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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-First Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLUM, James	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
BINDLE, Kelly	Thompson	PC
CLARKE, Eileen, Hon.	Agassiz	PC
COX, Cathy, Hon.	River East	PC
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YAKIMOSKI, Blair	Transcona	PC

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 16, 2019

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

Please be seated.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader): This morning we'd like to call from 10 to 10:30, Bill 227, The Child and Family Services Amendment Act, and from 10:30 to 11 a.m. we would like to call Bill 230, The Spirit Bear Day Act.

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that the House will consider second reading from 10 to 10:30 of Bill 227 and from 10:30 to 11, second reading of Bill 230.

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 227—The Child and Family Services Amendment Act

Madam Speaker: I therefore call second reading of Bill 227, The Child and Family Services Amendment Act.

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): I move, seconded by the member from St. Johns, that Bill 227, The Child and Family Services Amendment Act, now be read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mrs. Smith: This bill has been something that even before I became a legislature, that I've been speaking to families about, that I know families first-hand who have had this had—happen to them.

Just most recently, there was a video online of a woman who had her child at the women's centre, and her child was almost ripped out of her arms. The police were called; there were social workers there; it

was very traumatic, not just traumatic for that mother but traumatic for the whole community, traumatic for anyone that watched that video.

And I'm happy to say that, you know, that aunt that was there, the grandmother was there, the uncle was there and there was a cousin there, and they were all willing to take this child from the hospital if they didn't want to give this child to their mother. And, unfortunately, they weren't allowed to do this. So this child essentially went into care when there was five people there besides the mother that were capable and willing to take that child.

Today, that child is actually living with the auntie who was there that was willing to take that child right from the hospital. But, unfortunately, that child had to be taken from its mother for six whole months away from, you know, the parent that—or the aunt that was willing to care for this child.

This happens way too much in our society. We have 15 per cent of kids that are in care because they need protection because they're either being physically or sexually abused. The other 85 per cent of kids in care are just need it—are just in need of extra supports, and we need to start putting investments into our families instead of ripping our families apart.

We see the devastating effects of what that has on society. You know, we see 50 per cent of the people who are homeless today in Manitoba in this province were kids that were in care, you know, kids that aged out of care. And when we keep our kids with our families, our kids get care beyond the age of 18, you know, and when we break that bond with that family and we no longer allow even visits to happen.

You know, I think of when I was a youth and they called them permanent wards. You know, permanent. You think of that word. When you write with a marker, it's permanent. It doesn't come off. Well, when you say that to a family that your child is now begin a—become a permanent ward and you're never going to see that child again that you've carried in your body for nine months, that you've developed a bond with, that, you know, you're preparing to take care of and then all of a sudden, you know, child welfare comes in and says, well, you're not fit to be a parent because you were a kid in care.

What does that say about our system? Our system with our kids in care were the ones that provided the care that should be helping these children to become good parents but yet what the system is doing is it's causing more damage than it is good.

We have, you know, upwards of probably 5,000 missing and murdered indigenous women in this country, and, you know, I would say probably half of those women were women that were in care, that were directly in the care of Child and Family Services. What kind of system are we providing when we're allowing people to be murdered, people to go missing, you know, these children to become homeless?

And then we look at the incarceration rates in Canada. You know, 80 per cent if not more like 90 per cent of those incarcerated are indigenous people, and probably 70 per cent of those that are incarcerated had some dealings with the Child and Family Services. We need to stop taking children from their families; we need to start investing in our families.

And Canada, you know, when we look at their history with indigenous people. I think about some of the key drivers and I want to give a bit of statistics here. It's a public issue as well when you think about, you know, the social determinants of indigenous people and how well they do. It's on how well we all do; it's not just us.

When I think about, you know, I had my child at 16 years old but I had a mom, you know. I had lots of support around me. I still did have a social worker come and visit me. Thankfully, I was able to keep my son, who's now 28. But, had that happened now, I probably wouldn't have been able to keep my son because they would have said, well, you were a child in care. Therefore, you know, you don't have the skills to be able to be a parent yourself.

*(10:10)

So, in the calls to TRC, there's been recognition of the errors of historic policies that have resulted in large numbers of indigenous children being removed from their homes, including the 2008 federal apology to Indian residential schools and the subsequent Truth and Reconciliation Commission, as well as a settlement for the '60s scoop class action suit. Despite the recognitions of harms that were done, prior child removal policies, this is still going on. We have even more kids in the care of the state

than we even did in the residential school. And we saw the effects of what happened with residential school.

You know, my mother was in residential school. You know, it has a lasting impact, you know. I can't imagine not being told, I love you; being read a bedtime story; being tucked in at night; asked how my day went at school. Like, these are all things that parents should be able to do. But, somehow, we think that, you know, we're more fit, as the state, to care for these children, when there's parents—and, you know, family members—that are willing to do that.

My own sister's children, just over two years ago, were apprehended. They live in Emerson—well, they did live in Emerson; they moved to Alberta now—but they lived on a farm. My nephews were out—and niece was outside playing on a small motorized quad, and the neighbour called Child and Family Services and said that the children were being unattended—while my brother-in-law was in the kitchen, watching them, doing dishes. And those kids grew up driving those motorized vehicles. They weren't—they knew how to be safe on them.

But Child and Family Services went to their school and apprehended them from school. So my brother-in-law goes to pick his children up from school; my sister's missing; the kids are gone. He's given a card: Child and Family Services picked the kids up from school.

It took six months for us to get the kids in care. There was three of us that were willing to take the kids. You know, all of us had jobs, all of us, you know, were capable of looking after the kids. And the kids were in care for eight months. So six months, they moved three different placements they moved to. Then they finally moved with my sister. And then, two months later, they were returned home.

But they didn't even have to go into care. There was family members that were willing to take them. But were our families asked? No. And, in fact, the member from St. Johns actually came to court and was advocating as well as a number of other people we had. You know, people from Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata, we had people from Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, and some advocates that came to court. And even they couldn't convince the court that the children should be put in our care.

And that should always be the first point of contact, is—who in your family, if you—if they're deeming you unfit to take care of your child, and there's a goal of reunification. Who in your family could take care of this child while we're figuring that out? Children should never be separated from their community and put into another person's home, you know, and multiple persons' homes. Six months, three different houses.

So I just want to say, mothers that are separated from their children are—have a 97 per cent increase in substance abuse disorder, 51 per cent increase in physical visits for mental health, 54 per cent increase in mental health hospitalization, 36 per cent increase in anxiety and a 19 per cent increase in depression.

So I just want to urge my members opposite to, you know, vote for this bill. There's many people in the community that have supported this, and we have some in our gallery today that are here supporting. You know, and we've just continued to hear from families that want to stay together, that want our government to support our families and to put those structures in place so the families can stay together and that we don't have to see, you know, higher incarceration, higher homeless youths.

Miigwech.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

I would just like to ask the members of the gallery that—to please follow our rules, that there is to be no applause and involvement in the debate on the floor. So I would ask for everybody's co-operation, please.

Questions

Madam Speaker: A question period of up to 10 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the sponsoring member by any member in the following sequence: first question to be asked by a member from another party; this is to be followed by a rotation between the parties; each independent member may ask one question; and no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, I congratulate the member for bringing forward this bill. I have seen a number of instances where the fact that the mother or father had been in care was a significant factor in deciding to take the baby away at birth. I can tell you if a woman who was breastfeeding and that at day four Child and Family Services swooped into her hospital room and

took the child away. One of the factors was just this. Fortunately she had a good lawyer—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): I thank the member opposite for that comment and I just want to read—I didn't get to this, but if children are removed from their mother at birth, they will not have access to the benefits in breastfeeding in terms of both nutrition and mother-to-mother contact. Breastfeeding is associated with better cognitive development in children and reduces the risk of ear infections, diabetes, obesity, gastrointestinal infections and cardiovascular diseases. They also—there's also benefits to mothers to breastfeed, including reduced rates of ovarian and premenopausal breast cancer, and it also reduces the rates of diabetes, type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mrs. Sarah Guillemard (Fort Richmond): I do want to thank the member opposite for bringing this bill forward. I think any time that we're discussing the safety of children and how we should approach supporting families is an important discussion to have.

I do have a question for the member. I'm wondering whether she realizes that the current act states eight general reasons for when children are in need of protection and that a parent or guardian having been in care is not actually one of those reasons.

Mrs. Smith: I am aware, but we do need to put this into legislation with this exact wording so that this doesn't continue to happen.

We see this happening every day. If you talk to the First Nations child's advocate, they'll tell you upwards of 100 babies are apprehended on a daily basis. This group actually goes in and it's a group of grandmothers that go to a hospital and support these women, non-indigenous or indigenous, when mothers know that this is going to happen; the community comes around them, they support them.

So this would strengthen that legislation and ensure that just because you're a kid in care doesn't mean that you can't be a good parent and that you shouldn't have a chance.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): I do want to congratulate my sister colleague from Point Douglas on her very important and timely bill in respect of making amendments to the CFS act. I think that most of us that are indigenous and new MLAs here know

that we got elected to be actually able to make changes within the CFS system, so I congratulate her for putting forward really important bills.

Can the member ask how expectant mothers get placed, flagged for a birth alert?

Mrs. Smith: Thank you for that question. So there is a system called CFSIS, and if you are a kid in care and there's no timeline on how long your name stays in this system.

So, when I first got elected, I had a woman that was 31 years old that was a nurse at the Health Sciences Centre. She had her baby at the women's centre which is attached to the Health Sciences Centre, and she had grown up in care her whole life, she had been in number of foster homes, didn't have a good experience, went through lots of counselling and was really moving on with her life. She got married and she had shared with her husband this—her past and then all of a sudden she had a baby and a social worker comes to visit her 13 years later after she came out of care.

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Gerrard: I wrote very recently to the Minister of Families (Mrs. Stefanson) because I had an instance of a baby being taken away from a breastfeeding mother. And so this practice is continuing.

One of the major problems is that there wasn't an adequate plan developed for the mother and father to keep the child. I would like to propose an amendment if we get to committee that there be a requirement for a plan to be developed in every case so that the parents can keep the child.

*(10:20)

Mrs. Smith: I thank the member for those comments, and I absolutely agree that there should always be a plan in place for children to return back to their families. Often, when children are taken, families are forced to sign a temporary agreement that puts their kids in care. And I already talked about, you know, kids—sometimes families are told that this is a permanent, you know, a permanent situation, that they'll never see their kids back. But that should never be the situation. There should always be a plan in place and a plan that includes the extended family so that kids don't have to go into a home that they don't know and that is certainly not within the cultural parameters of that child.

Mr. Bob Lagassé (Dawson Trail): I'm wondering if the member has had an opportunity, given the unique devolved indigenous jurisdictions within our CFS system that recognize the SCO, MKO and MMF authority—can the member assure this House that she has consulted that each of—with each of these organizations and their political leadership before introducing this bill?

Mrs. Smith: We absolutely have. We've also consulted with families who are experiencing this right now that are trying to get their children back. We also spoken with kid—or adults who were apprehended at birth and heard about their experience of being in care. Not all great experiences. Some, of course, were but, you know, we need to make sure that kids are staying with their families in their homes, and if they can't be with their biological mom, then it should be an extended family member.

Ms. Fontaine: I do want to just share and point out that the member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith) has spent a considerable amount of time reaching out to different PTOs including AMC, SCO, and MKO and MMF in respect of CFS agencies, on top of community engagement and directly discussing these issues with families that are affected. So I want to congratulate the member for Point Douglas who has taken so much time to develop those relationships in her new capacity as an MLA.

Can she tell me one of the things that have stood out most about meeting with Manitoba families that are currently involved in the CFS system and gone through a birth alert?

Mrs. Smith: I thank the member for that question. Of course, the resiliency of the families, you know, the strength that they have and the hope and the commitment that they have towards getting their children back and the collaboration and how they want to work with these agencies to ensure their kids come back. And I think, you know, we need to take some modelling from these families because these families don't give up. You know, they're fighting for their children. They want to keep their children at home.

And I just want to point out a member in our gallery today: Krista. Krista's been holding circles on her own in the Point Douglas area with youth that have been involved and actually adults that have been involved and been in the CFS system—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Gerrard: I want to continue in a number of cases that I've seen where the child has been taken away very early. There was a complete failure to develop a plan with the parents in terms of how the parents would keep the child. I think that this is a real problem which is happening every day. We know that there's good examples, the Mothering Project, et cetera, where they develop a plan and they often are able to have the families keep the child. So I just want to emphasize that.

Mrs. Smith: Again, thank you for those comments. I just want to point out another program that's out of the Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre and that's reunification and supporting families to get their kids back, especially when they've been told that they're permanent wards. There's a group of people within this organization that work directly with families, whether they're urban or rural. They go out to their communities and they've really been working hard to ensure that families are included, that the kids are included, and that it's at the best interest of the child. So, basically, the child is at the centre of it. All the supports are on the outside and then your external supports. And they have been doing tremendous work. We just found out that—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Debate

Madam Speaker: The time for this question period had also expired. Debate is open.

Mrs. Sarah Guillemard (Fort Richmond): Thank you, Madam Speaker. And, as I had said before, during the question period, I do thank the member for bringing up this bill so it allows us a chance to discuss a very important subject and topic, and that is our most vulnerable and our youth in Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, I think the member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith) and I share the same views when it comes to keeping children safe in Manitoba. I imagine we would both like to see a world that is nurturing and loving towards our most young population, especially by their own family members. Sadly, we also both realize that's not the world that we do live in today. There are many tragic situations that cause lasting trauma and pain, and that does lead to situations that are unfortunate, where safety concerns do actually come into factor when we're looking at these family situations.

So I personally want to focus on the work of our amazing front-line workers in the child and family services. It takes a very special heart to work with

families who are having difficulties. It takes a huge emotional toll when decisions have to be made to protect a child in danger by removing them. There are many foster families, as well, who have to step in, at times, to provide a loving home, knowing that there is trauma involved when these children are removed from existing situations. Even when it's a safety concern, those children are traumatized from the removal. It's not an easy decision to make, Madam Speaker. And, I guess, my concerns too, with this particular bill, is that it has the potential to trivialize the reality that our front-line workers are facing each and every day.

There isn't a single support worker that I have met that looks forward to apprehending a child. In fact, the caring workers that I've met with do everything in their power to support and offer resources to encourage a healthier home situation before finding themselves at a point where removal is the only option.

There's a bit of a redundancy to this particular bill—and I alluded to that during the question time as well—and that there's always—already provisions within the existing act to prevent apprehensions unless there are these particular safety issues, and being a former child within that system is not considered a safety issue, Madam Speaker. In fact, I could read through some of the existing act, as it exists, and some of the wording included in our act.

So some of the elements that might require a child to be removed is: when they are without the adequate care or supervision or control of an adult; or they're in the care, custody or control or charge of a person who is unable or unwilling to provide adequate care, supervision or control of the child; or whose conduct endangers or might endanger the life, health or emotional well-being of the child; or who neglects or refuses to provide or obtain proper medical or other remedial care or treatment necessary for the health or well-being of the child.

Number—or letter (c) says: is abused or is in danger of being abused, including where the child is likely to suffer harm or injury due to child pornography—these are all elements, I believe, that the member opposite and I agree are safety issues, that those children do need protection from; (d) says: is beyond the control of a person who has the care, custody, control or charge of the child; or (e) is likely to suffer harm or injury due to the behaviour, condition, domestic environment or associations of the child or of a person having care, custody,

control or charge of a child; (f) says: is subjected to aggression or sexual harassment that endangers the life, health or emotional well-being of that child; or (g) being under the age of 12 years, is left unattended without reasonable provision or being made for the supervision and safety of the child; or (h) is the subject or is about to become the subject of an 'onlawful' adoption under The Adoption Act or of a sale under section 84.

Madam Speaker, these are all situations that have to be taken into account when workers are deciding whether that child is facing a safety risk or whether there are resources that can actually support those families to continue care of that child. And, again, it is not an easy decision for workers to make, to apprehend a child. They too will go home after each one of these situations and they will question what actual impact has happened to that—

* (10:30)

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have five minutes remaining.

Bill 230—The Spirit Bear Day Act

Madam Speaker: As previously announced, we will now move for the next half hour into second reading of Bill 230, The Spirit Bear Day Act.

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): I move, seconded by the member from St. Johns, that Bill 230, The Spirit Bear Day Act, be read—be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mrs. Smith: So this bill essentially would proclaim May 10th as spirit bear day in honour of Jordan River Anderson, a young man from Norway House, a community that I spent a good part of my life in.

My father married a Cree woman from Norway House, Brenda Osborne, and I used to go out there for summers, spent lots of time out there; well, even Christmas sometimes.

But this family—and I've speak—spoken extensively to Jerleen, the sister and to the father; I've met with them several times. And, you know, they've sacrificed a lot in their lives to, you know, have other children across Manitoba receive the health care that they need in their communities.

You know, this young, five-year-old boy actually had to be—his family had to make the decision to put him in care so that he could get the proper health care that he needed. He ended up dying in the hospital, unfortunately, but his family has never given up fighting, fighting for other kids. So this bill would honour that young man.

It would also honour the work of their family but it would still—it would also bring awareness to, you know, the need for health care for children that need health care in Manitoba because Cindy Blackstock has been to the tribunal seven times already to fight for children who are not getting the proper health care that they need. Even though Jordan's Principle was passed, several of the organizations I've met with that have Jordan's Principle offices and that work directly with families, you know, are still having challenges.

So this would not only bring awareness to Jordan's Principle, but it would also, you know, just highlight the work that family is doing and honour that young, five-year-old boy that had to pass away in the hospital fighting for care that he needed.

So, miigwech, Madam Speaker.

Questions

Madam Speaker: A question period of up to 10 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the sponsoring member by any member in the following sequence: first question to be asked by a member from another party; this is to be followed by a rotation between the parties. Each independent member may ask one question and no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I would ask, with respect to this bill, what sort of activities the MLA for Point Douglas would suggest should be undertaken on May the 10th each year should this bill pass?

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): Well, right now what happens in Norway House and what happens in—or, in Winnipeg here is on May 10th, there's a gathering of students in the back here and there's a number of schools that participated; I don't remember all of them. I've been to three now and, you know, it's really to help the next generation, our younger generation to have some compassion and to become social justice leaders and to really champion to ensure that this isn't happening in the future, that no child, regardless of where they live, can't access health care. And I

think schools too, in having an educational piece in it and it becoming a proclamation, that it'll bring more awareness.

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): I thank the member opposite from Point Douglas for bringing forth this because it definitely is a thing where we can't—we cannot see, you know, young people, whether they live in the city or in the far north slip through the cracks as what happened here with this young man.

Could the member tell me why the bear is a symbol for the Jordan's Principle?

Mrs. Smith: So, that—the bear became a symbol because of Jordan Anderson. Jordan Anderson had a teddy bear with him all the time, and if you go and you visit this young man's gravesite in Norway House, it is actually a teddy bear with a heart that is the headstone.

And, if you look at Cindy Blackstock and her and every place she goes and when she's speaking on the issue of Jordan's Principle, she carries along this spirit bear, and that spirit bear is to represent Jordan River Anderson and his spirit and what sacrifices have been made in his honour.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Again, I just want to take a moment to acknowledge and lift up the work of my sister colleague for the member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith) for Bill 230.

I think that it is important that we take this bill seriously and that we come to these discussions with a good heart in acknowledging and honouring Jordan River Anderson, and his family, who continue on that fight and that struggle on behalf of First Nation children.

Can the member tell us what this would mean to Jordan's family?

Mrs. Smith: I'm going to try not to get emotional because this—the family has not been recognized in what they've done and the sacrifices that their family have made. It is their son that was five years old that passed away in the hospital that they had to put in care to get the health care that they need—needed. So for them, it's recognizing their little boy. It's also recognizing the sacrifices that their family has made and that no one will ever forget their little boy.

Mr. Gerrard: As someone who's long been an advocate for Jordan's Principle, who's worked closely with Trudy Lavalee who wrote the first piece and been at many events with Cindy Blackstock, I

think that it is important that we do something that continues and reminds us year by year of the importance of making sure that every child and First Nations children, in particular, because they have not been adequately supported in the past, are well supported now and how much a difference this makes in terms of their, not only short-run but long-run, impact on their lives.

Mrs. Smith: I've met Cindy Blackstock on a couple of occasions and in fact she had a spirit bear day in my riding so she was at Niji Mahkwa, she had written a book and so she had had a picnic, a bear picnic. And all of the children from Niji Mahkwa school were given little bear ears and they each received a bear and they each received one of—a book that's in honour of Jordan River Anderson. So again, uplifting and honouring and helping the next generation to understand that this is a social justice issue, this is still happening, and that we need to continue to raise awareness so that there's no child that was—is without health care.

Mr. Bob Lagassé (Dawson Trail): Can the member opposite tell us a little more about spirit bear, please?

Mrs. Smith: Yes, so spirit bear is essentially what I said earlier. It was a bear that was carried around with Jordan River Anderson. It became a symbol of his plight to get health care and Cindy Blackstock has continued on that tradition in honour of that little boy. So like I said, everywhere she goes—and that bear has been gifted to thousands of children across the province in honour of Jordan River Anderson and Jordan's Principle. So it's become a symbol, it's become a part of Jordan, and it's become a part of his family, and it's really to create awareness around, you know, the need, and the need still today that kids aren't getting the health care that they need.

Ms. Fontaine: You know, for all the talk that we have in this Chamber day after day about working together and coming together to do better for Manitoba children, all Manitoba children, but certainly, the discussions that we've had in this House, in particular in respect of indigenous children in care, today, this morning, is an opportunity for the House to come together in solidarity, in partnership, and allow Bill 230 to go to committee.

* (10:40)

And again, I would ask the member for Point Douglas, what would it mean to the family to allow this bill to go to committee and ultimately receive royal assent?

Mrs. Smith: Well, I think it would be very empowering to the family, very emotional. And it's been something that they've wanted for a long time. They've done lots of work and, you know, they've never been honoured for that work. And they want to ensure that their little boy—again, who was five years old, that died in care, in a hospital—that he's remembered, and that people see that as ensuring other kids don't have to go through what that family went through.

They celebrated in Norway House. You know, they celebrated here, last year; the chief from Norway House was here. This year he couldn't come, he sent a representative. But it's creating awareness and it's uplifting that family for all of the sacrifices they've made, so it'll mean everything to them.

Mr. Gerrard: Madam Speaker, this bill arose out of the fact that the members or representatives from federal and provincial governments couldn't work together, were debating about the funding of a showerhead rather than looking after a child. There has been a lot of progress with major funding, which I've seen being transformative in a number of First Nations 'communities'.

Will the member speak to the importance of the federal and the provincial government working together on this issue?

Mrs. Smith: Miigwech, and I thank the member for that question.

There should never be, you know, a dispute over a child's health care. There should never be a dispute over health care, period.

You know, when we look at what happens in northern communities versus, you know, the urban city here, we have access to health care. You know, but when we look at rural communities, they don't have the same access. They have to travel to the city, often without an escort. You know, we've seen some really egregious things happen with people who are coming through the city without someone 'accompanying' them. So I think everybody needs to make sure that there's health care there when it's needed.

Mr. Wowchuk: Could the member from Point Douglas maybe just share with us who she's—or who has been consulted with in this legislation at the local levels and the different bands and all the way through the government levels?

Mrs. Smith: I've met with the family extensively. I mean, this—Jordan's Principle is after Jordan River Anderson, and essentially their family has never been recognized. And it's important for us and, you know, I urge the members opposite to vote in favour of this bill. This isn't my bill, this isn't anything, you know, political. This is about uplifting, honouring a little boy and their family. So, you know, I urge you again to vote in favour of this.

Ms. Fontaine: In the last couple of seconds that we have left I will put it again to the House to come together in respect of and in honour of Jordan River Anderson.

And not only for the family of Jordan but actually for the whole community, and in particular the indigenous community that want to recognize this little boy and all children that are affected, unjustifiably and discriminatorily, under CFS system where we don't get the same amount of dollars that are prescribed to other ones. I'm asking members of the House to support the member for Point Douglas's (Mrs. Smith) bill this morning, and allow it to go to third reading and committee.

Mrs. Smith: Yes. So, you know, in speaking with the family, this is what they asked. They asked for a day to be proclaimed in Manitoba because of their—losing their child. Who, again—five years old, had to be put into CFS care to get the health care he needed, and then ultimately passed away in the hospital.

So I urge the members opposite to please vote in favour of this. Honour Jordan River Anderson. Honour the family and proclaim this a day so that no other child has to, you know, go without health care, and that the next generation doesn't forget who this little boy was.

Madam Speaker: The time for this question period has expired.

Debate

Madam Speaker: Debate is open.

Mr. Bob Lagassé (Dawson Trail): I'm pleased to stand in this House today and put a few words on the record regarding Bill 230, the spirit day act, brought forward by the member for Point Douglas.

Madam Speaker, when I was asked to speak on this bill, I took the opportunity to reflect back on the seven sacred teachings and their meeting—meanings. I did this having only learned about these teachings a few years back. I, as a Metis individual, was brought up in a home that practised Catholicism and spoke

French, or rather, *franglais*. We also spoke a bit of Michif without realizing it.

So it was only when I started to work as a specialized foster parent that I began to fully understand my history. I learned of the indigenous side as well as the European settlers and exactly how the Metis people came to be. Since then, when I have the opportunity, I like to study up on our traditions and our teachings.

Madam Speaker, I am sure you are aware, but I will take this time to highlight our government and how we are firm supporters of Jordan's Principle, which is a child-first principle that ensures quality of care for all Manitobans, whether they live in the city or on a reserve in the North.

Our government will continue to work with the First Nations leadership and the federal government to develop and co-ordinate an a co-ordinated approach to implementing the full scope of Jordan's Principle in the province.

In 2015, the late PC MLA Stu Briese introduced a resolution calling on the Province to ensure that no child falls through the cracks because of jurisdictional disputes between the federal and provincial governments. The resolution by Stu Briese called on the Province—on the provincial government to formally support Jordan's Principle while reaffirming the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The resolution was unanimously passed. Madam Speaker, a teddy bear called the spirit bear has become the 'sydibol' of Jordan's Principle.

Bill 230, the spirit day act has given me the opportunity to re-read and now share some of the sacred teachings. The seven sacred teachings are values based on First Nations cultural traditions that reinforce the teachings of faith. Each teaching honours one of the basic virtues to help us live a full and healthy life: love, respect, courage, honesty, wisdom, humility and truth. Each of these sacred teachings is represented by a different animal—that—and provides practical and positive traits for use in our everyday lives.

Love, represented by the eagle. To feel true love is to know the Creator, therefore it is expected that one's first love is to be the Great Spirit. He is considered the father of all children and the giver of human life. Love given to the Great Spirit is expressed through the love of oneself and it is

understood that if one cannot love oneself, it is impossible to love anyone else.

The eagle was chosen by the Great Spirit to represent this law, as an eagle can reach the highest out of all creatures in bringing pure vision to the seeker.

Though the purveyor of the greatest and most powerful medicine, love can also be the most elusive of the teachings, as it depends upon a word that is—acknowledges the importance of spirituality.

Humility, the wolf. Recognizing and acknowledging there is a higher power than man and it is known that—oh, sorry, excuse me—is a higher power than man and is known as Creator is to be deemed truly humble. To express deference or submission to the Creator through the acceptance that all beings are equal is to capture the spirit of humility.

The expression of this humility is manifested through the consideration of others before ourselves. In this way, the wolf became the teacher of this lesson. He bows his head in the presence of others out of deference and, once hunted, will not take the food until it can be shared with the pack. His lack of arrogance and respect for his community is a hard lesson, but integral in the aboriginal way.

The wolf also, in my opinion, is the perfect reflection of how a government should not fight when it comes to the issues such as the tragedy that is Jordan's story.

* (10:50)

Bill 230, Madam Speaker, gives us an opportunity to work together. This is why we are committing to supporting our federal partners to honour the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal ruling which requires that all First Nations children have access to need services regardless of where they live.

Madam Speaker, we are engaged in the informational, interdepartmental meetings regarding the implementation of Jordan's Principle. It is important to keep up to date on the pressing needs of First Nations children and youth in Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, honesty is the next of the sacred teachings. Long ago there was a giant called—and excuse me, I'm probably going to butcher the name—Kitch-Sabe. Kitch-Sabe walked among the people to remind them to be honest to the laws of the Creator and honest to each other. The highest honour that could be bestowed upon an individual was the saying: There walks an honest man. He can be

trusted. To be truly honest was to keep the promises one made to the Creator, to others and to oneself. The elders would say: Never try to be someone else. Live true to your spirit. Be honest to yourself and accept who you are, the way the Creator made you.

Madam Speaker, the next is wisdom, represented in a beaver. The building of a community is entirely dependent on gifts that are given to each member by the Creator and how these gifts are used. The beaver's example of using his sharp teeth for cutting trees and branches to build his dams and lodges expresses this teaching. If he did not use his teeth, the teeth would continue to grow until they became useless, ultimately making it impossible for him to sustain himself. The same can be said for human beings. One's spirit will grow weak if not fulfill—fulfilling its full use. When used properly, however, these gifts contribute to the development of a peaceful and healthy community.

An example of our government's ability to listen and work together is Manitoba and Canada establishing the joint committee on the implementation of Jordan's Principle to address delays or disruptions resulting from jurisdictional disputes.

The Department of Families is leading an interdepartmental Jordan's Principle working group with Indigenous and Northern Relations, Education and Training, and Health, Seniors and Active Living to share information on Jordan's Principle and develop recommendations on common provincial positions and implementations plans.

Madam Speaker, let's now reflect on courage, represented by the bear. The bear provides many lessons in the way it lives, but courage is the most important teaching it offers. Though gentle by nature, the ferociousness of a mother bear when one of her cubs is approached is the true definition of courage. To have the mental and moral strength to overcome fears that prevent us from living our true spirit as human beings is a great challenge that must be met with the same vigour and intensity as a mother bear protecting her cub. Living of the heart and living of the spirit is difficult but the bear's example shows us how to face danger to achieve these goals.

The spirit bear, as referenced in 230—in Bill 230, the spirit day act, is a reference to the raven and the spirit bear. The spirit bear was a legend of the Gitga'at and Kitsoo native peoples. The legend told of a time when the world was white with ice and snow. A raven later made everything green. He

decided that one in 10 black bears should have white fur. The white bears would remain—remind people of a time of glaciers. Raven said these bears would live in a special place. They would live in the Great Bear Rainforest.

Spirit bear and Jordan's Principle are aligned through the children's book which tells of the spirit bear's mom telling him about human—a human rights' case in Ottawa: Jordan's Principle case. And he travels far to stand up for First Nations children's rights. Spirit bear calls on Canada to immediately comply with all the rulings of the Canadian Human—of the Human Rights Tribunal, ordering it to immediately cease its discriminatory funding of First Nations children and family services. The order further requires Canada to fully and properly implement Jordan's Principle.

I see I'm running short on time, Madam Speaker. Unfortunately, I had quite a bit more to go with this story so I'll sit down and give other members the opportunity to talk. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Order.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to proceeding, I do need to introduce some guests that we have in the gallery right now because they are leaving at 11 o'clock. But we have seated in the public gallery, from École River Heights school, 17 grade 8 students under the direction of Carolina Galli. And this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard).

On behalf of all members here, we welcome you to the Manitoba Legislature.

* * *

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): I'm pleased to get up in the—

Madam Speaker: Oh, sorry, pardon me. I thought the member was doing something else. But—oh—I am wrong, it is the member for St. Johns' turn.

Ms. Fontaine: As I was saying, I am pleased to get up and put a couple of quick words on the record in respect of bill 30, The Spirit Bear Day Act, so that it will allow us—at least—a minute to be able to vote on bill 30 and allow this bill to go to committee and on to third reading and royal assent.

Because as I said, Madam Speaker, quite often, every day, we get up in the House and we talk about this House, this Chamber, the elected members

of this Chamber having opportunities to work together in a good way for all Manitobans and certainly on behalf of children. And so I would suspect, and I suggest to members in the House, that the bill put forward by the member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith) is a good opportunity, on what is our last day in the House this week, to do something good in partnership with one another and in honour and recognition of Jordan River Anderson and his family.

I do want to just put on the record, the member for Point Douglas had wanted me to share that this would mean a tremendous amount, more than we could ever understand in this House, to Jordan's family and, in particular, his parents. And we did want to put it on the record that Jordan's father is actually on dialysis and is facing serious health concerns.

And so, in honour of his beloved Jordan, it would be nice to do something together in concert with one another—both the Conservatives, the Liberals and the NDP—to recognize this five-year-old little boy, rather than talk out the bill today.

So I just want to, finally—I just want to acknowledge some of the folks that we have in the gallery and say *miigwech* to everybody that came down to watch the debate. And to say hello to the students in the gallery. It's important that students, that Manitoba students, see what we debate in the House.

And today we're debating a provincial day that would recognize Jordan River Anderson, a five-year-old boy who died in the hospital because he could not access the health care that he needed in his home community. I would suggest to the House that I'm sure that the students in the gallery would love to see members in this House come together this morning and vote in favour of Bill 230.

So with that, I will sit down. I will allow my colleagues to vote for the member for Point Douglas's bill, and let's honour Jordan Anderson.

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): Thank you for the opportunity to speak on this here. So much to say about this very important bill. And our government recognizes the importance of fostering an understanding of past and present relationships between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples. To identify the needs and the priorities of indigenous communities and determine actions that further reconciliation.

In doing so, we have implemented the framework for a reconciliation strategy in which a public engagement process will begin and include indigenous communities, as well as all Manitobans. Our government is a firm supporter of Jordan's Principle, which, as a child-first principle, ensures equality of care for all Manitobans. Whether they live in a city or a reserve in the far North, the Manitoba government continues to work with First Nations leadership and federal government to develop a co-ordinated approach—

Madam Speaker: Order.

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

* (11:00)

RESOLUTIONS

Res. 11—Crown Corporations should stay public and affordable

Madam Speaker: The hour is now 11 a.m. and time for private members' resolutions. The resolution before us this morning is the resolution Crown Corporations should stay public and affordable, brought forward by the honourable member for Minto (Mr. Swan). [*interjection*] Oh, pardon me.

House Business

Madam Speaker: The honourable House Leader for the Official Opposition, on House business.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader): Pursuant to rule 33(9), I am announcing that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Thursday of private members' business will be one put forward by the honourable member for Point Douglas. The title of the resolution is: Keep Concordia and Seven Oaks emergency rooms open.

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Thursday of private members' business will be one put forward by the honourable member for Point Douglas. The title of the resolution is Keep Concordia and Seven Oaks emergency rooms open.

Madam Speaker: I will now recognize the honourable member for Minto for his resolution.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): I move, seconded by the member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum),

WHEREAS the Provincial Government has an obligation to keep Crown Corporations public and their services affordable; and

WHEREAS Manitoba Hydro has continued to be profitable as it expands its generation and transmission capability, profiting \$95 million in 2018, and are estimating a \$64 million dollar profit even without a rate increase in 2019; and

WHEREAS the Board of Manitoba Hydro still wants to raise rates by 3.5% in 2019 which would result in families paying more than \$40 more a year; and

WHEREAS this Provincial Government has a poor track record working with Crown Corporation boards, leading to mass resignations of members hand-picked by the Premier and Cabinet; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government removed "keeping hydro affordable" from the terms of reference for the Board of Manitoba Hydro; and

WHEREAS the Minister of Crown Corporations most recent mandate letter to Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries prioritized "engaging with the private sector to identify opportunities for increased participation in the liquor retail and distribution sectors;" and

WHEREAS this directive encourages shifting liquor sales from the public to private sector, putting profits earned into the hands of the wealthy rather than back into public services, certain to lead to higher costs and less choice for Manitobans; and

WHEREAS the Minister of Crown Corporations most recent mandate letter to Manitoba Public Insurance (MPI) prioritized "a rate setting structure that is driven to Minimum Capital Test ratios;" and

WHEREAS this directive could lead to large MPI rate increases for Manitobans to build a larger reserve fund; and

WHEREAS the removal of a cap on vehicle inspection fees by the Provincial Government has resulted in the price increasing substantially from \$55 to up to \$200 dollars; and

WHEREAS the Minister of Crown Corporations ordered the Board of MPI to not proceed with online payment options; and

WHEREAS Provincial Cabinet Members approved a change for MPI to no longer accept convenient pre-authorized credit card payments; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government continues to attempt to lay the groundwork to privatize Manitoba's Crown Corporations and the Progressive Conservative Party has a history of privatization.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to keep Manitoba Hydro, MPI and Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries publicly owned so hydro and MPI rates remain the lowest in Canada.

Motion presented.

Mr. Swan: You know, there was a time in Manitoba when provincial Crown corporations were respected by government.

There was a time in Manitoba when these Crown corporations were seen as a way not only to earn revenue for government for important purposes but also as instruments of social policy, for economic development, for employment, for social responsibility.

There was a time when provincial Crown corporations were seen as dynamic places for people to work, to pursue careers, to grow, and there was a time in Manitoba when these corporations were seen as having a duty to provide effective and affordable services, so much so that there was actually a provincial law in effect to ensure that Manitobans enjoyed the lowest cost for their auto insurance, their hydro and their home heating.

Mr. Dennis Smook, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

And the sad part, Mr. Acting Speaker, is that that was only a little more than three years ago.

And this resolution is put forward in the hope that members of this House from all different parties will reaffirm today the beliefs that we thought were central to what most Manitobans thought, to—a resolution to make it clear that we want our Crown corporations to make life better for Manitobans, that they are to be kept public, and one of their main goals, among all the other things I've said, is to keep Manitoba as an affordable place to live as possible.

And there's not enough time this morning to discuss in detail everything I would like to, so, Mr. Acting Speaker, I'll try and hit the high notes for you today.

We know that Manitoba Hydro generates clean power at a time when the world needs it, and we know that Manitoba Hydro continues to be profitable even as it has undertaken a major period of

expansion—expansion of its generating capacity but also expansion of its transmission capacity.

And it is a fact—it is a fact, Mr. Acting Speaker—that the new bipole, Bipole III, was absolutely necessary for the security, not just of Manitoba Hydro but the security and the economy of our province.

And I say that as a fact. Well, why do I say that? Because the chairperson of Manitoba Hydro that was appointed by this government agreed with me at Hydro committee. And I know the member for Tyndall Park (Mr. Marcelino) and I, we asked a lot of questions that day and I found the chairman to be very open about that, that it was understood that this was a necessary thing. And that has now—it's now come into play and yet Hydro continues to be profitable.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I'm excited about more hydro capacity being available because not only can we satisfy Manitobans' needs, but we have the ability to export clean power to our neighbours to the east, to the west and to the south, to reduce carbon emissions, to earn money that's for the benefit of all Manitobans. When I say all Manitobans, I mean that, because Manitoba Hydro is a Crown jewel, is a Crown asset.

Now, there's some concerns, obviously, of steps that the government has taken. It was telling that Hydro's mandate has now changed to take away the obligation and the intention of keeping costs affordable. Manitobans have enjoyed the lowest hydro costs in Canada, perhaps the lowest hydro costs in all of North America and among the lowest hydro costs in the entire world.

And that's been a benefit for Manitoba consumers, that's been a benefit for Manitoba companies and it has been something which has assisted Manitoba—with only a small amount of oil and gas reserves, compared to other provinces—to punch above its weight in providing energy, but in this case, clean energy that our friends in Wisconsin and Minnesota and Nebraska tell us they want, and our friends in Saskatchewan, whether they will tell us this or not, desperately need.

We know that this government has chosen to pick fights with partners and we know that this government cancelled an agreement with the Manitoba Metis Federation, which we know is headed to litigation. And we also know that this government has turned away from negotiations

with the very jurisdictions that I talked about: Saskatchewan, which needs to find an alternative as it begins to decommission its old coal plants; Ontario; Minnesota; Wisconsin; Iowa; Nebraska, all whom are consumers of our power, but could be much larger consumers of our power.

And it would be helpful if the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and his Cabinet and his government would show some enthusiasm for Hydro. And not just when the Premier's trying to negotiate a better deal with Ottawa, which is when he suddenly tells everybody how great Hydro is, and how wonderful it is that we have this capacity.

You know, I would be very worried that the Premier has failed to commit—when he's been asked the questions in this House, he's failed to commit to keeping all of Hydro in public hands. And we're doubly worried that he has now hired Gordon Campbell, although we understand his status is somewhat uncertain—but he's heard Gordon Campbell to conduct some kind of review, or some kind of investigation of Manitoba Hydro.

This is the same Gordon Campbell, who, as the Premier of British Columbia, actually privatized as much of BC Hydro as he thought he could get away from. And what's happened in BC? Those hydro rates have gone through the roof. And why is that? Because now the ratepayers in British Columbia are paying private companies not to generate power.

Let me say that again: ratepayers in British Columbia, because of decisions made by Gordon Campbell, are paying private companies who built power dams—they're paying them not to generate power. And that is not what we want to see here in Manitoba.

We know that Manitoba Public Insurance has provided the lowest rates for auto insurance in the entire country. And I believe it was 15 of 17 years, under the NDP government, that MPI rates actually stayed the same, or even went down. And I'm not just talking about adjusted dollars to take inflation into account. These are actual dollars. People's rates not only stayed the same, even as other costs increased; they actually went down.

And, of course, that included decreases in many of the last few years of our government, and even included rebates, including a rather famous rebate that I was somewhat happy to be able to provide, as the minister responsible for Manitoba Public

Insurance, that gave Manitobans back 45 per cent of the MPI premiums they'd paid in a previous year.

You can't do that with a privately owned company. That would be money heading to shareholders in New York, or Toronto or London, or somewhere else.

And we now know that the mandate of MPI has been changed. And now they've been told that they should change the capital test ratio—or the reserves, as we called it—and the direction for MPI now is to try and argue for a larger reserve fund. They can take that before the Public Utilities Board, I suppose, just as they've taken some other questionable choices.

If they were successful in getting the kind of larger reserve fund that they want, that would actually mean a spike in auto rates in Manitoba, for anywhere from \$55 to \$200, increases that Manitobans have not seen in a long, long time. At the same time, we've seen that MPI has taken away online payment options and it's a disappointment.

* (11:10)

In the limited time I have left, I want to speak about Liquor & Lotteries. We believe as New Democrats that public distribution is the best way to go. We also believe, with some parameters in mind, that keeping liquor sales public is the right thing to do. It's the right thing to do for social responsibility, it's the right thing to do to manage and to ensure that maximum revenues go to government.

There has always been a role for the private sector. We know that there are private liquor vendors in smaller communities. Mr. Acting Speaker, I know there'd be many communities in your riding. We know that for many decades, hotels have been able to sell beer and now apparently they'll be selling cider and there's no quarrel with that. But we know that keeping most sales public has provided reasonable prices; it has provided clean premises, professional staff.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I know the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko), and we agree on some things, he will agree when Gary Doer used to say day after day that we wanted to have the cheapest six-pack in Canada, and I agreed wholeheartedly with Gary Doer and I know members opposite agree with that as well. That's not quite the case now, but it is still one of the most efficient liquor jurisdictions in the country.

Now we know that there's a move to have Liquor & Lotteries look at privatizing the sale. There's concerns that'll take revenue away from government, reduce social responsibility and actually increase drinking, including harmful drinking in a way that will not be valuable for our communities. Just today in the Winnipeg Free Press, there's a great article by Lynne Fernandez of the CCPA on the foolishness of this.

I hope the government will accept this resolution. Let's keep these Crowns public; let's keep things affordable for Manitobans.

Questions

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): A question period of up to 10 minutes will be held and questions may be addressed in the following sequence: the first question may be asked by a member from another party; any subsequent questions must follow a rotation between parties; each independent member may ask one question; and no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): I'd like to ask the member if he can explain to Manitobans and members of this House why the NDP government in routing Bipole III chose the west-side route, which was far more expensive and, of course, has left a bill that Manitobans—Manitoba Hydro ratepayers will have to pay for, for a number of years?

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Well, I thank my friend from Portage la Prairie for asking that question, and I think by the tone of that question he has now accepted what Sandy Riley told us at committee, that the bipole was absolutely necessary. It was absolutely necessary to get that built and I can assure the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Wishart) that the Bipole III on the east side of Lake Winnipeg never would have been built, and I say that because of 80 meetings in 16 communities which all came to the same conclusion—had to be built. We did it.

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): They don't see hand signals in Hansard.

I want to thank the member for bringing this important resolution forward.

Why does it appear that the government is attempting to privatize Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries?

Mr. Swan: This government of course will say, well, no, we're not privatizing Liquor & Lotteries; we're just privatizing what they do. And we know that now

direction has been given from this government, which, of course, pledged not to interfere with Crown corporations—direction was given directing Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries to find more ways for more private sale of alcohol.

And that's why we believe that they are attempting privatization—I don't want to say by stealth because it's apparent—that's why we're discussed in the Legislature, but they are attempting to change some things—a mix of public and private which has worked very well in the province of Manitoba for many decades. They are now trying to upset that. We know that they plan to minimize the public benefit of liquor sales in Manitoba.

Mr. Andrew Smith (Southdale): I'd like to ask the member opposite how he believes that increasing, under the NDP watch, by the way—the increasing of Hydro's debt, essentially handing over power and ownership of Hydro from Manitobans to wealthy bankers and moneylenders in Toronto is in the best interest of all Manitobans.

Mr. Swan: Well, I understand a lot of members over on that side don't really understand business or balance sheets. I would point out to the member for Southdale (Mr. Smith) that 'associaed' with debt is assets. And Manitoba Hydro, because of the need to provide safe, effective generation of power and safe transmission of power, needed to embark on building a third bipole. We know—I mean, the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Wishart) knows it, obviously a Cabinet minister doesn't, which surprises me.

Those things had to be done. If the member would look at the balance sheet, he would see the tremendous increase in assets as Manitoba Hydro continues to generate clean power for our province and beyond our—

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): The member's time has expired.

Mr. Allum: You know, I have to laugh at the Minister for Growth, Enterprise and Trade laughing. He was the guy who talked all tough about bipole before the last election. Then, after the election, his constituents had to put out an APB looking for him because they couldn't find him anywhere.

Why is it important to keep liquor sales in distribution public?

Did they ever find you?

Mr. Swan: One of the main concerns we have is the issue of social responsibility. And if members

opposite will take a look at the experience in Alberta—I mean Alberta under the then-Progressive Conservative government, the party that doesn't exist anymore in Alberta—they found that moving to a private distribution and sales system actually resulted in many, many more places to buy alcohol, many more instances of alcohol being sold to people who are intoxicated, people who are underage.

One of the great difficulties, of course, is that many of the people selling alcohol might be 18 or 19 years old, earning minimum wage, that are told by their employers to try and maximize—

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): The member's time has expired.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): I'm—gives me great pleasure to stand today and put a couple words and a question up on the record.

The member from Minto and actually the member from Fort Garry-Riverview were both Cabinet ministers under the Selinger government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and in 2012 they sold off the Property Registry.

I would like to know if the member from Minto—the NDP member from Minto, before he ran the rebellion—would he stand today in his place and apologize to all Manitobans for selling a Crown corporation, the Property Registry?

Mr. Swan: Well, I didn't know that the member for Lac du Bonnet was so upset about that, and if he has concerns with it, perhaps he should have said something at the time and perhaps we could have had a discussion.

There is a great difference, of course, between allowing information in a land titles office to be dealt with, as opposed to the sale of alcohol and cannabis, now. We believe there is a huge role for social responsibility. What the member's talking about is an entirely different situation. It doesn't impact social responsibility, nor does it impact the affordability of life in Manitoba.

Maybe this member could tell us why he agreed with this government doing away with the obligation of the government of—

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): The member's time has expired.

Mr. Allum: I guess the member from Lac du Bonnet might want to explain to the House why his

government sold the phone company 20 years ago, and then all of his other members profited from it.

How would—could the member tell us how privatizing liquor sales would hinder public services and education related to alcohol use?

Mr. Swan: Well, I thank the member for the question. I actually started and ran out of time in my last answer, so I do appreciate that.

We know that liquor, when used appropriately, is something that's very good for many Manitobans. We also know that alcohol abuse is an issue for too many Manitobans. And we know that part of the mandate of Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries must be to try and mitigate those damages: making sure there is education out there, making sure there are resources for people who believe they might have a problem and also to make sure that, in stores, there is information provided to make sure that people are only buying appropriately. They're not buying for people who are underage, or are not underage themselves—

* (11:20)

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): The member's time has expired.

Mr. Wishart: In returning to the question on the routing of Bipole III, I appreciate the member's admission that the government of the day was unable to work with the communities on the east side of Lake Winnipeg to use the most logical route. But the criteria that was set out at the time by Manitoba Hydro was that a 40-kilometre setback between existing I and II lines and new line III was the best solution. And the east-side route actually met that criteria far better than the west-side route.

I'd like to ask the member: Why they chose such a poor alternative?

Mr. Swan: Thank you, I'm happy to talk about the bipole line that had to be built. And if I can read what the member for Portage la Prairie is saying, he believes that working with communities means ignoring what they have to say, imposing a line on them, and then sitting back and waiting for the inevitable lawsuit to happen.

As, course, as Premier Gary Doer used to say, there was a transmission line between Edmonton and Calgary in Alberta where the PC government couldn't move forward because of court challenges. The member needs to understand that the line never would have been built, and of course when I

ask Mr. Riley about that, he said he had no information to suggest that what we had said about this was not correct. So, I think the member needs to revisit his own history—

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): The member's time has expired.

Mr. Allum: It's hard to believe how out of touch the member for Portage la Prairie is. Maybe that explains why he's also out of Cabinet.

I wonder if the member could just tell us how this PC government has continued to make life less affordable for Manitobans?

Mr. Swan: Well, let me say first how strange it is. There hasn't been a single question from any Liberal member. And, of course, you know, we had the Liberals previously, with the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) talking about how alcohol should be restricted and more expensive, and then we had their leader in the last election saying that alcohol should be cheaper and it should be available absolutely everywhere. So, you know, I—it would be very interesting to hear what Liberals have to say on this issue, but they've chosen not to do that.

What I will tell you is what New Democrats believe which is that having strong, respected Crown corporations provides affordability for Manitobans in all of these areas and we know that provinces, for example, with private car insurance, people in those provinces pay much more for—

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): The member's time has expired.

The time for questions has expired.

Debate

The Acting Chairperson (Dennis Smook): The debate is now open.

Hon. Colleen Mayer (Minister of Crown Services): I rise today to speak to Resolution 11, the Crown Corporations should stay public and affordable, put forward by the member for Minto (Mr. Swan) before this House.

While I may agree on the title and the THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I disagree on all the words in between actually. I take great pride to stand up here and have that opportunity to put some words on the record regarding our Crown corporations. Crown corporations do tremendous work. They do excellent

work and I commend them for helping provide the services Manitobans need.

The members opposite have spent significant time in the House speaking about Manitoba Hydro's request for rate increases over the past year. The members opposite seem to forget why Manitoba Hydro is in the predicament they are in today: massive capital projects that were put in motion under the previous government.

While Manitoba Hydro has worked to bring down costs and manage recent massive projects, costs had continued to grow on projects like Wuskwatim and Keeyask. Now, while Keeyask remains on track, after reviewing, it was determined the cost would be much higher than initially projected.

As well, let us not forget that the former government made the reckless decision to move Bipole III on the west route which meant an almost \$1 billion in additional costs. Manitoba Hydro and, in fact, all Manitobans will continue to pay for these projects for generations to come as Manitoba Hydro and ratepayers work to pay off these costly decisions. Manitoba Hydro will be facing more than \$700 million of higher annual expenses when the carrying costs of these ill-advised projects comes online over the next few years.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Manitoba Hydro and their board and executive work very hard to keep rates low for Manitobans. We continue to have some of the lowest electricity rates across the country and North America, all of this while we focus on green, sustainable energy.

Manitoba Hydro is determined to find ways to best serve Manitobans with their energy needs. I commend the work that they do every day, ensuring Manitobans have some of the lowest rates in the country.

My recent mandate letter to the chair and the board of Manitoba Hydro set out expectations for the coming year and beyond, and I look forward to seeing those reports—reporting updates on the work that comes through on these matters.

Manitobans know the value—the valuable resources that Manitoba Hydro represents, but also know that the costs we see today need to be balanced against having future generations pay for them. We do not want to leave our children with debt loads that they cannot manage, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Our government knows that managing our province's fiscal situation requires an all-hands-on-deck approach and that means our Crown corporations need to be included.

I also want to take a moment to put some words on the record regarding Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries. I know that members opposite and their union friends are happy to scream the end is upon us when they see the words private sector. But let me be clear: Liquor is already a public-private partnership in this province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, wine, liquor, beer are already sold through both government stores and private retailers across Manitoba. There are 170 privately owned liquor vendors, eight speciality wine stores and over 250 private hotel beer vendors in Manitoba. They are being socially responsible when they are serving our public.

Private vendors of all kinds are an integral part of how alcohol is sold in Manitoba. Many small businesses across Manitoba provide consumers with choices in their communities. In relation to my bill that's currently in this House, Mr. Deputy Speaker—Bill 11—it amends to allow for cider and spirit-based coolers at all beer vendors. There are many rural liquor vendors or hotel beer vendors that are the only locations for many kilometres anywhere that Manitobans can find their favourite products.

While NDP members opposite can continue to claim that liquor sales need to remain public, I suggest that the time to review—that they take the time to review liquor sold in their own communities. They might be surprised.

The member opposite, in his assertion that this leads to higher costs and less choice for consumers, is completely baseless. We are a government that is working hard to provide more choices and better access for Manitobans.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in 2017 and 2018, 46 per cent of liquor sold in Manitoba was through a private channel. Our model already focuses on public-private partnerships to best serve Manitobans. There are many ways that the private sector is already involved in many aspects of liquor sales and distribution in our province.

I am hopeful that the board of Liquor & Lotteries will be able to make this mandate forward and review their operations to determine if there are better ways for Manitobans to get the best service possible at the lowest prices.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the members opposite need to get their facts straight when it comes to Manitoba Public Insurance. I'd like to take time to explain a few things and point out a few things for members opposite.

The NDP continues to believe that Manitoba can be used as a political tool and that our Crown corporations should be used for their will. This is not the right approach and the reason we are publicly—why we publicly released the mandate letters. This keeps our Crown corporations and government accountable to the people of Manitoba. This is not something that the NDP were ever interested in and apparently they're not interested in it now, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

While the leader of opposition questioned in the media that MPI does not need to build reserves because they are backstopped by government, our side of the House knows better, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This is the old approach which got Crown corporations in trouble for many years in the past.

We expect our Crowns to manage their fiscal affairs in a responsible way as part of summary government. This means not sucking MPI reserves dry and adding more to our provincial debt.

* (11:30)

Manitoba Public Insurance, through these regulations, will now operate similarly to other insurance companies, public and private, which are regulated federally and not need to have—and need to have these reserves to cover the losses. We do not want a hail storm or another disaster, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to damage the government's books, and I'm proud of our corporation and the work that they're doing to take the steps necessary to protect 'fewner'—future generations from large debt and massive hikes.

These changes are about avoiding rate shock and working with the Public Utility Board to charge—to chart a path forward for lower rates for Manitobans. MPI will work with the PUB to determine a capital management plan that focuses on reaching these targets without costing—or causing massive one-year hikes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the NDP have shown in the past the desire to force Crowns to make poor business decisions. These regulations will mean that MPI reserves cannot be raided by future governments. As well, I have been very clear and I'll state once again: I have told Manitoba Public

Insurance and the insurance brokers of Manitoba that they need to work together on a model that best serves Manitobans, and that means online services. I am very encouraged that these two groups have come together to review what's taking place, not only here but across the country, and come up with the best services for Manitobans.

I'd like to address one other topic, Mr. Deputy Speaker, before my time runs out. MPI has focused on providing the best service and the lowest rates on auto insurance in Manitoba. The security of Manitobans' information is an important part of good service. MPI has been clear that they would no longer accept monthly preauthorized credit card payments, and this aligns with other utilities in this province like Manitoba Hydro, as well as others across the country. These changes were made to secure Manitobans' information. Security was the key point to this and this will also allow for those who are—have unscrupulous motives to not access those Manitobans' secured information. *[interjection]*

Well, the member opposite had a moment. The member for 'Mindo' had time to speak. I respectfully sat there and listened. I suggest he might do the same, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So I will continue to stand up for Manitobans. I will continue to work with our board and chairs. I'll continue to get the work done for Manitobans because that's what Manitobans expect, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We're not afraid of the challenge or the mess left by the NDP. We're not afraid of the words that come across the aisle because we are doing the right thing by Manitobans. And if the NDP would stop and listen, if they would have listened all those 17 years, they may have got the clear signal that we are on the right path.

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): I appreciate the opportunity to put a few words on the record regarding this resolution from the member from Minto. He certainly seems very incensed about the fact that Crown corporations are an important part of Manitoba's history, and they absolutely are and our government certainly has recognized that. But we also know that they need to be extremely well managed, and the history for that under NDP governments does not really reflect their desire to have strong corporations, Crown corporations on behalf of Manitobans. What it tends to reflect is their desire to have something to raid when they feel like that—they have the—a particular desire to do something.

I can remember many instances, and I don't think anyone here would forget the time that over \$200 million was taken out of Manitoba Hydro by an NDP government to add to their general revenues and to be used a number of different ways. And I think some of us here might remember a time when they floated some ideas like, well, let's take some of the surpluses from MPI and we'll put them into maybe post-secondary education to help subsidize some portion of that.

And, of course, the public outcry around that one at the time was so severe that even they did not want to go down that road. And as has been mentioned in question period by the member for Beausejour—that or for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko), sorry—that they actually sold a Crown corporation not that long ago and didn't seem worried about that, even though that tended to be a profitable Crown corporation and could continue to make money for Manitobans, but then they couldn't run it very effectively and it was certainly not something that was in a position to be plundered for their purposes.

I did spend some time on a similar board on behalf, actually, of an NDP government, for at least part of the time, when I sat on the crop insurance board here in Manitoba, which is now the Manitoba Ag Services, a very valuable portion of the agricultural safety net here in Manitoba that writes over \$1 billion worth of liability for farmers here in Manitoba every year.

And I know during that period of time, the government of the day tried to—and there were surpluses. We'd had a period of number—a number of good years and the government of the day tried to find ways to get their hands on those surpluses and spend them.

Fortunately, for Manitoba farmers and Manitobans in general, they were unable to do that because with that legislation there's actually matching federal legislation that restricts their ability to do that. I'm really glad that there was because within a few years of unfortunate poor crops, the surplus had in fact disappeared.

But, with good management on the part of the board following the NDP period at that time, they were able to get reinsurance because they had a well-managed reserve fund that had turned out to be one of the best things that they had ever done. They were able to get reinsurance to protect that reserve fund, something that actually only Manitoba was able to get. Other provinces were not able to get that

because they had messed with the reserves or messed with the payments and that actually saved Manitoba, in a short period of time, well over \$300 million which certainly has been valuable reinvestment on the part of Manitoba farmers because they were the beneficiaries of that money that was there for them when they had poor crop years.

So it's a good working example actually, I think, for the minister to keep in mind with MPI and the current situation, that there are reasons to do this and to have proper reserve funds and to give you access to other financial tools that you can use to actually protect your risk.

Now, if you look at NDP management of Crown corporations—and I know the minister did a really great job of outlining the Liquor & Lotteries and its long history of working in a public-private relationship. In fact, I think over 40 per cent of the liquor sales in Manitoba go through a private vendor in one form or the other, whether they be beer vendors or whether they would be other types of sales like wine stores. And certainly it's worth examining strengthening this relationship.

It's—obviously has a long history here in Manitoba and I think Manitobans appreciate the fact that they have good access to the products that they desire. And I know in many rural areas, if it were not for the relationship with private industry, there simply would be no sales in that community at all and of course the people would be on the road even more. That's not greenhouse-gas-friendly, for those that are paying attention to that. But—though I would suggest the members opposite really only provide lip service to that particular point.

I'm particularly interested in their concern that, in the long term, Hydro sales are—I think, from their point of view—not a good thing for Manitoba. And it's going to be a challenge for Manitoba moving forward because our potential customers that were originally identified in the US, actually if you go to their website actually make a point of saying that by such-and-such a date they will no longer be dependent on purchases from Canada—usually is the term that they use, but specifically Manitoba.

So I think much of what the NDP thought was their long-term solution in terms of sales to the US has, in fact, turned out to be a bit of a myth. And it's perhaps driven by the timing, but for many of those other entities down there which are often private companies, they have found other ways to generate electricity, whether they are natural gas or coal in

some cases—because that's certainly cheap and not necessarily greenhouse-gas-friendly, but it's certainly cheap—or winds or solar installations which have become—especially the wind installations—have become very common in some US states.

* (11:40)

And I think we've all travelled down there and seen how many of them there are and how modern they are and they have certainly incorporated that into their grid very effectively. And so they're now our competition moving forward is another industry, or another private source down there, that, at the time, I don't think the management in the NDP even considered as a possible alternative.

So, moving forward, we certainly want to make sure Manitoba has strong Crown corporations. But I think the key to that is far more that they are strong, well-managed Crown corporations. And that's not the experience we saw. I gave a few examples of the NDP trying to raid surpluses, or effectively raiding surpluses, and trying to do more in the past.

And, certainly, we know that what Manitobans want in good government is well-managed Crown corporations. So we are prepared to rebuild the economy using Crown corporations where it's appropriate. We will give better services to Manitobans, moving forward, something that the NDP failed to do. And we will continue to work on behalf of Manitobans now and into the future.

So I appreciate the opportunity to put a few words on record, on—regarding this resolution. And I know that Manitobans want to hear more about this, especially about how well the NDP did not manage the Crown corporations during their period.

Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, just a few comments on this resolution which has been brought forward about Crown corporations.

Manitoba Liberals, we would certainly support Crown corporations staying publicly owned and would therefore support the resolution as it is put forward. But we would suggest that both the NDP and Conservative governments have, in their turn, created major problems for Manitoba Hydro.

Under the NDP, the power capacity and the way that things were done resulted in tremendous spending and tremendous debt build-up. This was in part because project after project was over budget. And it is in part because of the way that the NDP

approached it and certainly gave political direction to Manitoba Hydro.

Under the Conservative government, one of the biggest threats to Manitoba Hydro is, in fact, the Premier (Mr. Pallister). He fired nine of 10 board members. They then issued a written statement in which they cited an inability to work with the Premier and his Progressive Conservative government. This threatens the future of Manitoba Hydro, which is already dealing with billions of dollars of debt. And when the debt from Keeyask dam is fully booked, that debt will increase substantially.

The Pallister government, just like the NDP government before it, has taken hundreds of millions of dollars each year from Manitoba Hydro, in part to make the government's books look better or to cut taxes for the richest Manitobans, as we've seen with the Conservative government.

Both NDP and Conservative governments have, in a sense, been using Hydro as a credit card. All that debt, however, is going on Hydro's books. And that is raising the cost of doing business because of the added debt which Hydro has and the way it has been managed under both NDP and Conservative governments.

The Hydro board resigned under the Conservative government because the members felt that the existence of Manitoba Hydro was at risk and the Premier wouldn't listen to them. The Premier is distracting from his poor management of this file and the poor management of the future of Manitoba Hydro.

Having said these comments, Mr. Speaker, the—do not see any reason and to privatize the Manitoba Hydro, MPI or Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries and would prefer at this juncture to make sure that they are not privatized and so we will support this resolution. Thank you.

Mr. Andrew Smith (Southdale): I do appreciate the opportunity to rise in the Chamber today to put some words on the record with regard to this particular resolution.

Now, we on this side of the House do believe that our Crown corporations are, in fact, crown jewels in our province here, Madam—Mr. Deputy Speaker. But that's why we believe that Crown corporations should be actually treated with respect.

And it is a particularly egregious that the NDP government used Manitoba Hydro as their piggy bank. You know, I can hear members opposite mumbling in the back there, but I can only imagine they're referring or they're thinking about in 2002 when the NDP government took a special payment of \$203 million from Hydro. Since Hydro didn't have that cash on hand, they had to go borrow that money.

So the borrowing cost was not just \$200 million, not \$300 million; it was almost \$400 million, think \$400 million. How many roads, schools could that have built? Think of the opportunity it cost to what that money could have been used for but, instead, members opposite chose to use it for their own political purposes.

We believe on this side of the House that you should defend the taxpayer and we're not interested in running up huge debts making Toronto bankers wealthier at the expense of Manitoba taxpayer and the Manitoba rate payer. We have a fiduciary responsibility to the taxpayer to respect hard-earned money of Manitobans and ensure that governments do not borrow against their—our children's future.

It would be one thing if this was the only example of NDP mismanagement but, sadly, it is not. Who could forget the multi-million dollar boondoggles of Keeyask and Bipole III? The NDP government directed Hydro to undertake these projects without the PUB scrutiny, unfairly saddling the rat pay here—the rate payer for years to come.

Now, let me be clear, it's not the fault of Hydro staff. This was directed under the previous NDP government. While members in this House speak to Hydro's request for rate increases, they neglect to mention the fact that it was the NDP government's spending on massive capital projects without any substantial return on investments, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This is the NDP's record: borrow from tomorrow, pay for today.

I believe it was Margaret Thatcher who once said that the problem with socialism is that you eventually run out of other people's money to spend. Well, that's what happened here. Despite years of raiding the crown jewels, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the NDP still managed budget deficits in core government. Instead of rethinking their approach, they decided to go to the taxpayer; first, by increasing the scope of the PST affecting basic services such as haircuts or home insurance.

But that wasn't enough. Members opposite had to increase the PST by a full percentage point; from 7 to 8 per cent after promising shortly before that that they would not. Greg Selinger said, that's ridiculous; everyone knows we're not going to increase the PST. But that's exactly what they did. And, if that wasn't bad enough, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they even considered going up to 9 per cent.

Under the previous NDP, Manitoba was one of the highest taxed provinces in Canada. I doubt the NDP had a plan to get themselves out of the financial mess that they had so they would continue to raise taxes on hard-working Manitobans. Well, eventually, Manitobans wouldn't be able to pay their high-tax requests. Talk about running out of other people's money, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Well, thankfully, Mr. Speaker, the dark days are over and Manitobans can look forward to July 1st of 2019, where the PST will be reduced back to its 7 per cent. That's a promise made and a promise kept.

* (11:50)

Madam Speaker, the NDP forced MPI to take over driver and vehicle licensing as well as paying the cost to do it. They also forced MPI to take on the enhanced ID card project. Now, MPI did market research and found that nobody was interested in the cards, but the NDP told MPI to go ahead and do it anyways.

It was interesting that the Official Opposition Leader had publicly questioned the need for MPI to have financial reserves because they are backstopped by government. It's an interesting position to take, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I think that sometimes governments, particularly the NDP government, forget that the ratepayer and the taxpayer are essentially the same person and same people.

So, if government has to bail out a Crown corporation, or vice versa, it comes from the same pocketbook. It comes off the same table from Manitobans—and hard-working Manitobans.

I do appreciate the opportunity to speak to this resolution and I understand that members opposite may have had the best of intentions, I don't know. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do believe that there is—it is interesting that the members opposite, particularly the member from Minto, who was a minister of the Crown during the NDP time in government, after 17 years of NDP government, who mismanaged the

Crown so badly and left them in the financial mess that they are now in.

So I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak to this resolution, and I do look forward to further debate on this, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I would, before I go, though, I do want to mention here that it is a distinct honour to serve in this House. And I know that this has been about three years of serving the good people of Southdale. And, as a representative in the Legislature I know that it's been quite an honour. And, with the redistribution of the boundaries I know that it's—I do—will miss—the—my—I will miss the riding of Southdale, of course, as the redistribution occurs in the next election.

We—I know that I too thank the members and all the people from Sage Creek, Island Lakes, Royalwood, Bonavista and, of course, everyone in the new riding of Lagimodiere, where I do plan to run. I've been nominated. And I thank the good folks from Southdale who did place their trust in me, and I know that they'll be in good hands, following the next election.

I thank again for the opportunity again to speak to this resolution. And I do want to point out that if members opposite were so interested in protecting and defending the Crown corporations that they would not have left such a mess, financially, and, of course, essentially, essentially leaving the ownership of the Crown corporations in the hands of wealthy bankers and moneylenders from Toronto.

And you know, with—when it comes to Bipole III, Madam Speaker, and we've heard some conversation back and forth, and it's interesting to see that the members opposite decide to go down the west side of the province as opposed to the east side. Why would they do that?

And you know, they've—they come up with so many ideas at this point, that I remember that when they had announced that, when that was announced, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Bipole III was going to be announced, it will not cost Manitobans one cent. Not one cent.

But then they backtracked on that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And—[interjection]

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): Order.

It was going nicely here. So I'd like—it's getting hard to hear, so if we could just bring it down, please.

Mr. Smith: Well thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and appreciate your intervention in that.

You know, like I said, the NDP at the time said that this was not going to cost Manitobans one cent. Not one cent. That's not true. And the member for Minto (Mr. Swan), who spoke out earlier saying, well, you know it's a balance sheet—well, I don't think the words balance sheet and NDP should be in the same sentence.

The fact is that they invested—and I use the term loosely, investment—they invested in projects that did not have any tangible return on investment. That's the problem, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So, yes, anything can look good on paper. But the reality is he did not get the investment, or the return on investment, needed for Manitobans, and now we've got more power than we can sell. That's thanks to the NDP mismanagement.

Of course, the NDP members don't understand that. They don't much like private enterprise in general. So for them this is not a big deal. What's a big deal? You just—you raid from one piggy bank, give to the other. Take from one other piggy bank, you give it to the other. At the end of the day, they're taking from the same pocket: the taxpayer, the ratepayer.

So that's what we're here to debate today is why the NDP government, under 17 years of mismanagement, have mismanaged our Crown corporations, the crown jewels, and now have the audacity to stand in the House and propose a resolution to try and show respect and try to undo, I guess, the years and years of damage that was done by this previous administration, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I can hear them talking right now and they can only be, I imagine, musing about the times that they raided the taxpayer and raided the ratepayer, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm glad that finally Manitobans had replaced them in 2016—

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): The member's time has expired.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): It gives me great pleasure to stand up today and put a few words on the record in regards to the Crown Corporations should stay public and affordable resolution put forward by the member from Minto.

Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, this is quite the resolution. We are standing today, sitting in this

great Chamber, elected officials, listening to the absolute nonsense that the member from Minto is putting on the record today. I can't believe he has the audacity to stand in his place and put a few words on the record from his perspective on this—on all our three crown jewels here in this great province of ours.

And then, what else happens is we've got the member from Fort Garry-Riverview, and keep in mind both of those members, I'm not sure if maybe they're—they've got a little bit of a revival happening, going on—not a rebellion, not yet, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, but maybe a bit of a revival, that all of the sudden they're getting a little bit more time to get up and speak.

Maybe the member from St. Johns is having difficulties filling their spots throughout the province, and maybe they're trying to encourage the member from Minto and the member from Fort Garry-Riverview to come back and be candidates on the not-so-new NDP team.

But it will be interesting in the next few weeks, months, even over the next possible year and a half to see what their plans—what they're going to be doing. We know that the member from Minto, he, of course—and we all know this, that he was part of the Selinger government and the Doer government, that he was a Cabinet minister.

And so, in fact, so was the member from Fort Garry-Riverview. They were Cabinet ministers. And what did they do? As I mentioned in question period today, in 2012, the then-minister of Finance who was the previous member from Dauphin, he—oh, a matter of fact I can say his name now, because he's no longer here. It's Mr. Stan Struthers. And we know the

type of difficulties that the NDP had not only with that member but also the member from Minto and the member from Fort Garry-Riverview.

I think there's so many teams over there right now, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, that they don't know which way is up. They don't know whether they're leaving politics or they're getting back into politics. The member from Minto gave it a shot there on the federal side but that didn't prevail, so he's here today speaking loudly in regards to keeping Crown services public, and we agree.

We are going to be—and we've said this over and over again, and we are going to keep our Crown services public and—because they're working for us.

They're—I know that many of those Crown services are absolutely thrilled now that we—they've got a strong Progressive Conservative government in charge with our hands on the wheel, making sure that good economic choices and decisions are being made to continue—to help continue the good work that they've all been doing over the last few years.

A few other items that I'd like to talk about, but it looks like I'm running quickly out of time, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker. The members, I don't know if they're going to be—

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): When this matter is again before the House, the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko) will have six minutes remaining.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 16, 2019

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