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Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
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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
CULLEN, Cliff, Hon.	Spruce Woods	PC
CURRY, Nic	Kildonan	PC
DRIEDGER, Myrna, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EICHLER, Ralph, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FIELDING, Scott, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
FLETCHER, Steven, Hon.	Assiniboia	PC
FONTAINE, Nahanni	St. Johns	NDP
FRIESEN, Cameron, Hon.	Morden-Winkler	PC
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
GRAYDON, Clifford	Emerson	PC
GUILLEMARD, Sarah	Fort Richmond	PC
HELWER, Reg	Brandon West	PC
ISLEIFSON, Len	Brandon East	PC
JOHNSON, Derek	Interlake	PC
JOHNSTON, Scott	St. James	PC
KINEW, Wab	Fort Rouge	NDP
KLASSEN, Judy	Kewatinook	Lib.
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	PC
LAGIMODIERE, Alan	Selkirk	PC
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Burrows	Lib.
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas	NDP
LINDSEY, Tom	Flin Flon	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Flor	Logan	NDP
MARCELINO, Ted	Tyndall Park	NDP
MARTIN, Shannon	Morris	PC
MAYER, Colleen	St. Vital	PC
MICHALESKI, Brad	Dauphin	PC
MICKLEFIELD, Andrew, Hon.	Rossmere	PC
MORLEY-LECOMTE, Janice	Seine River	PC
NESBITT, Greg	Riding Mountain	PC
PALLISTER, Brian, Hon.	Fort Whyte	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine, Hon.	Midland	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle	Arthur-Virden	PC
REYES, Jon	St. Norbert	PC
SARAN, Mohinder	The Maples	Ind.
SCHULER, Ron, Hon.	St. Paul	PC
SELINGER, Greg	St. Boniface	NDP
SMITH, Andrew	Southdale	PC
SMOOK, Dennis	La Verendrye	PC
SQUIRES, Rochelle, Hon.	Riel	PC
STEFANSON, Heather, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
SWAN, Andrew	Minto	NDP
TEITSMA, James	Radisson	PC
WHARTON, Jeff	Gimli	PC
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WISHART, Ian, Hon.	Portage la Prairie	PC
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
YAKIMOSKI, Blair	Transcona	PC
<i>Vacant</i>	Point Douglas	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 30, 2017

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

Hon. Andrew Micklefield (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I'm seeking leave for three items: first, to proceed directly to concurrence and third reading of Bill 218, the red tape reduction act; second, agreement that the question will be put on Bill 218 at 10:20 a.m.; and third, leave, then, to proceed with second reading, debate of Bill 226, the Manitoba conservation officers service recognition day act.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to consider concurrence and third reading of Bill 218 this morning?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Speaker: No? Leave has been denied.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Official Opposition House Leader): I would ask the House for leave to go to proceed directly to second reading on Bill 226.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave of the House to go directly to dealing with second reading of Bill 226?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Speaker: Leave has been denied.

Mr. Micklefield: Madam Speaker, I would like to seek leave to proceed directly to 226, but to call Bill 218 for a vote at 10—voice vote at 10:55.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to go to bill—second reading of Bill 226 and, following that, at 10:55 to have a voice vote on Bill 218?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Speaker: Leave has been denied.

Mr. Micklefield: Madam Speaker, in light of that, we will revert to the previous recommendation—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Micklefield: Thank you, Madam Speaker. We will then grant leave for what was previously requested, that we would go for—to Bill 226 at this time.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave this morning to deal with second reading of Bill 226? *[Agreed]*

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 226—The Manitoba Conservation Officers Recognition Day Act

Madam Speaker: We will then go to second reading, Bill 226, The Manitoba Conservation Officers Recognition Day Act.

Mr. Alan Lagimodiere (Selkirk): I move, seconded by the honourable member from Swan River that Bill 226, The Manitoba Conservation Officers Recognition Day Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of the House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Lagimodiere: The bill before us will designate October 1st as The Manitoba Conservation Officers Recognition Day Act. October 1st, 2015, was the date of coming into force of The Conservation Officers Act, which expanded the legal enforcement duties of natural resource officers and gave natural resource officers peace-officer powers and renamed them as conservation officers.

Thanks again to a PC government in Manitoba, another act to help with the recognition of conservation officers is being brought forward. This act will build upon the principles that we first set out under the protection of game act.

Conservation officers have a dangerous and difficult job that often involves strenuous circumstances that many people would not understand. That is why they deserve a day of recognition. Their job involves ensuring that hunting, trapping and fishing is carried out safe and legally, which is extremely dangerous. They are environmental stewards and have the duties of peace officers. That is a job to be proud of. The conservation officers service has been the third largest law enforcement body in Manitoba since 1988, serving some of the most remote corners of Manitoba. As six conservation officers, natural resource officers, have lost their lives since 1966, Manitoba's conservation officers service deserves recognition.

Our Manitoba government shares the concerns of all Manitobans regarding the dangers of unsafe and unsustainable harvesting practices. That is why we want a day to recognize the hard and dangerous work that conservation officers do for us.

Once passed, this bill will establish October 1st as a day of commemoration, a day of respect, a day of appreciation for the diversity of responsibilities that conservation officers perform on behalf of all Manitobans.

Madam Speaker, in terms of historical significance to Manitoba, it is worth noting that the regulatory inspection capacity of fish and wildlife has existed in Manitoba for approximately 138 years. The protection of game act received royal assent in 1879, empowering the lieutenant government to appoint guardians to protect Manitoba's natural resources and enforce our laws. The game guardians were the first agents in Manitoba dedicated specifically to enforcing wildlife laws and were the initial predecessors to today's conservation officers.

The same act also defined hunting seasons in Manitoba and established penalties for out-of-season hunting and trapping. For fines for violations of the acts, they ranged from \$5 to \$50 at that time. This amounts to about \$1,140 in today's purchasing power, Madam Speaker.

Formally established in 1902, the game protection branch was responsible for protecting Manitoba's big game, game birds, waterfowl from overhunting. This game protection branch operated under the Department of Agriculture and Immigration. To enact their mandate, the branch issued hunting licences, investigated complaints, initiated prosecutions. Under the terms of the act,

confiscated weapons used illegally, licensed the exportation of trophy animal heads and issued permits for the shipment of live animals and birds to natural parks in Ontario, United States and Great Britain.

* (10:10)

While the provincial game guardian was the first sole staff of the branch, by 1915, he was termed the chief game guardian and was assisted by a staff of permanent and seasonal game guardians based in locations throughout the province.

As legislation and enforcement powers changed, Madam Speaker, with jurisdiction flowing from the federal government to the provinces, game guardians became natural resource officers. As law enforcement, resource management and disaster management has evolved considerably since those early days. In response to this, Manitoba consolidated game guardians, forest guardians, fish inspectors and natural resource officers into one entity, called natural resource officers, in 1999.

On October 1st, 2015, the Manitoba government proclaimed The Conservation Officers Act, conferring powers of peace officers for enforcement purposes upon conservation officers. I want to point out that this was a government bill which was passed with all-party support.

Madam Speaker, the following Manitoba natural resource officers have been recognized by the Canadian Peace Officers' Memorial Association. These officers lost their lives while carrying out their duties. May we never forget their supreme sacrifice and the loss their families have had to cope with.

Kenneth Skwark: while conducting forest fire operations in northern forests of Manitoba, Kenneth died in a helicopter accident June 28th, 1995.

Keith Bartley: while conducting a night hunting patrol, Keith died in a head-on vehicle accident on November 19th, 1989.

Robert Logan: while en route to a provincial park, Robert's vehicle rolled after encountering black ice on November 3rd, 1983. On September 27th, 2013, the Province of Manitoba named a lake in his honour. Robert Logan Lake is located near Childs Lake in Duck Mountain Provincial Park.

Allan Assiniboine: during the fisheries patrol, Allan drowned after his patrol boat exploded on Lake Winnipegosis on July 27th, 1976.

William McLeod: William was murdered by an impaired trapper who had shot him with a shotgun in the leg. He died on May 12th, 1967, from complications resulting from the wound. An island on Cormorant Lake, not too far from my hometown in northwestern Manitoba, was renamed William James McLeod Island on December 27th, 2013.

Charles Morrish: while conducting a trapline patrol, Charles drowned when his muskeg tractor broke through the ice on April 3rd, 1966. An island on Clearwater Lake near The Pas, Manitoba was renamed Morrish Island on September 27th, 2013.

I personally knew four of these six officers, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, Manitoba conservation officers have traditionally been some of the earliest first responders deployed to natural disasters within our provincial boundaries. They led the protection of residents and communities like Cross Lake, Snow Lake, Nelson House and Moose Lake during the wildfires that displaced approximately 25,000 northern Manitoba residents in 1989. Their value to all Manitobans is clear.

Madam Speaker, our keystone province represents over 647,000 square miles. It represents more than 100,000 lakes and 90 provincial parks and various endangered species and ecosystems which require active management and enforcement.

Under the leadership of Conservative Premier John Norquay, in 1989, the government of Manitoba enacted the protection of game act, one of Manitoba's first conservation acts. This act will build upon these visionary principles.

Progressive Conservatives take seriously the need to protect our natural resources, fisheries and wildlife, so that they can be enjoyed in a responsible way by future generations. There were 14 vehicles and a total of 44 long-barrel rifles and shotguns seized by Manitoba conservation officers in 2016. Nearly 50 cases of night hunting or dangerous hunting are moving towards prosecution.

We also continue to combat the spread of aquatic invasive species. The Manitoba government recently launched a new public awareness campaign to tackle zebra mussels.

We will implement a made-in-Manitoba strategy to combat climate change, one of-one that protects our economy while setting and achieving manageable GHG-reduction targets. Conservation

officers protect the fish, wildlife and forest and waterways that make Manitoba unique. They often serve as first responders in communities. They work closely with local provincial and federal agencies. These men and women represent a special type of law enforcement officer. From inner cities to the deep woods, wetlands to our lakes, on watercraft, off-road vehicles and on foot, conservation officers serve with courage and professionalism.

Conservation officers service is an elite, versatile team that uses technology to solve crimes and safeguard Manitobans. It maintains strict standards for its officers. They are professionally trained and equipped law enforcement officers. They are our government's largest armed and most visible representation in Manitoba communities. The conservation officer service has obviously paid a hefty price with the loss of six members while on duty. They are integral to the overall team of professional law enforcement officers that protects Manitobans and ensures the high quality of life that makes our province an attractive destination for our visitors.

Thank you to the members that are both current and retired for your service, for your dedication, for dedicating your lives to enforcement of our natural resource laws aimed at protecting our natural resources.

I hope this non-partisan bill will be supported by all parties, Madam Speaker, and it will lead to a national acknowledgement of the important work conservation officers do.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: I think this would be a good time for me to introduce the members that are here in our gallery.

We have with us Manitoba conservation officers Jack Harrigan, Brian Ogiloy [*phonetic*], Earl Simmons, Shaun Bobier, Craig Gerstmar, Murray Zielke, Warren Toderan, Chad Moir, Robert Belanger, Andrew Prokopchuk, David Cove, Trevor Wyant and Alec Simpson.

Also, from the Manitoba Wildlife Federation, we have Cam Neurenberg, and from Manitoba Lodges & Outfitters Association we have Paul Turenne, who are the guests of the honourable member for Selkirk (Mr. Lagimodiere).

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

And I apologize if I've mispronounced any names.

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.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): I'd like to ask the member for Selkirk: The bill provides that October 1 will be known throughout the province as Manitoba Conservation Officers Recognition Day. Why did the member choose October 1st?

Mr. Alan Lagimodiere (Selkirk): I thank the member opposite for the question.

October 1st, 2015 was the date of coming into force of The Conservation Officers Act, passed by the previous government, and this will expand on that, allowing a day for resource officers to be acknowledged within the province as the important job that they do for us.

This date was chosen in consultation with resource officers themselves as to which date would be best suited for that purpose.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Yes, Madam Speaker, as the member will know, there were significant cutbacks in the number of conservation officers under the last government.

When bringing forward this bill, is the member got a commitment from his own government to restore the numbers of conservation officers so that there can be a better stewardship of our wildlife and fisheries?

Mr. Lagimodiere: Thank you for the question, and yes, it's important to acknowledge that shortly after the passage of the October 1st, 2015 date as recognizing The Conservation Officers Act, cutbacks were made to the department. I understand further cutbacks were made to the department in 2014 as well, as much as 12 per cent reduction within the department, and our government is going to be working towards restoring those. Thank you.

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): What was the reason for the member for Selkirk to propose this private member's bill?

Mr. Lagimodiere: Thank you for the question.

* (10:20)

As I had stated in the—my opening remarks that I personally knew four of the six fallen officers that lost their lives while on duty in Manitoba. I also had a grandfather who, after the war, was a conservation officer who was injured in a Bombardier accident and later succumbed to his injuries. I had an uncle who was a conservation officer. I have many family members who are conservation officers. And a lot of times we sit on the deck and talk about their experiences and the hard work and the dedication they have to ensuring Manitoba's resources are protected.

Mr. Swan: Yes, well, I'm certainly hoping that by the time we get around to 11 o'clock today we will stand as one and send Bill 226 off to committee.

Will the member for Selkirk stand with us in two nights when we vote against Bill 28, which will take away the right of people like these conservation officers to bargain collectively and impose wage freezes on them without allowing for negotiation? Will the member do that?

Mr. Lagimodiere: Actually, I'm—I—to say the least, I'm disappointed in the member opposite's—wants to try to take this question period in that direction. Clearly, this is a non-partisan—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lagimodiere: —bill directed solely at recognizing and acknowledging the importance conservation officers throughout Manitoba history dating back from the 1800s to present day. And I think the focus should be on the positive direction of this bill.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): I congratulate the member from Selkirk for bringing forward such an important bill. I'd like to thank all the members of our conservation community for attending today with us here at the Legislature.

I'd like to ask the member from Selkirk, you know, on this side of the House we strongly believe in consultation, and I'd like to ask the member from Selkirk, in preparation for this bill who has he

consulted with in regards to bringing forward Bill 226?

Mr. Lagimodiere: Well, I thank you for the question.

In considering this bill I first consulted with, of course: the Manitoba Conservation Officers' Association, initially; the Manitoba Natural Resource Officers' Association; Manitoba archives; various municipalities; I consulted with the Manitoba Wildlife Federation; the Manitoba Metis Federation; the minister of resources; Bucky Anderson; Grand Chief Sheila North Wilson; Grand Chief Jerry Daniels; Chief Jim Bear from Brokenhead Ojibway Nation; former-Chief Ron Evans—[interjection]—current Chief Ron Evans, I stand corrected—Manitoba government—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas): My question is: How will this government recruit and encourage indigenous people to work as conservation officers?

Mr. Lagimodiere: I'm sorry, Madam Speaker, there was some noise in the background and I didn't get the question.

Ms. Lathlin: How will this government recruit and encourage indigenous peoples to work as conservation officers?

Mr. Lagimodiere: Currently, there are a number of indigenous resource officers employed within the department, I'm very proud to say. And this bill will help bring a day of recognition and a—highlight the importance of being a resource officer in the province of Manitoba and I'm hoping more indigenous communities will look to that as a career choice in the future.

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): I, too, want to thank the member from Selkirk for bringing forward this important bill. It's long overdue.

I want him to tell me how this bill will energize, engage and empower conservation officers here in Manitoba.

Mr. Lagimodiere: Conservation officers, since receiving their expanded mandate have newfound roles and responsibilities to enforce the law. These responsibilities are in line with peace officers—and with power comes responsibility. And, as such, conservation officers and the service deserve a day of recognition. And, as the duties of the job have changed dramatically over the years, this recognition

day bill will show conservation officers that their work is respected and hope to promote the next generation of potential conservation officers to join the service here in Manitoba.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Swan: Madam Speaker, I didn't really get an answer from the member for Selkirk (Mr. Lagimodiere).

In the course of all his consultation did he speak to the conservation officers, and did they tell him how they feel about this government taking away their right to collective bargaining and freezing their wages over the next contract?

Mr. Lagimodiere: I did speak to the conservation officers in coming forward with this bill, and they did tell me about all the cutbacks that the former government brought forward, cutbacks to the departments, cutbacks to their abilities to perform their duties, cutbacks in the numbers in their profession—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lagimodiere: —from a one-time high of I'm told 140 down to just over 80 now. So, yes, there have been cutbacks in the past, all related to the former government.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Smook: Hunting and fishing has always been an important part of my life and I want to thank the member from Selkirk for bringing forward this bill today, because the fine folks that set up there do play an important role in Manitoba in providing hunting and fishing for the future.

Can the member for Selkirk please explain why this bill is so important to him?

Mr. Lagimodiere: This bill is very important to me, because it, well, it honours current and past members of the conservation officers' association, but also the conservation officers are front line—are important—one of the most important groups that we have to help protect against invasive species, protect our waterways. The historic Red River has always been of importance to me and to my family; my family came here in 1806. I was disappointed to hear a few years ago that at one time potable water was available in Lake Winnipeg, something we don't have anymore—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Swan: Did the member for Selkirk (Mr. Lagimodiere) consult with conservation officers about the government's recent change to environmental policy, including weakening drinking water regulations and also weakening protections for the rivers and lakes, including the river—the Red River that flows right through the member's constituency into Lake Winnipeg?

Mr. Lagimodiere: I have consulted with the conservation officers in regards to many of their concerns with their lack of support from the previous government for them being able to perform their duties, and it's something that our government is going to be working forward in the future to help support them. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: The time for questions has expired.

Debate

Madam Speaker: Debate is open. The honourable member for Minto.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): It's a pleasure to get up and speak today about Bill 226, and I do commend the member for Selkirk for bringing this bill forward. And our NDP caucus will be supporting moving this bill on to committee, and we'll look forward to perhaps hearing from some of the individuals that are present here today to speak about what this bill means to them.

And we certainly support the good work of conservation officers, and we will continue to do so. And I'm very pleased the member for Selkirk noted that the anniversary date, October 1st, is the date in 2015 that the new law came into effect, which I think is fair to say elevated people's understanding, they elevated the roles of conservation officers here in the province.

I was, of course, formerly the Attorney General, and we spent a lot of time trying to confirm who peace officers were, what roles they had and it became very, very clear in hearing from conservation officers, in speaking with departmental officials, that we do call upon conservation officers to truly be on the front lines, to be out there, whether it's trying to deal with poachers, whether it's other areas of law enforcement or whether it's other, happier areas of allowing Manitobans to feel safe and secure and also knowledgeable in our beautiful province, conservation officers are the ones who do the work.

* (10:30)

I'd also ask the member why October 1st, because the date falls very close to the Peace Officers Memorial Day, which takes place the last Sunday in September. I've been very honoured, Madam Speaker, to have attended that ceremony here at the south side of the Legislative Building many years. And, although many Manitobans may think that day is reserved solely for police officers, we also, of course, commemorate conservation officers, correctional officers and others who've given their life in the course of their duties. And I know the conservation officers are always well-represented at that event and I know that will continue.

So, you know, I know the member for Selkirk might have been unhappy with some of my questions. I can tell him that based on his answers October 1st seems to be an entirely appropriate day for this to be recognized.

Again, we recognize the important work conservation officers do to enforce the laws that protect our natural resources, to educate the public and, of course, to aid the court investigations and provide the evidence the court needs to—and Crown attorneys need to the successful prosecution of those who break our laws, who put animals at stake, who put livestock at stake and, indeed, put other people at stake if they are not following careful practices—also, those who do not respect limits, who do not respect other rules that are in place, regulations that are in place and laws that are in place to protect our animals and make sure that things go the way they should.

But, you know, I asked the question, and I know that the PC members got very upset when I asked the question. This bill I accept from the member for Selkirk is about showing respect for our conservation officers, public servants. Two nights from now we'll be having another vote on a bill about the respect that members of this Chamber have for civil servants. And all members of my New Democratic Party team will be voting against Bill 28, a bill which is going to freeze the wages, take away the right to bargain of conservation officers and other public servants who we respect very much.

We'll be voting against that bill, we'll be standing up for conservation officers and other civil servants. I'm hoping, based on what the member for Selkirk is hearing today, that he will stand up and join us. I understand in that caucus now there is the ability to dissent. And, hopefully, sitting next to the

member for Assiniboia (Mr. Fletcher), the member for Selkirk (Mr. Lagimodiere) will listen carefully and will actually stand up and double down and double his support for the conservation officers that we were very, very happy to see here today.

And, of course, we expanded the role of these officers back in 2015 when we passed The Conservation Officers Act. And, as I say, we officially recognize—because the language, frankly, was not clear before—that conservation officers are law enforcement officers and they are peace officers in the province of Manitoba.

It is an excellent chance, and I know the member for Selkirk put some history on the record, and I think that was good, good for all of us to learn a little bit more about how the conservation officers receive their power, the work they did—which has changed over the years, but many parts of that work are still very much the same as they were even 100 years ago. And they will be and will continue to be important voices in protecting Manitoba's environment.

And on this side of the House we have real concerns about this government's commitment—or, should I say the lack of commitment—to environmental protections. And I think many Manitobans are now learning that the PC government brought in a regressive, omnibus bill called the red tape reduction and government efficiency act, and that bill is going to weaken environmental protections and, in fact, put the safety of Manitoba families in jeopardy—the very families these conservation officers are careful to protect when they head out into our wilderness, into our provincial parks. These are the same families that are going to be impacted by choices—unnecessary choices that this Progressive Conservative government is making to reduce environmental protections and take away safety that Manitobans have enjoyed for a long time.

And we think—and we would work with the government to increase protection for Manitoba's natural wonders like Lake Winnipeg. Lake Winnipeg, which is one of the largest freshwater lakes in the entire world, which, of course—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Swan: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Which, of course, is the—is where a lot of environmental challenges exist. If you look at a map of Manitoba, we know that the Lake Winnipeg watershed is huge.

Not only does it take in some of northwestern Ontario and much of Manitoba, but also Minnesota, North Dakota, some of South Dakota, Montana, Saskatchewan. And decisions which are made far upstream and decisions which are made in the province of Manitoba and outside of the province of Manitoba have a real impact on the health of our lakes and our rivers.

And that's why I ask the member for Selkirk—as we all know, the Red River flows through his constituency on the way to Lake Winnipeg. Lake Winnipeg is a treasure, but I and others have great concerns about how the decisions that this Conservative government are going to make on the health of that lake, which is already a challenge.

And it's quite clear that the Premier (Mr. Pallister), of course, he likes beaches, just not ones in the province of Manitoba. He doesn't care. He doesn't have any interest in the recreation that Manitobans are able to get. My family and I are frequent visitors to Winnipeg Beach Provincial Park. I know some other members love Grand Beach Provincial Park and the Whiteshell, Nopiming, and I could, of course, mention all the lakes across the—and parks across the province.

We think that the government should continue on the path of increasing protection for these parks, but, instead, we have a Premier and a government that are more focused on cuts and forcing officials, including the great conservation officers that have joined us today—forcing them to cut corners in the name of efficiency.

And I can't think of a more frightening example of that drive to efficiency than the government deciding that water systems will only be tested every 10 years instead of five years. And if I recall correctly, the Minister for Sustainable Development, when asked the question by my colleague the member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer) said, well, this was something that business had wanted. So I guess for the benefit of business saving on the cost of getting their water system inspected every five years, we're going to put the health of Manitobans at risk. And Manitobans, whatever their political stripe, whatever their views may be, are saying no to that and they're saying that's simply not acceptable.

Drinking water is absolutely important. Former premier Gary Doer used to say water trumps everything, and I think his words still ring true. And Manitobans want the insurance that their drinking water has been rigorously tested. I will be pursuing

more to see what that means for water systems contained in our provincial parks. If somebody goes to Grand Beach or Winnipeg Beach, we want to make sure that the water they're drinking is going to be safe and it isn't going to make them sick.

And, frankly, Madam Speaker, that is very important to myself and my colleagues, and I would hope it would be more important for the members opposite.

Portions of that bill could still be corrected. We won't be voting on that bill until into the fall. It's one of the five bills that we held over, because we think it's so important for Manitobans.

Madam Speaker, I hope the member for Selkirk (Mr. Lagimodiere) will do more consultations with conservation officers and be able to be a strong voice in his caucus. And if he can't get heard in caucus, he can do like the member for Assiniboia (Mr. Fletcher), I suppose, and show up at committee hearings and put his own thoughts on the record and there we go.

So we know, Madam Speaker, that the bill also before the Legislature will take other steps. We support our officers, but we don't support weakening environmental protections in Manitoba.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Madam Speaker, I'm very, very pleased to rise today to speak to this resolution, brought forward by the member for Selkirk.

It's always a great day when we can have our fantastic conservation officers joining us here in the gallery—joining us to hear debate today and to truly hear from all members of this Chamber in unison to say how much we appreciate the work that you do each and every day and how much we appreciate the sacrifices that you make, what you put on the line to make sure that our natural spaces are protected, that our fish and wildlife is being administered properly and that you truly are the front-line workers in this province. And so I just, on behalf of our caucus, once again wanted to thank you for coming here, congratulate you on your good work and say how much we appreciate you being here today to join us.

* (10:40)

This is a great honour for me personally, because I am somebody who very much enjoys the outdoors. As the member for Minto (Mr. Swan) alluded to in his comments, I do have a cottage that I frequent at Grand Beach Provincial Park, so I have a lot of love

for that place. But my love for our natural spaces goes far beyond the time that I spend at the cottage, because I am myself a fisherman, although not a very good one, I might add, but I do enjoy it—the sport very much. I am also somebody who likes to hunt whenever I get an opportunity.

And so I've had an opportunity to visit, I must admit, only a very small fraction of the so many amazing natural places that we have in this province, but I do consider it an ongoing process of getting out, experiencing different parts of the province, whether it be southeastern Manitoba—the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Smook) is here. He knows that I spend time in his neck of the woods and have done some hunting there. I've spent some time in the Interlake. I've spent some time in western Manitoba doing some fishing out there.

And at every time that I get an opportunity to be out in our parks, in our natural spaces, I see the good work that the conservation officers are doing in those places. And, you know, especially as a hunter or a fisherman, when you're out—when you see the work that's being done to protect our fish and wildlife, to make sure that the hunting and fishing is being done appropriately—when we here stories about poaching and other illegal activities, it's something that really brings to focus how important it is to have our conservation officers on the front lines.

And when, as the member for Selkirk mentioned, we hear about tragedy amongst the ranks, it really—again—brings into focus how these front-line workers are truly putting themselves on the line to make sure that our natural spaces are protected and are well taken care of.

I do believe, Madam Speaker, that our wild—our wilderness areas, our parks are some of the best resources this province has to offer. And that goes beyond not just the obvious benefits that we see from increased tourism or economic activity, but it also goes, I believe, to the overall health and well-being of us as Manitobans. I think it's one of the greatest resources that we have and, quite frankly, it's a resource that I think not enough Manitobans are taking advantage of. And I think there's certainly been a resurgence, I would say, in my generation and even younger where folks are understanding and appreciating the natural spaces of their environment even more so.

But what has always struck me is that it's not until the investments are made, that the—that there's a building of capacity in our parks, that our parks are

made beautiful, that they're made accessible that people, then, want to go use those. And I believe that conservation officers play an integral role in making sure that our parks are as accessible and safe and welcoming as possible.

So I think it really speaks to how important it is not only to, you know, to talk about it here in this House, to have an opportunity—as the member has suggested in this resolution—to have a day to recognize conservation officers. But then to take the next step which is a real investment in our parks, in our wilderness areas and in our conservation officers. And, you know, the member from Selkirk was quick to put on the record, you know, what I would say are alternative facts about what the previous government has done with regards to conservation officers.

I was here—I was elected in this House, you know, towards the end of the government's last term. But I know in my time in the House we were very proud—as the member mentioned, in 2015—to bring The Conservation Officers Act, an act that was brought into force in consultation with conservation officers, with those people who are on the front lines, and really serve to, you know, show that respect, not just talk about it, not just have a day to respect it. And, again, I appreciate this, that we do have this opportunity to discuss it, but, you know, an actual investment in conservation officers—and I think that's what's absolutely key here.

You know, absolutely, at every turn conservation officers—as I said, they put their lives on the line. And I know this because in my own family, my brother-in-law is—was a conservation officer. He's now gone on to the Winnipeg Police Service, but he served as a conservation officer, and so I had an opportunity to talk to him on an ongoing basis about some of the struggles that he saw out in the field, so to speak. And he certainly understood that not only was it important to give officers the recognition as officers, as true conservation officers, and give them all the rights and responsibilities that come with that, but also to have the correct staffing, the number of folks and the pay that they deserve to make sure that they are able to do their job. And he talked often about, though, having those resources to enable him to actually be out in the field, to work with his comrades to actually make sure that the work that he was doing, he was able to fulfill his mandate, and he felt very, very passionately about that and I learned a lot from him.

You know, honestly, this is, as I said, something that touches very deeply to me because I am so, you know, so close to the services that they provide and so it's an absolute honour to be here this morning to put these words on the record to support, along with my caucus, the work that the member for Selkirk has done and, again, to just thank those members of the conservation officers group who have joined us here today. And to say how much we appreciate the work that we do the—to stand in solidarity with you as you continue to fight for those resources from the government to make sure that they're respecting you, not only in a recognition day, not only in words, but in actions and in actions that respect the work that you do each and every day. It's an absolute honour to have you here and, once again, thank you very much.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I want to begin by thanking our conservation officers for their contribution and the work that is being done every day out in the field and all over Manitoba. It's a really important contribution, so I say personally, on behalf of our Liberal caucus, thank you.

We, as a Liberal caucus, will be supporting Bill 226 to give better recognition to conservation officers and the importance of their work. It is vital that we better recognize what conservation officers do in Manitoba and their importance to the management of our wildlife, our fisheries, the stewardship of our forests and the management of our parks. These are all critical areas which are important to Manitobans and it's vital that we have good work, as is being done in these areas.

We hope that along with the improved recognition of conservation officers would be a reinvestment in the conservation officers, in the number of conservation officers and in the general support that conservation officers receive, as well as better funding for monitoring fish and wildlife populations.

An example would be pickerel in Lake Winnipeg, and it's clear in discussions with both anglers and commercial fishers that one of the real needs of the moment is better knowledge of the pickerel and other fish populations on Lake Winnipeg in order so that we can make science-based decisions related to their management.

I note that there have been some recent changes to put an upper limit on the size of meshes and to decrease the number of large walleye that can be taken by anglers and I think these are steps in terms

of managing the fishery, but, at the base, what we need is a better knowledge of the fish population so we can manage things better.

We are concerned about the impact of Bill 28 on conservation officers and others and do not agree with Bill 28 for this reason.

We also hope that along with the better recognition of the role and the importance of conservation officers that the government will work to have a better partnership with First Nations and Metis people so that the situations which have arisen in the past where there's been, you know, differences on management approaches, the Metis stewardship, the hunting card and so on.

And I think that there's an opportunity to get a better working relationship and improve the stewardship because knowledge and traditional management approaches by Aboriginal people, indigenous people and incorporation of the understanding of populations by Aboriginal people can certainly help us as we move forward and improve the stewardship of fish and wildlife populations in our province.

So, with those words, Madam Speaker, I say thank you again to the conservation officers who are here. You're doing great work and thank you and I wish you all the best.

* (10:50)

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Again, as I mentioned in question period, I'd like to thank the member from Selkirk for bringing forward Bill 226 recognizing our hard work and dedication that our conservation and resource officers have put forward for many, many years of service. And I'd like to welcome many of my constituents who are joining us as well, today, who's in the gallery. And I just want to make sure that I took this opportunity to put a few of those words on the record in regards to—on behalf of the constituents of Lac du Bonnet, and also many of the people of this great province of ours.

How fortunate and how heartfelt we feel on the everyday work that you guys, that you people—conservation officers—do each and every day for us. I know we're joined by a few other organizations, as well, up in the gallery, so I'd like to thank the Manitoba Wildlife Federation and also the Manitoba lodges and outfitters for joining us today in the gallery, as well.

I know that, you know, listening to the heavy, partisan tone from the members opposite—and it's unfortunate on a day today where we're bringing forward a bill to recognize the hard work of our conservation officers, that the members opposite feel that it's their opportunity to sling mud. But you know what, Madam Speaker, you know, now being in this House for going on seven years, it's not beside themselves to sling mud in this Chamber, especially on a day when we do have people in the gallery.

And they've had opportunities, Madam Speaker. They had opportunities over their 17 years in government to make things better, not only for conservation officers but for people in Manitoba. And I know that the member from Minto and the member from Concordia mentioned our great lakes and resources, and it's interesting that the member from Concordia—now he says, you know, and almost I quote—because I don't have the copy of Hansard in front of me, but he says that he is fortunate that there are resources, great resources in this province that he can take advantage of, as well as other Manitobans.

And what have they done over the last 17 years? They've basically restricted resource development and mineral exploration throughout this great province of ours.

And then the member from Minto stands up and he basically talks about, you know, Lake Winnipeg, and I know the great Red River that goes through the member from Selkirk's constituency, and how all of a sudden the member from Minto is a great advocate for the environment. And he had 17 years, Madam Speaker, to actually get some of these things done.

And I know that they brought forward an environmental bill in the last few days of their government—and they had 150-plus priorities. And they stood up in this House when they were still in government and they basically proclaimed that they were the saviours of Mother Earth. But because they had 150 priorities, that bill never saw the light of day. They spoke it out themselves.

And so, with that, Madam Speaker, I just wanted to make sure that I had the opportunity to stand up and put a few words in the records. Congratulations—congratulate the conservation officers, congratulate the member from Selkirk. I know that, in the Lac du Bonnet constituency, we've had many discussions with conservation officers throughout the many challenges that we've had in the constituency with various trails or parks and those things have gone quite well.

And I think—I—my hat goes off—if I was wearing a hat, my hat would go off to the conservation officers for those mediation discussions, those community consultations that we brought the various groups together and came up with a mutual agreement. I think that absolutely benefited not only the environment, but a lot of those user groups that uses those great resources, as the Concordia—member from Concordia mentions in his speech.

So, with that, I am looking forward to this coming October 1st to celebrate conservation officers day, and again thanks to the member from Selkirk, thanks to all of you for taking the time out today to join us here at the Manitoba Legislature and celebrate, and see that we do see Bill 226 pass on to committee, and I look forward to seeing and hearing some of you at committee as well.

So, thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Greg Selinger (St. Boniface): Madam Speaker, I rise today to show my recognition and respect for the conservation officers of Manitoba. We obviously—all of us, I believe this bill will pass unanimously in the Legislature, which shows the universal respect of members of the Legislature for the work that conservation officers do.

I'd like to thank the member from Selkirk from—giving us some of the history of the earliest days of when conservation officers were brought into practice, and I do want to say that over the decades the responsibilities have changed. They've become expanded. But also the territory that required protection has become expanded. We have more parks now than we've ever had before. We have heritage rivers now. We have the potential for a UNESCO World Heritage designation on the east side called Pimachiowin Aki, the land that gives life.

We have legislation that requires joint planning between indigenous peoples and conservation officers and government about how the land is looked after, and protected, and kept safe and enjoyable for Manitobans and Canadians and, indeed, people from all around the world.

Manitoba is a place where people come from all over the planet—Asia, Europe—all over the planet to see the species that we protect, to see the landscapes that are still left in their natural state. And in many places in the world, those landscapes and species have been eliminated; they have been extinguished.

And so we're very fortunate to have the landscapes that we do in this province and we need

to protect them, and the conservation resource officers play a front-line role in ensuring that that is looked after in this province, and it's one of the great advantages we have in living in this province, to be able to enjoy the outdoors.

The role has become more complex. Protecting fish, wildlife, water, waterways, bringing the latest research available on endangered species, understanding constitutional responsibilities with respect to indigenous peoples and their rights and balancing those off with respect to conservation.

The lodge owners, I note, are here today, and I want to thank them for their presence. I have two sons that have been professional guides in lodges in Manitoba and they worked with the public to teach them conservation practices in how they hunt and fish.

And, of course, climate change is an issue which is coming forward as well. And we can see it almost every day, the volatility in our weather systems and all the challenges that brings through natural disasters, what that does to our parks that have to be restored, what that does to our landscape in terms of what runs off it into our lakes, which is why we have legislation like Save Lake Winnipeg.

And I'm informed that we have very few—short moments left. As a matter of fact, what we have to do is pass this legislation today and then, in our budgeting of legislative decisions, make sure we're consistent with the spirit of what we're practising today. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 226, The Manitoba Conservation Officers Recognition Day Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

Hon. Andrew Micklefield (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I'd like to see if there is leave to have this vote as recorded as unanimous.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to have the vote recorded as unanimous? *[Agreed]*

Leave has been granted. Congratulations.

Mr. Micklefield: Madam Speaker, I think we're just a half minute or so away, but if there's leave to call it 11 o'clock, we can proceed to the next hour.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to call it 11 o'clock?
[Agreed]

* (11:00)

RESOLUTIONS

Res. 18—Previous Provincial Government's Hydro Mismanagement

Madam Speaker: The hour is now 11 a.m. and time for private member's resolution. The resolution before us this morning is the resolution Previous Provincial Government's Hydro Mismanagement, brought forward by the honourable member for Morris.

Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris): Good morning, Madam Speaker. I move, seconded by the member for Dawson Trail (Mr. Lagassé)

WHEREAS after 17 years of mismanagement by the previous Provincial Government, Manitoba Hydro was forced to take on insurmountable financial debt and risk; and

WHEREAS the previous Provincial Government refused to implement a stand alone "demand side" management agency even after recommendations from the Public Utilities Board in 2014; and

WHEREAS it was brought to light by the media that the previous Provincial Government's Deputy Premier and Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs attempted to influence First Nations with Manitoba Hydro contracts in exchange for votes in support of the Member for St. Boniface's leadership bid against his former colleague; and

WHEREAS under the previous Provincial Government, hydro rates had increased by more than double the rate of inflation; and

WHEREAS because of the previous Provincial Government's mismanagement, hydro rates were projected double over the next twenty years; and

WHEREAS the previous Provincial Government promised Manitobans that Bipole 3 wouldn't cost them a nickel; and

WHEREAS the Keeyask Hydro Generating Station is now suffering from cost overruns of \$2.2 billion, thanks to the actions of the previous Provincial Government; and

WHEREAS due to irresponsible management by the previous Provincial Government, Keeyask and Bipole 3 will now cost Manitobans \$4.9 billion and \$7.8 billion respectively; and

WHEREAS Manitoba ratepayers are now paying for the mistakes of the previous Provincial Government through what could be known as the "NDP Bipole Keeyask Levy".

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba recognize the previous Provincial Government's mismanaging of Manitoba Hydro, effectively causing the Crown Service to increase rates for ratepayers across the province.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave for the bill as indicated by the minister—the resolution as indicated by the member be considered as read? Printed, sorry. Considered as printed. [Agreed]

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba recognize the previous Provincial Government's mismanagement of Manitoba Hydro, effectively causing the Crown Service to increase rates for ratepayers across the province.

It has been moved by the honourable member for Morris, seconded by the honourable member for Dawson Trail,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba recognize the previous Provincial Government's mismanagement of Manitoba Hydro, effectively causing the Crown Service to increase rates for ratepayers across the province.

Mr. Martin: It's my pleasure this morning to rise to make a few brief comments on this resolution. I do believe—in the words of my colleague across the way, the member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum)—this would be classified as a soft resolution, a resolution that I believe all of us in this Legislature on any side, whether it's Progressive Conservative, NDP or Liberal, can get behind because of the truth behind the resolution and the statements that are contained within that.

I do—would like to point out, Madam Speaker, in the interest of ensuring the factual information—and I know my colleague across the way, the MLA for Concordia, has made note previously of what he calls of questionable information.

So in the second-last whereas, unfortunately, those numbers are transposed, so it should be noted that it was the irresponsible management by the previous Selinger government that Keeyask is actually now costing over \$8 billion, respectively, and Bipole III is costing about \$5 billion, respectfully. So those numbers, unfortunately, were transposed, but I just want to ensure in the interest of accuracy and a fair and open and honest debate that those—that information is put on the record.

Now, the history—and I'll share some information for my colleagues, especially my newer colleagues that may not have the benefit of—sorry, the history of Manitoba—under the benevolent yoke of socialism over the last 17 years.

And it's with interest, Madam Speaker, that when the former government took office in 1999—and if you take a look at their news releases and speeches, they would constantly talk about how Manitoba Hydro has the lowest hydro rates in the world. And that was a constant talking point. It was all—you know, fair and well, and I'm not questioning them on the validity of that statement. I will—we're all honourable members here and I'll take that as fact. But it's interesting, as you watched that phraseology and that selling point over the lifetime of both the Doer government and then phasing into the last decade of the Selinger government, they went from extolling Manitoba Hydro as having the lowest rates in the world to, suddenly, they started talking about how Manitoba Hydro has the lowest rates in North America. And, you know, I thought that's sort of interesting. What's—sort of—what's happened and what's been going on and that.

And then they went from, you know, well, we don't—we—Manitoba Hydro has the lowest rates in Canada. So, again, you know, quite interesting that, you know, we're 'soring' this slide, this slide of differentials in terms of comparatives. That we've gone from the world to now Canada. But, still, you know, it's a—I think it's something that we can all as Manitobans and ratepayers be proud of. And that—but then they went from—you know, so we went from lowest in the world to lowest in North America to lowest in Canada.

And then, at the end of their term they were talking about, well, we have among the lowest in Canada. So, again, it gives idea and it gives a context of where Hydro went under the previous administration due to that Hydro mismanagement, Madam Speaker.

Now, a lot of this—and, yes, a lot of the conversation right now among a lot of Manitobans in their kitchen tables is about the NDP's Keeyask-bipole levy that the Public Utilities Board, through their mechanism, will take a review at and determine whether or not those numbers put forward by Manitoba Hydro in terms of potential rate increases to deal with the \$25 billion of debt left by the previous administration, a literally doubling of debt, is a valid number or whether or not that number needs to be adjusted in some way.

But what's happened to Manitoba Hydro just didn't happen over the last short number of years under the Selinger government. In fact, and again, a bit of a history lesson for my colleagues: upon taking office, actually, in 1999, one of the very first things the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger) and his government did was actually double the water rental rates paid—fees paid by Manitoba Hydro from approximately about \$15 million annually to \$100 million annually. And then they said, you know, well, that's not enough; we need more money—because they have, and it's very clear, I mean, given the billion-dollar deficit we're currently facing left over by the previous government, their appetite for spending was literally insatiable—so after doubling the water rental rates, they took a look at Hydro and they said, well, you know what, let's increase their debt guarantee fee. So they essentially added another \$30 million a year to the cost of hydro by increasing the debt guarantee fee.

But, again, Madam Speaker, they weren't done there. In about 2003, there were some mild 'flucuation' in the economy, and so the previous administration said, well, where can we find, you know, 250 to 300 million dollars lying around. They said, well, you know what, we'll just raid Manitoba Hydro, and they took what they colloquially called, at the time a, quote, unquote, special dividend out of Manitoba Hydro, back early in their mandate, of about a quarter of a billion dollars.

And I remember going through the PUB deliberations—because in the House the member for St. Boniface and his colleagues would defend that action, Madam Speaker, and say it would have no impact on Manitoba Hydro, and, of course, I remember reading the actual PUB transcripts, and the vice-president of finance was saying, well, no, that's not accurate, that the minister responsible is not being factually accurate, and, in fact, there will be a significant cost to Manitoba long-term because interest obviously has to be paid on that.

So, sort of, that sort of sets the stage as we move forward to a government that decided to override the advice from Manitoba Hydro in terms of the placement of the bipole line. Manitoba Hydro, in its analysis and determinations, had obviously made the decision to move that—to build that bipole line down the east side, but members opposite felt, you know what, we know best as an NDP government and we can't trust the good folks at Manitoba Hydro, and we are going to force them. And that's what they did; they forced them to move it down the west side, Madam Speaker.

And it's—again, it was very interesting that you go back to 2011, and I know my colleague, the Opposition House Leader, loves his props and was holding them up yesterday, and I won't follow that disrespectful lead, but I do remember large brochures going into people's mailboxes, every mailbox, and they would say: Fact—the bipole will not cost taxpayers a single cent. And I thought that was, you know, quite interesting. They were very adamant, the Selinger government and the NDP and those members across the way, because it lies in direct contradiction of what the Public Utilities Board indicated in their notice of decision back in July 24th of 2015.

And, again, that date's important, because the NDP were still the government in office, and the board that made this statement was, in fact, their hand-picked board. And it noted that, in its order 73/15, dated July 24th, 2015, that PUB approved a approximately 4 per cent increase in Manitoba Hydro consumers' billed rates effective August 1st, 2015, and I'm quoting, Madam Speaker: Of the 3.9 per cent rate increase, 1.8 per cent will support Manitoba Hydro's ongoing operations and the remaining 2.15 per cent will be added to the deferral account previously established by the board to fund the Bipole III project.

So, again, Madam Speaker, a 'jirdect' contradiction from the Public Utilities Board as to what the government of the day was saying in terms of bipole and the cost to ratepayers. And now, of course, we're seeing those chickens come home to roost, because even back in 2015 we—again, in terms of the Public Utilities Board, and I quote: Manitoba Hydro forecasts electricity rates will need to increase by 42 per cent. These higher rates will have a significant impact on all Manitobans—again, the date on that news release by the Public Utilities Board: July 24th, 2015.

* (11:10)

Now, I know, Madam Speaker, that members opposite will get up and, in their hyper-partisan attacks, will question some of this information and maybe question my position on it. So, you know what? I will—you know, if you don't want to take my position or take my comments as valid, then we'll see, you know, what does, say, former NDP Hydro ministers have to say? I mean, these are individuals that sat around the Cabinet table that were in control of those very organizations.

So, Tim Sale, Madam Speaker, the former NDP Hydro minister, recently, in public committee, noted that the risk to Manitoba Hydro due to technology, shale, oil, gas presents a serious risk and, unfortunately, the NDP government piled on more risk. And I'm quoting Mr. Sale, the former NDP minister—Hydro minister. The net result of these changes is that risk for Manitoba Hydro has risen sharply. Unless Hydro reshapes its strategy and implementation, the scale of that risk could overwhelm Manitoba's greatest asset for the 21st century and beyond. And we're seeing that today in the current motion in front of the public utility board where we're hoping that it will have a good analysis, an opportunity for Manitobans to come forward and make their comments known about the Keeyask-bipole levy left over by result of mismanagement of the NDP administration.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Questions

Madam Speaker: 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. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park): Just to set the tone for this process, how many export contracts has the current government signed on to and for how much?

Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague across the way, the member for Tyndall Park for the question because, actually, it was an excellent question because it highlights the fundamental error in the NDP approach to economics and sales.

They're actually selling power. And I remember the 'fremier'—former administration, when they were in committee, and they were noting that they produced power for approximately—I believe it's approximately about 10 cents a kilowatt hour, and they're selling it on the spot market for a third of that, Madam Speaker. So you're actually selling power south of the border at a loss.

And so members opposite—and the member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum) was in the paper, we'll just sell more. Sell more power south. Well, selling more power at a loss, Madam Speaker, doesn't do anything except to 'exacerate' those costs.

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): In 2011, the Selinger government told Manitobans that, quote, the bipole will not cost taxpayers a single cent.

Can the member for Morris tell Manitobans the true cost of the bipole boondoggle?

Mr. Martin: And boondoggle is a very appropriate term. It's a legacy that Manitobans, through the Keeyask-bipole levy, will be paying for years. The cost overruns on that have been significant. At last toll we're looking at almost \$5 billion and so it's going to be a significant impact on ratepayers going forward.

But, again, I will quote the Public Utilities Board from July of 2015 when the Selinger government was still in office: indicating that Manitoba Hydro forecasts electricity rates will need to increase by 42 per cent. And that is a result of the previous established funding of the Bipole III project. End quote, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Marcelino: Does the member realize that the application for the 8 per cent Manitoba Hydro rates now currently pending with the PUB was started by the government that he belongs to?

Mr. Martin: Absolutely, Madam Speaker, and I am proud to be a part of a 40-person caucus that was elected to clean up the finances of this province. And that was the mandate that we received from—a resounding mandate we received from Manitobans in April of last year.

So he is right that this is one of the challenges before us as a government, and before Manitoba Hydro. They, as a government, virtually bankrupted the organization. They took it from what was a crown jewel to much—something that should be found, in some instances almost, in a bargain bin. It's really unfortunate that they drove that organization into the

economic ground because they were more interested in manipulating the process in terms of raiding it for their financial means, simply because they couldn't control their own insatiable spending appetite.

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): There is a website for the members of the public to voice their concerns. Can the member share with us the website address for the record?

Mr. Martin: Madam Speaker, I appreciate my colleague, the member for Kewatinook's question. And if I did hear her question correctly, it had to do with the ability of Manitobans to make a presentation towards the Public Utilities Board.

The Public Utilities Board's email address is publicutilities@gov.mb.ca. For those individuals that don't want to email, the telephone number is 204-945-2638. That is the mechanism that Manitobans can call and contact the Public Utilities Board if they'd like to express their concern about the NDP's Keeyask-bipole levy and its impact it will have on their electricity rates, not only for this generation, the next generation, but for generations to come.

Mr. Bob Lagassé (Dawson Trail): Can the member elaborate on how the NDP mismanagement will affect young and future generations of Manitobans?

Mr. Martin: Well, I thank, Madam Speaker, my colleague for Dawson Trail, and that's really what we need to be talking about because it's not just the cost today, the billions and billions of dollars in costs overruns, the 900 kilometres of extra route, the loss of power, of line loss, and obviously the environmental costs of having to produce more power just to simply—for it to disappear over almost a thousand kilometres extra line. These are costs to be borne not only by my children but by my grandchildren and their grandchildren. It will take generations to make up these costs and they're not done yet. Over their term and their mandate over a few short last terms they literally doubled the debt of Manitoba Hydro from approximately 12 to 25 billion dollars.

Mr. Marcelino: I'd like to ask the member if he agrees with the minister responsible for Hydro that the Crown corporation is bankrupt. Does he agree with the minister?

Mr. Martin: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the critic's comments when it comes to Manitoba Hydro, and obviously the member and the Minister of Crown Services (Mr. Schuler) has my full support as

a colleague of mine. He's doing a tremendous job representing Manitobans in terms of that Crown corporation.

I remember the member opposite, the critic today that's asking these questions, actually sat on the Manitoba Hydro board, and I remember one of his first comments as critic during the committee stages, he—his first comment wasn't about the economic stability or instability of Manitoba Hydro when he had an opportunity to ask questions of the president board, but actually it was more lamenting how much he will miss those hot lunches when he was a board member. So again the member's priorities, just like the NDP's, have always been misplaced.

Mr. Smook: Can the member for Morris elaborate of the negative impacts of politically sourced contracting and the effects it has on ratepayers?

Mr. Martin: Madam Speaker, I do appreciate that question, and unfortunately the short time that I have to answer that just doesn't allow me to really highlight—I mean, the NDP have a history of sole-sourced contracts. In fact, it was one of those very sole-sourced contracts, the Tiger Dam contract that Gord Mackintosh, who sat just over here, highlighted was one reasons for the rebellion led by the last remaining member of the rebel five across the way who accused his own premier, the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger), of being more interested in holding onto power than doing the right things for Manitobans.

So, absolutely, a history of single-sourced, politically motivated contracts, whether it's in Manitoba Hydro, Manitoba Health or Manitoba Highways has led to significant—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): Could the member tell the House how much the government paid for their consultant that was hired at the beginning of the term, how much was paid, whether those consultants ever—whether it was tendered, whether the government—whether that consultant ever went to the North? What can he—could he just share any information he has about that particular report?

* (11:20)

Mr. Martin: You know what? I always—Madam Speaker, I appreciate a comment from the member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum). I always hope

that his first comment, of course, will be the apology to my predecessor for shaming her for leaving her position to take care of her dying husband. But I digress.

But specifically to that, I can alert the member the amount paid for the review was on par with the severance package that was paid under the former—his government when staff left in exodus after the failed rebellion. Even though they were all assured that their positions as political staff were secured, suddenly after the rebellion concluded and 30-some-odd votes separated Ms. Oswald for the member for St. Boniface, those staff were let go at the cost of almost three-quarters of a million dollars, Madam Speaker. So it—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Lagassé: Can the member elaborate on how the previous government has been accused of using Manitoba Hydro work contracts as a method to leverage votes in their leadership campaign?

Mr. Martin: Well, Madam Speaker, I appreciate the comment and the query from the member for Dawson Trail (Mr. Lagassé) because, again, it speaks to the political manipulation of members opposite of Manitoba Hydro and, indeed, of the Crowns and the government as a whole.

So, again, I will quote—[*interjection*] and I will say that—I will absolutely say that outside. So I'm quoting from CBC, Madam Speaker. CBC News obtained a letter from a Opaskwayak Cree Nation chief to Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Minister Eric Robinson, dated April 21st, 2015—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Martin: The letter follows a closed door meeting between Constant and Robinson on OCN territory. On February 19th, Constant wrote he also met with Selinger, quote, during his visit at that time. When you shake someone's hand, you think you would pull through right. End quote. In his letter, Constant wrote that he clearly understood support would be given to us if we, OCN, would support Premier Selinger—

An Honourable Member: Point of order.

Point of Order

Madam Speaker: Order. Point of order. The honourable member for Minto, on a point of order.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Yes, Madam Speaker, I was listening to the member for Morris

(Mr. Martin), and I believe he did say the name of a member of this Assembly, which he ought not to do.

Mr. Martin: Madam Speaker, I agree. The member for Minto is accurate that I did reference the member for St. Boniface by name. I would indicate, though, that I did that in a quote by the Opaskwayak Cree Nation chief, who indicated that his support of the member was contingent with some bipole contracts.

But I do regret that—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

I would just remind the member that even in putting names forward when reading them as quotes, they are still to be indicated by the riding that they represent. So there is a point of order.

Point of Order

Mr. Jim Maloway (Official Opposition House Leader): On a point of order. I would ask that the member table the document that he is quoting from.

Mr. Martin: You know what, Madam Speaker? I'm more than happy to ask the page to photocopy this document and, if the member has a pen handy, he can go to CBC, December 17th, 2015. Posted at 5 a.m. Central time, it's cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/manitoba-aboriginal-affairs-minister-denies-promise-of-hydro-work-in-exchange-for-supporting-premier-1.3368392.

So he's welcome to look in Hansard and look that—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Order.

The member has indicated that he will provide that document to be photocopied and, also, the time for questions has expired.

Debate

Madam Speaker: Time for debate is open.

Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park): First off, we have to establish the fact that Manitoba Hydro is the crown jewel of our province. The member from Emerson was saying that that's old news, and I beg to disagree. I beg to disagree that Manitoba Hydro is old news.

And he also refers to me as old news. And I want to correct it. I'm the new news, and he is the old news. The sense of humour that I have pales in comparison with the sense of derision that I get from the member from Emerson. And I wish to at least get my point across that the disrespect that was prevalent

from way back when the member from Emerson challenged the member from Interlake to a fight in the Chamber is very appalling.

An Honourable Member: Let's maybe move on to the resolution.

Mr. Marcelino: But I'll speak to the resolution now.

The resolution suggests that—

Madam Speaker: The honourable—order, please.

Point of Order

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon), on a point of order?

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): The member that's speaking right now just put false information on the record, suggesting that I challenged somebody in this Chamber to a fight. That's not true, and I ask him to retract his statement.

Thank you.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Official Opposition House Leader): Well, Madam Speaker, I fail to see how this could be a point of order. However, if the member would take his feet off the chairs here and, you know, respect the rules and behave himself a little more, I think we would get along—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Maloway: —a lot better in the House.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

I would indicate that this is not a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts, but there is something to be said about showing respect for all members here in the Chamber and to have a higher level of civility in terms of the comments that are made. And I think all members need to—I think all members need to be a little 'mit' more aware of the opportunities we have in respecting our constituents in terms of the respect that we should be putting forward here in debate.

And so I would urge some caution by all members, and I would indicate that that was not a point of order because it did not indicate a breach of a rule or practice of the House.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Tyndall Park, to continue his debate.

Mr. Marcelino: Let's—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Marcelino: There are two visions for Manitoba Hydro. The previous government's vision was to build hydro and build new dams and transmission infrastructure for future economic growth to keep rates low and to keep the lights on and displace fossil fuels. And the other side of the coin that's facing Manitoba now is that they—the current government—is hell-bent—if I could say that word—is very adamant about cancelling hydro development.

They started out with laying off public servants. There was an indication—a directive from the office of the Premier (Mr. Pallister) to lay off or at least take 900 workers out of the payroll from Manitoba Hydro. And they also applied for rates that are way beyond what the ordinary Manitoban can afford. They applied for 8 per cent, and this jacked-up rate is not only for a year; it's for five years, and it will be about 46 per cent altogether, taken cumulatively. And it's appalling and it's disgusting, to say the least, that the government tries to balance its books on the backs of Manitobans.

* (11:30)

It would have been simpler if life were affordable. As it is now, this current government took out that law that requires the affordability advantage for all Manitobans, especially those who can least afford it. And that's what governments are supposed to do, take care of its own people. There has been a lot of talk about a crisis in Hydro and, at the same time, they are now attempting to chop it up.

First off, with the Power Smart division, with roughly about a hundred employees of the Power Smart division being told that they could stay with Manitoba Hydro or go with a separate corporation.

And I am not alone in opposing this. There was a filibuster that was done by a respected member of the government caucus. And I think he saw the light, and he saw the light about not doing what the minister responsible for Hydro was trying to do. He was trying to chop up Manitoba Hydro.

And I will surmise—and it's just a suspicion—that, perhaps, this is just an initial attack on the integrity of Manitoba Hydro by chopping it up and then selling it off. And the way that Hydro One was done when it was chopped up in Ontario was slowly selling off first the distribution lines and then cancelling those two generating stations that were planned by engineers. And they were supposed to provide enough energy for Ontario for a long time and be able to sell.

It is not our intention to keep on denying that Hydro needs to be improved. And it was being improved when Bipole III was planned, and then started construction. It was meant to provide reliability and safety and security of supply for the city of Winnipeg especially if Bipole I and Bipole II were to go down in an ice storm. And people still do not believe that part of the rationale behind Bipole III. And the rationale behind the creation of Bipole III was also somewhat practical when some First Nations on the east side were opposing it. And the thinking at that time—and I think it was also reasonable—was that Hydro will be all twisted up and embroiled in lawsuits that will take years, or even decades to resolve if they were to go down the east side. And it was part of the arguments then and I think it's still part of the arguments now. But now that bipole has been started out and almost a major portion of the acquisitions and expropriations have been done, we are of the opinion that the cost to Keeyask and Bipole III were reasonably expected and if there be cost overruns, as in most construction projects, it is part of what we have to deal with as a government. And as a government, the current one, the government of the day, I think, is bent on destroying Hydro and I don't like it.

Point of Order

Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris): Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I was asked to table some documents that I reference in the House and I'm pleased to table those copies of the CBC article from December of 2015 in which it indicated that he—that the—

Madam Speaker: The member does not need to provide the information verbally. We thank him for presenting the documents.

Just for the record, to point out that when members are quoting from public documents, they are not—they do not have to actually table documents. It is only private documents that they're reading from that need to be tabled. So just so that people understand the rules and I would indicate that that is not a point of order.

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): It is an honour to stand up today in support of my colleague from Morris and his resolution, Previous Provincial Government's Hydro Mismanagement.

I would suggest that members opposite listen and take a good look at this resolution and support it.

It is about time that they started thinking about Manitobans and what is best for Manitoba, not just their own political games.

Because of the previous NDP government, Manitobans have had a decade of debt, a decade of decay and a decade of decline.

Madam Speaker, I can remember reading an article in the Winnipeg Sun, in which the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger), then-premier, stated that Bipole III wouldn't cost Manitoba a single cent. Well, Bipole III is costing Manitobans a heck of a lot more than a single cent.

What I cannot understand is how someone could make such a mistake, from costing nothing to costing billions of dollars. With all the expertise and the resources we have in government today, it just doesn't make sense that one could make such a mistake. Or, was this just another way to buy votes? The member from Tyndall Park mentioned cost overruns. Well, that billions of dollars, that's more than a cost overrun, from nothing to billions of dollars.

There are many more examples of the previous government, the NDP government, politically interfering with the decision making of Manitoba Hydro, and Manitoba families are now being asked to pay more, thanks to the NDP and their reckless spending. Rate increases we see now are a direct result of NDP mismanagement and political interference of Manitoba Hydro.

Manitoba Hydro debt will double to \$25 billion within the next three or four years due to the NDP 'russed'-rushed decisions—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Order.

I would just indicate to the guests in the gallery that there is to be no photography taken from the gallery, please. Thank you.

Mr. Smook: Rate increases we see now are a direct result of NDP mismanagement and political interference of Manitoba Hydro.

Manitoba Hydro debt will double to \$25 billion within the next three to four years due to the NDP rushed decisions to build the bipole transmission line and the Keeyask dam without prior Public Utilities Board scrutiny. Because of the previous provincial government, hydro rates were predicted to double over the next 20 years. We could go from having some of the cheapest hydro rates to some of the most expensive hydro rates.

* (11:40)

Will the members opposite take credit for this? Will they tell Manitobans who live in rural Manitoba, in northern Manitoba, in even the cities of Manitoba that it's their mismanagement and political interference—is what's causing the Manitoba Hydro rate increases?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Smook: Manitoba—Madam Speaker, when Manitobans see their Hydro bill, they need to know—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Smook: —that we are paying for the NDP's rushed decision to build Bipole III and Keeyask. The bipole-Keeyask levy will hurt Manitobans for generations to come, both in private life and in business.

I know from a business background that when Manitoba Hydro rates increase, businesses will have no choice but to pass on these costs to the consumer—another cost from the previous 'goven'. We talked about untendered contracts. In my travels in northern Manitoba, I talked to several contractors and their feelings towards the millions and millions of dollars that were given away without tendering. I mean, tendering is one of the reasons you can hold costs down. But when you just gift contracts away, it does increase the cost of the job.

And to what the member for Minto (Mr. Swan) was saying: I listen to members opposite when they speak—that this—now being our problem. Madam Speaker, we did not create this problem, but we will do as we promised Manitobans in the election of 2016. Manitobans elected—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

I am going to ask the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) and the member for Kildonan (Mr. Curry) to stop the heckling that is going on. It is very difficult for a speaker that is trying to put forward comments in debate for this kind of noise to be occurring in the House. And I would ask that the members please cease with the heckling and that all members pay respect to each other as they are listening here in debate.

So I would appreciate everybody's co-operation in this.

Mr. Smook: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Manitobans elected a Progressive Conservative government committed to fixing our finances, repairing our services, and rebuilding our economy. I could speak on this for hours, but I do have another meeting to attend. And this will give the opposition the ability to take credit for this huge boondoggle. They should support this resolution because it is important for the people of Manitoba to understand who really created this mess.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): I'm—can't say I'm happy to get up to speak to a resolution of this kind, but I'm more than pleased to always get up in the Chamber to engage in a productive debate about issues that are of enormous concern to the people of Manitoba.

And I would say to all members of the House that there is, in fact, a very serious and important debate to be had about Manitoba Hydro, to be had about the investments that have occurred in the past—or not occurred in the past, as the case may be—and about the future direction of Manitoba Hydro. But it's hard to have that kind of debate when we have a resolution put forward before the House this morning that is chock full of factual misinformation, chock full of spurious allegations that have no basis in fact and, if it was taken out into the—outside of this Chamber, it would probably be subject to more serious consequences than would happen in here.

On this side of the House we are interested in debating in a productive manner the future of Manitoba Hydro, of the value of continuing to invest in clean, green renewable energy that not only provides energy security for this generation, but for generations to come. And so we'd be happy to have that kind of productive, engaged and informed debate but, well, we're not getting it in this resolution.

And I would say that I'm disappointed that the member for Morris (Mr. Martin) would put forward this kind of resolution, but I'm not surprised, Madam Speaker.

At every turn, we get a kind of rhetoric from him, whether it's in the House, whether it's on the side, whether it's on his Twitter feed, that doesn't actually contribute in a productive fashion to an informed public policy debate about a critical, critical matter to ourselves and to our children and to

our grandchildren. And, instead, we're forced to deal with all kinds of information and allegations in this particular resolution that leaves a lot to be desired.

I know that the Bombers are currently in training camp, and I can only suspect that the member for Morris was trying out for a Cabinet position today, and I want to say he'll be among the first cuts as a result, because it adds absolutely nothing, nothing to the substantive debate that needs to take place over Manitoba Hydro.

We would have preferred right from the get-go from last April when the government was duly elected by the people of Manitoba to continue—*[interjection]* yes, the people spoke; we accept that. We have no objection to it.

You know, I know my friend from Lac du Bonnet sits beside the member for Morris, and I've always had great time and respect for him, and would urge him to allow me to speak without—and then take his opportunity in the Chamber to put a few words on the record in regard to his position of Manitoba Hydro. I suspect that if you were getting—asked the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko) to have a conversation about Manitoba Hydro outside the Chamber, it would be a different kind of conversation that would happen in here. And so, I would urge him not to fall into the trap of his friend from Morris and continue to be the good and honourable member that he is.

You know, we took the position and have taken the position historically over multiple governments that investments in Manitoba Hydro are a good thing for the people of Manitoba. Unlike the Filmon years when they—the Filmon era—the Filmon regime sold off MTS, a crown jewel one would expect everyone to recognize of this province, that the agenda of the Conservatives when it comes to Crown corporations is clear, and, sadly, I'm afraid to say, it hasn't changed in all of this time.

We remember quite clearly—and it's, of course, on the public record—the debate over Limestone Generating Station years ago, and we had committed to invest it in Limestone, and it was suggested at the time that wouldn't be a good investment.

An Honourable Member: Liberals call it Lemonstone.

Mr. Allum: Yes, it was. In fact, some—as my friend from Elmwood who was probably here at the time, probably here from the origins of Manitoba Hydro, and that's what gives my complete and utter respect

for my friend from Elmwood who educates me and informs me every single day.

But the fact of the matter was that it was considered to be an investment not worth making, colossal waste of money; taxpayers would have to pay for it. What else is it that you, the Conservatives, generally say about investments in the people of Manitoba and in the resources of Manitoba? And the truth of the matter is that Limestone, which was built for \$1.4 billion, which I think back a few decades ago would've been a lot of bread in those days. Actually, now it's since supported \$7.5 billion in hydro sales and, at the same time, provided energy security for Manitobans and has given us the basis to be able to continue on with those investments into the future.

So we take the position that the investments that had been made in Hydro during the most recent 17 glorious years in government or whether it was before that, have always paid off, and they've paid off financially; they've paid off in terms of energy security. But more than that, Madam Speaker, they've also produced other direct and indirect benefits that members never want to talk about on the government side; it's things that need to be reflected on and acknowledged for the truth of what they are.

* (11:50)

One of those, of course, is the number of jobs that have been created as a result of those investments, and we saw from the Conference Board of Canada saying just yesterday, in a very important report, saying that those investments in Hydro that we have undertaken over the last several years have been at the core of economic development of this province. And as those investments wind down into the future, that Manitoba is going to go from a very significant rate of growth each year to quite likely less than 1 per cent.

And so, if the government thinks that that's going to be a good thing for Manitobans, if it's going to be a good thing for job creation, well, I can tell them that it's not. So good jobs, jobs in the trades and then, in addition to that, Madam Speaker, really sincere and important partnerships with First Nations that have resulted both in good jobs but in economic benefits of Hydro development flowing back to First Nations on their traditional lands. That's the kind of Crown corporation that I want to see. That's the kind of society I want to see, where there is mutual and

shared benefits for the collective well-being of all Manitobans.

And so we see in the partnerships and in the jobs and in the other benefits that directly flow to First Nations—and I would dare say there's much more work that needs to be done in that regard. It never stops. The work continues. But that has been a very important by-product of those investments.

And then, of course, we've said quite clearly that the exports that not only can help to pay—that will be generated by our continued investments in the bipole, in Keeyask, maybe someday in Conawapa, will nevertheless provide not only energy security but clean, green energy security, not merely for ourselves here in Manitoba, but for exports to other jurisdictions, both in Canada and in the United States, that helps them to transition from dirty energy to cleaner energy so that we can address climate change in a real and meaningful way.

That's why our government, with—in partnership with Hydro, established export deals with Wisconsin. That's why we established exports deals with Minnesota. That's why we've established export deals with Saskatchewan. And I think we all recognize that with the generation of more power, there is more ability for exports—exports to partners not merely at our borders, but beyond our borders that can create something very important in terms of energy security—clean, green, reliable energy—and start addressing climate change at the same time.

So that, at the end of the day, what you have is a complete and whole picture of an investment package that tries to address multiple concerns over multiple generations, which is a good thing not only for my family, but the generations of my family to come, in my neighbourhood, in my community, in my province, in my country.

So what we try to be is global citizens. I would invite the government to do the same.

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): I want to thank the member for Morris (Mr. Martin) for bringing forward this resolution, not because that I think it would help the citizens of Manitoba, but because it shows exactly what this new government is doing for our people: wasting precious resources and time and money.

Does the member know how many hours this government—his government took to put this resolution forth? Does this—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Klassen: –member know the dollar value? What did this resolution cost our taxpayers? I'd do the math myself, but I've got real problems to solve.

There was an indigenous man with kidney problems kicked off a Greyhound bus because Greyhound said he was drunk. The RCMP came and verified he was not drunk and even Greyhound, in the end, said he was not drunk. Yet a medical patient was still left on his own to walk from Grand Rapids to Thompson at 4 a.m. in the morning, a distance of 350 kilometres, for a sick person.

I have over 560 constituent evacuees being sent home today. I would have loved to have been at the airline. I had a trip planned to Princess Harbour and I had to send my regrets because I thought we would be doing valuable work in this House today.

So rather than waste more time, let me speak to this resolution. It gives me the opportunity to tell the members in this House how 'inappropriate' it is to keep blaming the previous government for everything that they're changing in government. Not so long ago, the NDP were in power and all they did was blame the Tories and the Filmon government because of the cuts and–cuts–all day long, the same game.

Is this how the Pallister government wants to be remembered by? Is this going to be their legacy for Manitobans–blaming the NDP for everything? This government is not in opposition any more. *[interjection]*

I have the floor, sir.

The Province needs to–what–needs to do what's best for all small businesses and for the health of our environment and the economy. Constructive, thoughtful and beneficial legislation needs to be brought forward. I know that some of the members of this House deliberately ran so that they could bring meaningful resolutions and laws forth. Manitobans are counting on us to improve the economy, improve the environment and be social justice leaders. The status quo has to end; it's 2017.

This resolution–you know what it says to me? It says that the current government is still stuck in opposition wanting to blame the NDP for everything. Madam Speaker, I am tired of it.

We need to start working together to do what we all campaigned for–improving Manitobans' lives, mentally, financially, for the well-being of our beautiful youth.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Bob Lagassé (Dawson Trail): Madam Speaker, fellow members, thank you for the opportunity to stand in the House today and speak to this resolution.

It goes without saying, but I'll say it anyway, this is an important one. The member from Morris's resolution speaks to one of the challenges that our government faces. We were elected just over a year ago to get Manitoba on the road to recovery. We were elected because the previous government refused to be transparent and honest with Manitobans.

This resolution recognizes the severe neglect and mismanagement of the–Manitoba Hydro under the previous government. It identifies how the previous government pushed and directed Manitoba Hydro into significant debt due to the reckless and politically motivated decisions.

I know that members on this side of the House have spoken to these decisions previously, but I wanted to briefly summarize again what happened with respect to Manitoba Hydro in the previous administration.

Let's start with Bipole III, Madam Speaker. I'm going to put just this record. It seems to criss-cross everywhere and makes no sense, kind of like a lot of the arguments the NDP put forward. Bipole III was advertised as a new transmission line that would not cost Manitoba taxpayers a single cent. This claim was sent out by the NDP in a mailer in 2011. Well, we can see that this isn't the case. Bipole III is now expected to cost nearly \$400 million more than originally estimated. This is just one example of the previous government not being willing to tell the truth about the project.

We can see the same thing with Keeyask. It is–its estimated costs have gone way into the stratosphere and now has 'raisin' about 2.2 billion. So with those–sorry, excuse me–I can see that it is–sorry–and again, the previous government refuses to–*[interjection]*–yes, I'm not sure how to spell that one, Wayne–sorry about that. And again, the previous government refuses to be transparent about the truth in the Keeyask costs.

The price tag for bipole and Keeyask will now cost approximately \$8 billion and \$5 billion, respectively. Hydro's debt is now set to double to \$25 billion in the next three to four years.

And with those records—with those words on the record, Madam Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak.

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): Madam Speaker, you know, sometimes in the Chamber we have motions or resolutions or private member's bills that come forward which actually have some good substance to them. You know, they raise an important policy issue; they attempt to provide a solution to the challenges that, you know, we face in this province.

And then sometimes we get resolutions like this one, which does not have any substance to it. There isn't a single proposed solution contained in the motion. This is a political rant put on paper, and it is going to, you know, be my pleasure to point out some of the many flaws and inaccuracies and incomplete aspects of—

* (12:00)

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

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

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 30, 2017

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