees have to fight for their pension plan to get their pension back? That was the Leader of the Opposition and all the members on the other side of the House.

So it's fictitious for them to say that they don't have a record of doing this kind of stuff; it's exactly what they did. They drove MTS into the ground. They didn't provide it with the resources—much like what they're saying for us to do right now—is to run Hydro down into the ground—like they would do if they had their hands on the helm—so they could sell it off cheaply and make money on it. They sold MTS for pennies on the share of what it actually was worth.

And then the other day, the member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon) was on record saying that he said, buy it back—buy it back. Well, that's the Conservative Economic Action Plan, right? Sell a Crown corporation for 13 bucks a share and then buy it back at \$39 a share, so all the Conservatives can get rich. Because we know who's on the board of that. We all know who got their hands on the shares, Mr. Speaker. It wasn't us. It was them—it was them.

And that's exactly what they're going to do with Manitoba Hydro. They have a proven track record. They like to try run from it. They want to run as far away as they can from their track record. And, you know what? I have to admit, if that was our track record, I'd probably be running pretty fast and pretty hard too, because it speaks for—

* (16:30)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order, please.

The hour being 4:30 p.m., pursuant to rule 28(14), I must interrupt the debate to put the question on the motion of the honourable member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler).

So it is the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: I hear a no.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please signify by saying aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed to the motion will please signify by saying nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: Opinion of the Chair, the Nays have it.

Recorded Vote

Mr. Eichler: With all due respect, a recorded vote, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Recorded vote having been requested, call in the members.

* (17:00)

Order, please. Order, please. The question before the House is the Opposition Day motion.

Does the House wish to have the motion read?

Some Honourable Members: No.

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: No. I hear a yes? Yes.

It's been moved by the honourable member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler), was seconded by the honourable member for Midland (Mr. Pedersen), that the Legislative Assembly call on the provincial government to respect Manitobans as the real owners

of Manitoba Hydro by immediately reconsidering the plan to at least double hydro rates for Manitoba families over the next 20 years in a risky hydro development scheme that has already cost taxpayers \$2.6 billion to create power that independent experts conclude will not be required to meet domestic needs until as late as 2034, and serves only to funnel billions of dollars in additional hidden hydro taxes and fees to the provincial government.

Division

A RECORDED VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:

Yeas

Briese, Cullen, Driedger, Eichler, Ewasko, Friesen, Gerrard, Goertzen, Graydon, Helwer, Martin, Mitchelson, Pallister, Pedersen, Piwniuk, Smook, Stefanson, Wishart.

Nays

Allan, Allum, Altemeyer, Ashton, Bjornson, Blady, Braun, Caldwell, Chomiak, Gaudreau, Howard, Irvin-Ross, Jha, Kostyshyn, Mackintosh, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Melnick, Nevakshonoff, Oswald, Pettersen, Robinson, Rondeau, Saran, Selby, Selinger, Struthers, Swan, Wight.

Deputy Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish): Yeas 18, Nays 30.

Mr. Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

Mr. Speaker: The hour being past 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. on Monday.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 29, 2014

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are also available on the Internet at the following address:

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/legislature/hansard/index.html>