

**First Session - Thirty-Ninth Legislature**  
**of the**  
**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**  
**DEBATES**  
**and**  
**PROCEEDINGS**  
**Official Report**  
**(Hansard)**

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authority of  
The Honourable George Hickes  
Speaker*

**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Thirty-Ninth Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
ALLAN, Nancy, Hon.	St. Vital	N.D.P.
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	N.D.P.
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	N.D.P.
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	N.D.P.
BLADY, Sharon	Kirkfield Park	N.D.P.
BOROTSIK, Rick	Brandon West	P.C.
BRAUN, Erna	Rossmere	N.D.P.
BRICK, Marilyn	St. Norbert	N.D.P.
BRIESE, Stuart	Ste. Rose	P.C.
CALDWELL, Drew	Brandon East	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CULLEN, Cliff	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard	Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary, Hon.	Concordia	N.D.P.
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	P.C.
FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	P.C.
GRAYDON, Cliff	Emerson	P.C.
HAWRANIK, Gerald	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
HICKES, George, Hon.	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
HOWARD, Jennifer	Fort Rouge	N.D.P.
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri, Hon.	Fort Garry	N.D.P.
JENNISSON, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	N.D.P.
KORZENIOWSKI, Bonnie	St. James	N.D.P.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LATHLIN, Oscar, Hon.	The Pas	N.D.P.
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	La Verendrye	N.D.P.
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MAGUIRE, Larry	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
MARCELINO, Flor	Wellington	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McFADYEN, Hugh	Fort Whyte	P.C.
McGIFFORD, Diane, Hon.	Lord Roberts	N.D.P.
MELNICK, Christine, Hon.	Riel	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	P.C.
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	N.D.P.
OSWALD, Theresa, Hon.	Seine River	N.D.P.
PEDERSEN, Blaine	Carman	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Rupertsland	N.D.P.
RONDEAU, Jim, Hon.	Assiniboia	N.D.P.
ROWAT, Leanne	Minnedosa	P.C.
SARAN, Mohinder	The Maples	N.D.P.
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield	P.C.
SELBY, Erin	Southdale	N.D.P.
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan, Hon.	Dauphin-Roblin	N.D.P.
SWAN, Andrew	Minto	N.D.P.
TAILLIEU, Mavis	Morris	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Wednesday, October 31, 2007**

**The House met at 1:30 p.m.**

*PRAYER*

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**PETITIONS**

**Dividing of Trans-Canada Highway**

**Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

The seven-kilometre stretch of the Trans-Canada Highway passing through Headingley is an extremely busy stretch of road, averaging 18,000 vehicles daily.

This section of the Trans-Canada Highway is one of the few remaining stretches of undivided highway in Manitoba, and it has seen more than 100 accidents in the last two years, some of them fatal.

Manitoba's Assistant Deputy Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation told a Winnipeg radio station on October 16, 2007, that when it comes to highways' projects the provincial government has a flexible response program, and we have a couple of opportunities to advance these projects in our five-year plan.

In the interests of protecting motorist safety, it is critical that the dividing of the Trans-Canada Highway in Headingley be completed as soon as possible.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To request the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation (Mr. Lemieux) to consider making the completion of the dividing of the Trans-Canada Highway in Headingley in 2008 an urgent provincial government priority.

To request the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation to consider evaluating whether any other steps can be taken to improve motorist safety while the dividing of the Trans-Canada Highway in Headingley is being completed.

This is signed by Nicole Baccaert, C. Unrau, Dean Weiten and many, many other Manitobans, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** In accordance with our rule 132(6), when petitions are read they are deemed to be received by the House.

**Retired Teachers' Cost of Living Adjustment**

**Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

Since 1977, Manitoba teachers have made contributions to the Teachers' Retirement Allowances Fund Pension Adjustment Account, PAA, to finance a Cost of Living Adjustment, COLA, to their base pension once they retire.

Despite this significant funding, 11,000 retired teachers and 15,000 active teachers currently find themselves facing the future with little hope of a meaningful COLA.

For 2007, a COLA of only .63 percent was paid to retired teachers.

The COLA paid in recent years has eroded the purchasing power of teachers' pension dollars.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to consider adequate funding for the PAA on a long-term basis to ensure that the current retired teachers, as well as all future retirees, receive a fair COLA.

Signed by Bruce Hull, Roberta Desserre, Allan Desserre and many, many Manitobans.

**Neepawa, Minnedosa and Areas—Local Hospitals**

**Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

Residents of Neepawa, Minnedosa, and the surrounding areas are concerned about the long-term

viability of their respective local hospitals. Impending retirements, physician shortages, and the closure of many other rural emergency rooms have caused residents to fear for their health-care facilities.

Local physicians and many residents have expressed their support for a proposed regional health centre to service both communities.

It is believed that a new regional health centre would help secure and maintain physicians and would therefore better serve the health care needs of the region.

The success of other regional hospitals, such as Boundary Trails Health Centre, has set the precedent for the viability and success of a similar health centre in the Neepawa and Minnedosa area.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald), to consider the feasibility of a joint health centre, including an emergency room, to serve Neepawa and Minnedosa and the surrounding area.

To urge the Minister of Health to consider sustaining health-care services in the area by working with local physicians and the Assiniboine Regional Health Authority on this initiative.

This petition is signed by Randy Collins, Bernice Baker, Karen Beaumont and many, many others.

#### **The Child and Family Services Act**

**Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

Manitoba's provincial government has a responsibility to protect children from exploitation.

Canada's laws recognize those less than 18 years of age as deserving of certain legal protection. Under law, children cannot drive until they are 16, and cannot smoke cigarettes or drink alcohol until they are 18. Yet, the current age of consent under Canada's Criminal Code is 14 years of age.

Families, communities and law enforcement authorities recognize that young Canadians between the ages of 14 and 16 years of age are especially vulnerable due to legal loopholes. They are frustrated

with the lack of tools available to them from exploitation by adult predators at least three years older whose intent is to sexually exploit these children.

Predators are increasingly using nefarious means such as drugs, alcohol, gifts and false promises to lure at-risk victims. In addition to sexual abuse, these victims are sometimes coerced and misled into criminal activity, drug use and gang recruitment.

The consequences of any type of exploitation are devastating. While any child may become a victim of exploitation, at-risk children are particularly vulnerable and targeted. Many of these children are in the care or have previously had contact with Child and Family Services.

While the age of protection is within federal jurisdiction, there are actions that could be taken by the provincial government to protect young people in the care of the Department of Family Services and Housing. Section 52 of The Child and Family Services Act could be strengthened to better safeguard minors in care.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Premier (Mr. Doer) to consider amending and strengthening section 52 of The Child and Family Services Act to allow for the greater protection of children in care from exploitation.

To request the Premier to consider urging the federal government to raise the age of protection to a minimum of 16 years of age.

This petition signed by Kyle Prince, John Kent, Alex Dumas and many, many others.

\* (13:40)

#### **Personal Care Homes—Virden**

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for this petition:

Manitoba's provincial government has a responsibility to provide quality long-term care for qualifying Manitobans.

Personal care homes in the town of Virden currently have a significant number of empty beds that cannot be filled because of a critical nursing shortage in these facilities.

In 2006, a municipally formed retention committee was promised that the Virden nursing shortage would be resolved by the fall of 2006.

Virtually all personal care homes in southwestern Manitoba are full, yet as of early October 2007, the nursing shortage in Virden is so severe that more than a quarter of the beds at the Westman Nursing Home are sitting empty.

Seniors, many of whom are war veterans, are therefore being transported to other communities for care. These communities are often a long distance from Virden and family members are forced to travel for more than two hours round trip to visit their loved ones, creating significant financial and emotional hardship for these families.

Those families that have been moved out of Virden have not received assurance that they will be moved back to Virden when these beds become available.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) to consider taking serious action to fill the nursing vacancies at personal care homes in the town of Virden and to consider reopening the beds that have been closed as the result of this nursing shortage.

To urge the Minister of Health to consider prioritizing the needs of those seniors that have been moved out of their community by committing to move those individuals back into Virden as soon as the beds become available.

This petition is signed, Mr. Speaker, by Bette Scott, Jill Johnston, Judy Wood, Karen Forester, Sylvia Dunbar and many, many others.

#### **Public Meeting—Premier's Attendance**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba:

The background to this petition is as follows:

The Premier (Mr. Doer) has been silent on the issue related to serious allegations with respect to his office.

The Premier is not answering questions related to the said issue inside the Legislature.

There is no indication that the Premier is enforcing Manitoba's code of ethics for political parties.

Based on the 1999 Monnin report inquiry, leaders of political parties are obligated to enforce the code of ethics.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Premier to consider attending the November 5 public meeting at the Munroe public library, which is located in his constituency.

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by M. Villagrancia, G. Anig, H. Tamondong and many, many other fine Manitobans.

#### **TABLING OF REPORTS**

**Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** I would like to table the Public Utilities Board Annual Report for 2006-2007.

#### **Introduction of Guests**

**Mr. Speaker:** I would like to draw the attention of honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today Mr. Jim Scott who is the economic development officer from The Pas and who is the guest of the honourable Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (Mr. Lathlin).

Also in the public gallery we have with us from Springs Christian Academy 45 grades 9 to 11 students under the direction of Mr. Brad Dowler. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger).

On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you all here today.

#### **ORAL QUESTIONS**

##### **Justice System Public Inquiry Inclusion of Evidence from Existing Inquiries**

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, in response to the tragic loss of the life of Crystal Taman and the events that followed which have been well-documented in the media, which include several instances and examples of where the administration of justice in Manitoba appears to have broken down, the government yesterday, at our request announced the establishment of a public inquiry.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the government: In light of the two reviews that had been launched prior to the announcement of the public inquiry, the reports and reviews that were announced in the days prior to Judge Wyant's decision, will the government

be asking the commissioner in charge of the public inquiry under The Evidence Act to fully examine all of the issues and topics that will be covered by the two existing reviews that have been set in motion by the government?

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, the terms of reference are being discussed with various stakeholders dealing with the Crystal Taman case. While there are victims and there are individuals in the justice system, themselves, and the Minister of Justice (Mr. Chomiak) will seek advice and prepare the criteria, but the public interest will be the predominant and pre-eminent concern in that inquiry.

There were specific operational issues raised by the judge in his findings this week, Mr. Speaker, and, obviously, issues that were in the public domain prior to the judge's final ruling this week. One was the issue on the establishment of the independent counsel and that relationship with the Victims' Bill of Rights. The second issue was dealing with the operational issues of the East St. Paul police force.

I would point out the other two occasions that we've had to deal with the administration of justice, the Sophonow case and the Driskell case, it took some time to ensure that the proper judge that would have credibility was appointed. It took time to ensure that we had the proper counsel, that we had proper venues for public input, that we had proper criteria to ensure that at the end of the day the issues that were raised of public concern were dealt with. We do not see this as a contradiction to or in competition of the inquiry. We see it rather, the operational reviews, to be useful for the public interest and ensure that on a timely basis if there are operational changes that have to be made they will be made.

**Mr. McFadyen:** I appreciate those comments from the Premier. There's nothing in those comments that we would be in fundamental disagreement with. But, in terms of the two most glaring examples that have been cited in the media, one, the operations at the East St. Paul Police Department and, secondly, the issue of the special counsel and their role in this, it is of fundamental importance that the independent public inquiry, apart from the reviews, goes into those issues in considerable detail.

Our concern, Mr. Speaker, is that reports that may be done in advance of the inquiry may provide some basis or reason for objections to arise about further examination of those issues once the inquiry gets underway. Clearly, the inquiry process is what is required in order to give, not only the Taman family

but all Manitobans, absolute confidence that the facts have been brought to light and that appropriate steps are going to be taken to ensure that every reasonable and possible step is taken to prevent future travesties of justice, which is what we've had in this case.

So I wonder if the Premier can be quite specific as to whether, firstly, he'll be appointing a judge from outside of Manitoba and, secondly, whether that judge will be specifically asked to review in detail the issues surrounding the East St. Paul Police Department, as well as the issues with respect to the special prosecutor and that the existing reviews will in no way pre-empt or provide a basis for anybody to object to that sort of an examination.

**Mr. Doer:** The operational reviews will not preclude the inquiry dealing with all of these issues. If, for example, the perception of the justice system and the operation of the justice system requires that the establishment of independent prosecutors that have been established pursuant to Judge Dewar's decision or Judge Dewar's report to former Minister McCrae asks us to change a criteria or clarify a criteria before the inquiry is completed, it would make absolutely good sense to act upon that operational recommendation that would be dealt with by former Queen's Bench Justice Ruth Krindle.

So we would expect that would be useful for the justice system to have that in an immediate way. An inquiry has traditionally taken a longer period of time. If you look at Sophonow and if you look at the Driskell case, both of which took considerably more time than the 60 days the Minister of Justice has set out as the maximum time to deal with those two operational issues.

\*(13:50)

#### Announcement to Media

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I think the Premier is confirming that those issues will be examined, and I thank him for his comments on that point.

Finally on this topic, we've seen through this process several failures with respect to the Taman family along the way. The family, obviously, has firstly and most significantly suffered the loss of a loved one. Replacement of that individual and the loss must be felt to a degree that would be almost impossible to imagine for most Manitobans; but following that, a number of failures in terms of the ultimate outcome of the case, the disposition of the case the day before yesterday.

After these failures, we saw yesterday, once again, the family being failed by this government when the government made the decision to go ahead and leak and brief to the media the decision to have an inquiry, prior to even advising the family of the decision to have the inquiry. These are the people in Manitoba who have the most direct and profound personal interest in this public inquiry.

So I want to ask the Premier why they put media spin ahead of the Taman family when it came to the way that this inquiry was announced yesterday.

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Yes, Mr. Speaker, I phoned Mr. Taman today and apologized for not talking to him prior to making the announcement yesterday. I indicated that I had met with the parents several weeks ago and discussed the matters and found that I couldn't talk about a lot. It was difficult, but I did say that I apologized for not advising them prior to doing that, and we determined that we'd get together in the next two weeks to talk about that. I'm not afraid to admit a mistake.

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

#### **Manitoba Hydro Power Line Reasons for Location on West Side**

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, on a new question. I thank the minister for that comment and for being forthcoming about his apology.

I want to just ask on a separate topic, coming to the issue of the Hydro decision, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier: The rationale which he and his ministers have advanced for building on the longer and far more expensive west side of Manitoba has been opposition from east-side First Nations.

But this morning in a news conference, Grand Chief Sidney Garrioch, backed by other chiefs from First Nations, made public a letter that had been written to the Premier dated today, and in this letter he indicates that on October 23, 2007, which was just last week, the executive Council of Chiefs of the WNO, which is the umbrella group representing the 16 east-side First Nations, had an emergency meeting with the Conservation Minister, the Culture and Heritage Minister, the northern affairs minister, the Mines Minister, the Transportation Minister and the Finance Minister to discuss Manitoba Hydro's decision to select the western route.

Grand Chief Dr. Sidney Garrioch goes on to say, and I quote: During this emergency meeting, the WNO executive Council of Chiefs told your ministers that each of the First Nations wanted the bipole 3 transmission line to be built on a route east of Lake Winnipeg.

So I would ask the Premier: Given the support of the executive committee of the chiefs that represent the 16 east-side First Nations communities, in light of their support for an east-side line, why is the Premier disregarding the will of virtually all Manitobans on this issue and standing by a decision which is going to leave a legacy of debt, environmental destruction and economic despair for east-side communities?

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, the member opposite always uses the rationale for a number of factors that go into a decision. It's an interesting legal technique, but it doesn't deal with the multiple numbers of reasons that have to be into consideration of a decision, especially coming from a group that had no decision.

Mr. Speaker, we had 80 meetings—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The honourable First Minister has the floor.

**Mr. Doer:** In 2003 and 2004, given some of the disagreement between various participants in the east side and people living on the east side, we had 16 community meetings and 80 total meetings on their feelings on the east side. Many people in that area had been led to believe, in 2000, that the whole issue of expanding the cutting rights for Tembec would include an increased investment in the road. We had to set that straight that that wasn't true, a kind of an urban myth that was established by the former government.

Then in the public meetings we had to make it clear that what Hydro was offering was a short-term economic capital cost and a medium-term brush-clearing benefit for building a transmission line on the east side. With that information, most of the people on the east side that attended the meetings that we had, with some of the same ministers that the member opposite is citing, a meeting with the WNO chiefs came to the conclusion that there was not an agreement to proceed on the east side from the people, the people living in the area.

Today, we had a chief at a press conference that was elected a couple of months ago—but I want to point out, and other chiefs that have been around longer periods of time—but that's why we wanted to have the meeting with the people on the east side. I would point out, Mr. Speaker, that we then had a meeting in 2005 with the WNO chiefs. We passed a resolution jointly with them not to build the transmission on the east side. We communicated that to the east-side communities again in June of '05. We communicated that to the public. It was in the *Free Press*. We actually campaigned on our vision not to—to build a road.

The member opposite was going to cancel the road. We campaigned on building the road and not the transmission line on the east side, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. McFadyen:** It's clear that whatever consultation took place previously on the east side certainly didn't, and hasn't yet, taken place on the west side, so I don't know how they can plough ahead with a decision without any basis of information about how west-side residents might react.

But, on the issue of the east-side consultation, Mr. Speaker, Robert Flett, who is chief of the Ste. Theresa Point band, said this morning that these consultations never actually made direct mention of the proposed transmission line project. And it goes on to say, and this is reported in an on-line bulletin in the media, following this morning's news conference. He said that Hydro's announcement last month about the line route came as a complete surprise to the people on the east side. He says, and I quote, I've yet to find somebody who's been consulted. In the eyes of the government, we are people that can just be trampled on, but we have a voice too. This is what Chief Flett is saying from Ste. Theresa Point, one of the 16 First Nations that indicate that there was no consultation specifically on the issue of the transmission line.

We understand that if you go out and say to people, we want to run a line through your property, the first reaction is going to be negative. But, on a major project like this, Mr. Speaker, the point is to begin a dialogue and a negotiation to get agreement and consultation as you move forward on this issue.

So, we would say, do what's right for all Manitobans. Avoid a legacy of half a billion dollars in debt for the next generation. Avoid a legacy of hundreds of millions of dollars in lost power sales. Avoid a legacy of more coal-fired energy plants. Do

what's right in terms of economic development for some of the poorest communities in Manitoba. Make the case. Stand up, have a negotiation. Enter into discussions in good faith, as the chiefs are today calling on this government to do.

In light of what the chiefs are asking for, because he's put up a number of reasons for the decision, he said that there was going to be opposition in the United States that might result in power sales not going ahead. That opposition hasn't materialized. On the contrary, east-side chiefs are saying they want it.

Why won't the Premier listen to them?

\* (14:00)

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, the communities that have populations on the east side voted for the Member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson) by 80 percent, the WNO chiefs. The Berens River, Poplar River, Bloodvein, not—the immediate east lake communities voted overwhelmingly.

Your position was well-known. It was: Build it on the east side. Our position was well-known: We're not going to build it on the east side. That was based on three years of consultation, three years of community meetings, three years of listening to people.

You know, the other thing we had to deal with is this false promise that came from members opposite that the whole road would be built by Hydro along the east side. That was a false promise. There have been too many false promises made to Aboriginal people in Manitoba, and we're not going to make a promise that's false. We are going to make a promise that's real.

We are going to build the Rice River road. It's a tangible promise in our Speech from the Throne. We will deliver on it. It will be a real road with real money in real communities with real consultation. The member opposite was going to cancel that road, and now he wants to promise a mythical dividend and a mythical road to the people of the east side. I think it's time members opposite start being straight with the people on the east side.

**Mr. McFadyen:** If there was some connection between the reality of what east-side residents are saying and what the Premier is now saying in the House, we might actually find some of his words persuasive. But the fact is, Mr. Speaker, the position being taken by east-side people in communities, and



in some of the poorest communities in Canada, is at odds with what the Premier is today saying.

The fact is that he's wrong about what the Member for Rupertsland got in the last election. He's off by 23 percentage points. The Member for Rupertsland lost 23 points between the 2003 election and the most recent election, which may explain why the Premier was spending more time campaigning in that constituency in the lead up to this election than he ever has before. I was astonished to find people saying to me when I was visiting communities on the east side of the lake that they had seen the Premier there for the first time in seven years.

So I do want to say that the fact is that the people on the east side of the lake are speaking loud and clear. They support an east-side transmission line. The people in the rest of the province support an east-side transmission line. The only people who don't support an east-side transmission line are Robert Kennedy Jr. and the members for Cape Cod opposite.

So I want to ask the Premier: When is he going to stand up for the people of Manitoba and stop putting the wealthy Americans from Cape Cod ahead of what's best for Manitobans?

**Mr. Doer:** I thought that was going to be his new name for Point Douglas after he built his marina and his beach, and there was a lot of consultation with the neighbourhood in that area as well, Mr. Speaker. But he was on a roll then. His judgment was in full glory with his, I'm going to promise to bring back the Jets within four years commitment. His judgment was in full glory for the people of Manitoba.

The last time I looked, Sophia Rabliauskas, living in Poplar River who just won a prestigious international environmental award, was not living in Cape Cod. She was living as an elder in the Poplar River First Nation. She goes on to say, and I'd ask you to listen: Our people have always had a deep spiritual connection with the land, and we want to heal our community. We want to develop our traditional territory. She goes on to support, Mr. Speaker, the whole development of the UNESCO World Heritage site, and she goes on to say that this is very, very important for us.

Last week, at the Chamber of Commerce meeting, the same individual was talking when we were talking about the boreal forest being the lungs of the planet, and Mr. Brennan reconfirmed at the committee meeting on Thursday night—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Brennan confirmed last week, at the meeting, that the, quote, east side would be a lot more trouble to build a transmission line. There's no question about that, he said.

We have, again, Sophia. She's not from Cape Cod, she's from Poplar River. I will listen to Sophia over the member opposite any day of the week, Mr. Speaker.

### **Economy—Manitoba Tax Rates**

**Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon West):** I'm telling you, Mr. Speaker, it seems today is Halloween, and it seems the federal Finance Minister has this huge bag of treats, while our Finance Minister keeps giving Manitoba this massive bag of tricks and smoke and mirrors. The Finance Minister, the federal Finance Minister, really does get it. He understands priorities. He understands how to compete in a very competitive society.

I only wish the same could be said for our Finance Minister. Our Finance Minister still believes in more debt and high taxes. He just doesn't get it. Manitoba has the highest corporate taxes. Mr. Flaherty wants provinces to reduce corporate taxes to a combined 25 percent tax rate.

Will we do our part?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, I can see why the member opposite would ask a question like that on Halloween. The big tax cut for corporate taxes was the tax that Minister Flaherty increased two budgets ago. He went on personal income taxes from 15 to 15.5 percent. Last night, he reduced them to 15 percent again. We've made a lot of progress. All he did was get back to the last budget of Paul Martin.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that's 15 percent, lowest threshold for the federal government. What's ours?—10.9 percent. Ours is going to 10.5 percent. Our tax rate is about 30 percent lower than the federal personal income tax rate. Our highest tax rate is lower than the second, third and fourth personal income tax rates than the federal government, and I hope I have an opportunity to talk about corporate taxes on the next question.

**Mr. Borotsik:** Mr. Speaker, had the Finance Minister been listening, the first question was about corporate taxes, not about personal taxes. Reducing debt and increasing personal tax exemptions seems

to be the battle cry. The federal government and every western Canadian province has been doing the same except for Manitoba.

This tax year, this tax year, the federal government will increase the basic personal exemption to \$9,600. Manitobans', when we do our taxes, Mr. Speaker, will be \$7,834. Canada will reduce its debt by \$14 billion. This Finance Minister wants to increase it by \$2.3 billion.

We're not merely treading water, Mr. Speaker, we are sinking in a sea of debt. Is the Finance Minister going to react, or do nothing, simply have political rhetoric and hide from the reality?

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, on the last answer, I explained to him that our personal income taxes are one-third lower than the lowest rate, and our highest rate is lower than their second rate, third rate and fourth rate. The member opposite doesn't get it on personal income taxes. The federal government, by the year 2012, will be at 15 percent on their lowest rate after increasing it two budgets ago. We're at 10.5 percent.

On corporate income taxes, Mr. Speaker, we're at 14; we're going to 12. They're at 22; they're going to 15. Our taxes are already lower. They always will be lower.

Our small business rate, which applies to 95 percent of all businesses in Manitoba, is 3 percent, lowest in Canada. Their rate, 11 percent. They will have to have many, many budgets to even get close to where we are today.

\*(14:10)

**Mr. Borotsik:** Well, Mr. Speaker, let's talk about some budgets that have exceeded the province of Manitoba. This Premier (Mr. Doer) has stated that we don't want to fall behind Saskatchewan.

A report released today by the CFIB compares Manitoba and Saskatchewan. And, guess what, Mr. Speaker? The reality is we're behind in 10 out of 11 categories: personal income tax paid, advantage Saskatchewan; low- and middle-income threshold, advantage Saskatchewan; basic personal and spousal exemption, advantage Saskatchewan; equalization, advantage Saskatchewan; PST, advantage Saskatchewan.

Why is Saskatchewan so progressive, and this minister and this government is so regressive?

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, the answer is obvious. Saskatchewan has had a four-term NDP government. This is our third term.

Mr. Speaker, if the good citizens of Manitoba—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member pointing out the long-term advantages of electing a government for four terms that has the true interests of Manitobans at stake. If we can get a fourth term, we will continue to improve the affordability of Manitoba, the tax regime in Manitoba; and we will also do it while investing in education, investing in health care, investing in infrastructure, investing in clean water and ensuring that all Manitobans benefit from the prosperity that we will bring to the province.

#### **Nursing Shortage Cancelled Cardiac Surgeries**

**Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood):** Mr. Speaker, after next week, this will be the only NDP holdout in the whole country.

Mr. Speaker, after getting no answers from the Minister of Health last week when I asked about the dangerously high nursing shortage in ICUs, I received a phone call from a health-care professional to let me know about the disaster that is brewing right now in the cardiac surgery program.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Health to confirm that, because of the skyrocketing ICU nursing shortage, the number of cardiac surgery cases being cancelled has soared, and if she could tell us what those numbers are today.

**Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, as I did answer to the member last week, we acknowledge that we need to continue to build our complement of nurses across all programs. And we do acknowledge that, in particular, we want to build our complement of nurses in the ICU.

We know that people in Manitoba are having their cardiac surgery within the national benchmark time, and we're very proud of that. We know that individuals, both ICU nurses, cardiac surgeons, people in the cardiac program, are working very diligently, but again, Mr. Speaker, that's why we're committed to building that complement of nurses. We've committed to add 700 nurses to the list in Manitoba.

How many nurses did they promise, Mr. Speaker?

**Mrs. Driedger:** Mr. Speaker, this is not a political question. This is a very serious issue, and this is a red flag I'm raising once again to this Minister of Health.

Under the NDP, cancellations of cardiac surgeries have skyrocketed over the last three years under their watch. Fifty-one surgeries were cancelled in just the first four months of this year. We know that several patients have died on cardiac surgery waits in Manitoba under their watch.

So I'm asking the Minister of Health today: How many patients are there currently on the cardiac surgery waiting list today?

**Ms. Oswald:** As I said to the member opposite before and on several occasions, we do know that we need to build our complement of nurses across the system. We also know that we need to work very diligently to ensure that we have an even greater number of not only ICU nurses but of anesthetists here in Manitoba.

We know that we're working with the WRHA very diligently to increase the number of nurses that can take the ICU training program.

I'll say again to the member opposite that we know that emergency surgeries for cardiac, they never go on a wait list. They get done right away, and we know that cardiac surgeries are being done within the national benchmark, the best in Canada, Mr. Speaker. We're very proud of that.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Mr. Speaker, the minister is not answering the questions. These are very serious questions, and I'm told there's a disaster brewing in this program at St. Boniface Hospital. I was told that the Deputy Minister of Health is so worried about this that she has been in discussion with the St. Boniface Hospital about their cardiac surgery program.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Health to confirm that included in those discussions was the possibility of moving some heart surgeries back to the Health Sciences Centre because patient safety is a significant concern right now.

**Ms. Oswald:** Mr. Speaker, I can't believe that this is a revelation to the member opposite, that government, that deputy ministers, that CEOs of the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, that cardiac surgeons are talking about cardiac programming here

in Manitoba. We do it all the time. I don't know what they were doing under her time.

I can certainly tell you that according to CIHI, Manitoba once again has the No. 1 wait time for cardiac surgery. We know that we have to work diligently to build that complement of nurses. We know that CIHI reports that Manitoba has seen an increase of close to 10 percent of RNs and LPNs in three years, the best in Canada, but we've got more work to do. What did they promise, Mr. Speaker? Not a darn thing.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Can we have some decorum in here. It doesn't help the decorum in the House when members are shouting back and forth, because I need to be able to hear the questions and the answers. If there's a breach of a rule, you expect me to make a ruling. How can I do that if I can't even hear the questions and the answers. I'm asking co-operation of all honourable members.

#### **Child Welfare System CFS Standards Manual**

**Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday in Question Period we asked the Minister of Family Services about Bill 11. This bill is based on five out of 289 child welfare recommendations that the government received last year. The other 284 recommendations contain some very good ideas that would help children in care before they ever became the subject of a death investigation.

One good example is recommendation 62 of honouring their spirits, which was released more than a year ago. Just like Justice Conner did in 2003, it urges the government to complete the CFS standards manual. Can the minister tell the House why this recommendation isn't a priority and why the CFS standards manual still isn't complete?

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Family Services and Housing):** Mr. Speaker, I note that the members opposite supported in principle Bill 11. Yesterday it sounds like they flip-flopped on that and are prepared to reject the recommendations of the Children's Advocate and the Ombudsman.

Mr. Speaker, it's kind of like Bill 21, be a good science project. You bring two identical bills in two different Legislatures just as a test, just to see how resolute the opposition is. Identical bill No. 1, oh, strong support, identical bill No. 2, vociferous

opposition, project conclusion, flaky, flaky, flaky. Once again a flip-flop.

**Mr. Briese:** Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that the standards manual would be a pretty high priority for this government. I have looked through the Changes for Children progress report and it was not mentioned once.

The minister must be aware that several recommendations of that review talk about the need to develop a formalized risk assessment tool. In Estimates he said, we've seen testing and evaluation of these tools. They often lack the ability to bring in the context, often the scope is too narrow. There are some very serious problems with this.

So my question to the minister is: Why is he rejecting this recommendation and why isn't he making it a priority?

\* (14:20)

**Mr. Mackintosh:** All the recommendations are a priority, Mr. Speaker. There's a comprehensive action plan that is under way called Changes for Children to enhance the standards and, as well, to strengthen the ability to do risk assessments both through training and strengthening that whole process.

The member opposite should also know that a study in Ontario last year concluded that the risk assessment that had been imported from New York had not provided the necessary guidance, and there were serious problems identified. Here in Manitoba, we're going to continue to make sure that we put in place changes for children, changes that work, rather than the members opposite that just start flip-flopping, taking a position one day and another position another day. We are resolute. Changes for Children, full steam ahead.

**Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose):** Mr. Speaker, the need for a risk assessment tool is something that comes up every time there is a tragedy in child welfare. It should be a priority, yet the Changes for Children progress report doesn't mention that once either. Clearly, the minister's priorities are very mixed up when his first goal is to get Bill 11 passed rather than deal with the problems that would help children and their families before a tragedy occurs. Children aren't being visited by the social workers. Families aren't getting support. Front-line workers

are burning out and children are falling through the cracks.

Could the minister just explain to the House why Bill 11 is getting priority over children who need protection today?

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Family Services and Housing):** I believe just a few days ago the members opposite had taken a position to not support the \$48-million increase, as I recall, to child welfare in Manitoba. The members opposite should know, Mr. Speaker, that an overhaul is taking place with regard to child welfare. Indeed, as we move towards what's called differential response or a prevention stream, the risk assessments will continue to be improved. Risk assessment is what child welfare workers do each and every day. We're strengthening training. We're strengthening the protocol. We're going to continue to do that.

#### **Cottage Lot Development Sewage Agreement with Shellmouth-Boulton**

**Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell):** Mr. Speaker, the government of Manitoba has engaged in the development of approximately 140 cottage lots along Lake of the Prairies. These are in addition to approximately 160 cottage lots being developed by private developers. Prior to constructing their cottages, private developers entered into a development agreement with the Rural Municipality of Shellmouth-Boulton for sewage effluent.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Conservation if he can explain to this House why his department and his government refuse to enter into an agreement with the R.M. of Shellmouth-Boulton for the sewage effluent that is going to be coming out of the cottages that he is developing.

**Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Conservation):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to say to our friend from Russell that, especially in that Lake of the Prairies area, the enthusiasm for our cottage lot draw is very high—very, very high. So many Manitobans are looking for their cottage lots, not just on Lake of the Prairies but all around this great province, every region of this province.

We are working in co-ordination with the very people that the member just mentioned in order to make sure we have all of the infrastructure in place, to make sure that we do have the infrastructure that is there to enable us to move ahead in that area, not just our section of the cottage lots but other forms of

infrastructure to enable other kinds of development as well in that part of the province.

**Mr. Derkach:** Mr. Speaker, it's obvious the minister doesn't know what he's talking about. Private developers pay \$2,500 per cottage lot to the R.M. of Shellmouth-Boulton to accommodate sewage disposal. Yet the Province refuses to enter into a development agreement. Moreover, last week, the R.M. met with the Minister of Infrastructure (Mr. Lemieux) and the Water Services Board, where they were told that the Water Services Board has no responsibility for assisting in the needed expansion of the lagoon.

Can the Minister of Conservation explain what the Province intends to do with the effluent from the cottages in this development? Is it now the government's policy to leave homeowners on their own when it comes to effluent from their cottages?

**Mr. Struthers:** Absolutely not, Mr. Speaker. That may be the approach of a party who did nothing in terms of cottage lot development over 11 years when they had the chance to do it. They had every opportunity to stand in this House and introduce to the people of Manitoba the same kind of cottage lot program that we announced. We said we were going to build a thousand. We came through on building a thousand. We've done that, and we've done it in conjunction with the infrastructure in the area that needs to be put there, whether it be lagoons, whether that be sewage treatment, whether that be roads, right across the board we've been doing that as we move along forward on this very popular program.

**Mr. Speaker:** Time for Oral Questions has expired.

#### Point of Order

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Member for River Heights, on a point of order?

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, I ask leave to ask my question and the two supplementaries, as is a fair and normally agreed-upon practice in this Legislature.

**Mr. Speaker:** Does the honourable member have leave to ask a question and two supplementary questions?

**Some Honourable Members:** Leave.

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**Mr. Speaker:** No? I heard a no so it's been denied.

We'll move on now. We'll now move on to Members' Statements.

#### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

##### Guardian Angel Sweet Sixteen Cancer Benefit

**Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood):** Today I would like to speak about a cause very dear to my heart. The work of CancerCare Manitoba has helped to save and prolong the lives of Manitobans living with cancer. This week, I was privileged to attend, along with the members for River East and Tuxedo, the Guardian Angels' Sweet 16 Benefit for Women's Cancers. This benefit has helped to raise money to fight this terrible disease that has robbed us of too many mothers, daughters, friends and loved ones. Among their numerous initiatives, they have proudly supported the Breast Cancer Centre of Hope and Youth Awareness Forum promoting education for young people.

I would especially like to thank Mrs. Janice Filmon, event chair and board member for the CancerCare Manitoba and Guardian Angel Benefit Advisory Board. Because of the dedication of the many volunteers and numerous sponsors, this event was the most successful to date. Over 1,300 people were in attendance to support this worthwhile cause. Because of Mrs. Filmon's leadership and tireless work, more than half a million dollars was raised to help in the prevention and treatment of women's cancers.

On behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus of Manitoba, I would also like to congratulate this year's recipients of the Great-West Life Award of Distinction, the community contact volunteers. These volunteers help women and their families coping with cancer across Manitoba, especially in rural and remote communities.

Mr. Speaker, we also experienced an amazing and poignant theatrical component of the evening where we watched and heard shared stories of Manitoba women who have experienced cancer. We also heard the uplifting voices of the remarkable musical group, Prodigy.

Marie Curie said, and I quote: Nothing in life is to be feared. It is only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more so that we may fear less.

Mr. Speaker, it is the Guardian Angels' hope that through their efforts there will be greater understanding and less fear and that, together, we

will learn to understand more. Thank you, Guardian Angels.

### Domestic Violence

**Ms. Sharon Blady (Kirkfield Park):** Domestic violence can happen to anyone. Any person, regardless of race, age, religion, sex, job, sexual orientation or history can be a victim of domestic violence. We all need to make sure that we have an awareness of the damage that domestic violence can cause.

I would like to acknowledge the first annual Breakfast with the Boys tomorrow at the Winnipeg Convention Centre. Domestic violence affects both men and women. The breakfast will incorporate a pledge for men to never commit, condone or remain silent about domestic violence and to seek non-violent solutions to conflict.

Everyone in our community has a role to play in ending domestic violence, so it's important to know the signs: things like frequent injuries from accidents, increased isolation from family and friends, jumpiness, depression, fear of one's partner or spouse, very low self-esteem, partner's jealousy or possessiveness and constant criticism from a partner. These all can be signs that indicate domestic violence.

Mr. Speaker, if anyone ever thinks domestic violence cannot happen to them or someone in their family, think again. None of us is alone. The provincial government has a crisis line that Manitobans can call toll-free any time day or night. I would encourage anyone who has concerns, questions, or if they or someone they know is involved in domestic violence, to call 1-877-977-0007.

Mr. Speaker, sadly, children who are exposed to violence suffer the longest term consequences of domestic violence. Children who grow up in abusive relationships may believe abuse is part of a normal relationship. As children learn from the actions of adults, they may grow up to be abusers or abuse victims themselves. It is incredibly important to ending the cycle of abuse to educate young people about interacting in a healthy, non-violent way with their partner.

Mr. Speaker, I invite all honourable members and all members of the public to find out as much as they can about domestic violence and what they can do to prevent it. Domestic violence truly is an issue

that affects every single member of our society. Thank you.

\* (14:30)

### Samuel J. Jackson

**Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside):** I stand proudly to announce that an important historical artifact, which long ago sat here in this very Chamber, will shortly reclaim its home in the town of Stonewall.

Samuel J. Jackson is today remembered as a founder of the town of Stonewall. He served as Speaker of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly from 1891 to 1895. It is the chair that he sat upon during his tenure as Speaker of the House which is now finally returned to Stonewall.

After Jackson's passing in 1942, the Town purchased the chair and had it placed in the Stonewall Chamber. However, over time, the condition of the chair deteriorated and finally was sent to a repair shop where it remained for a number of years further, as the Town had scarcely the funds to cover the costs of any refurbishment. Finally, the chair was purchased and properly restored by a private citizen, and the important historical artifact would continue to be traded until 2006, when the most recent owners of the chair, the late Verlin and Kathleen Marchbank, donated the item to the Town of Stonewall where it will await its unveiling at the Interpretive Centre at the Quarry Park until the town's centennial celebration next year.

The timing of the chair's return to the Town of Stonewall is particularly opportune and will provide a unique opportunity for citizens to reflect, during the centennial celebrations, on the rich history of the town of Stonewall and its founding members.

Certainly, Mr. Jackson's contributions to both the local community as a founder and as a public representative for both the City of Winnipeg and also 16 years as a member of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly gives strong reason for the citizens of Stonewall to take pride in their history. His story of immigrating to Canada to build a better future is an iconic image within the history of Canada's development as a nation.

Mr. Speaker, for the Town of Stonewall, the returning of this important historical artifact represents the preservation of a proud historical legacy that may now serve to educate and instil similar pride in future generations.

### Heroes of Mental Health Awards

**Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk):** Mr. Speaker, with one in five Canadians living with the effects of mental illness, mental health issues are important for every Manitoban. More awareness is needed about mental illness, and we all must do our part to eliminate the stigma attached to this disease. The work of the Canadian Mental Health Association endeavours to do just that. I recently attended the third annual Heroes of Mental Health Awards in Selkirk and was pleased to support the people that make a meaningful difference in the lives of those living and recovering from a mental illness.

The award winners win in categories of individual, friend/family, organization/business, volunteer and mental health professionals. Among this year's award winners were Irene Shaw, Jeanette Warren, Ernie Malis, Dianne Mae Hocaluk and Cecilia Alhambra. Mr. Speaker, in all, there were over 78 award winners handed out across the province. All recipients are to be congratulated for their hard work and dedication to people with mental illness.

It was a pleasure to be there as an advocate for mental health issues. It was mentioned at the awards ceremony that our government's commitment to mental health issues is noted and is appreciated. Our initiative to build housing for individuals with mental illness in Selkirk will make a difference and was recognized. As well, Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to be part of a government that is investing \$23 million to redevelop the Selkirk Mental Health Centre.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask all members to join with me in congratulating this year's winners of the Heroes of Mental Health Awards. Thank you.

### Referendum on East-Side Hydro Route

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, the Grand Chief Dr. Sydney Garrioch of MKO has called today for a referendum of the citizens of all the MKO east-side First Nations in order to confirm community opinion on an east-side route for the bipole 3 transmission project.

Mr. Speaker, I call today for such a referendum, ask that we include others who live along the east-side route, and that a similar referendum also be held for those residents who would be along the west-side route to gain their opinion.

But before we have such a referendum, clearly, Bob Brennan had indicated that last week there

remained a lot of uncertainties, uncertainties both in terms of route, in terms of what would be provided to those who live along the route in terms of easement and other payments. It is time to put on the table all these matters before there is such a referendum so that people can vote knowing exactly what is involved.

### GRIEVANCES

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Member for Steinbach, on a grievance?

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** On a grievance.

**Mr. Speaker:** On a grievance.

**Mr. Goertzen:** It's a pleasure to rise today. I suppose it shouldn't be a pleasure to rise on a grievance, but I do think it's important to put a few words on the record.

Normally, in these situations we grieve on particular issues that are related to either issues that our party has been raising, but I do want to rise today to speak in favour of an initiative that's happening here in this Legislature brought forward by the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux).

I know that in the coming week on November 5, I believe, I stand to be corrected, but I believe it's November 5, the Member for Inkster is holding a public forum. It's a strange sort of occasion in the sense that it's happening not in his riding, but it's happening in Concordia which is the riding, of course, for the Premier (Mr. Doer).

But it's an important endeavour, I think, that he's brought forward. I know the member and I, prior to the election, had the opportunity to raise the issue about trying to get to the bottom, to try to get to the truth of certain allegations that have come forward both here in the Legislature and outside of the Legislature. Not allegations that have come without some evidence or some basis of support. In fact, I know there've been letters that have been tabled by those who feel that they were treated, not only improperly, but possibly illegally both under certain provisions of the criminal code as it relates to, some might say, bribery, others might say influence peddling, but certainly there have been allegations regarding those particular criminal code offences. Also allegations regarding Elections Manitoba breaches.

I know that the member and others have filed certain complaints with Elections Manitoba. There's a failure in how this system works within our

particular rules governing Elections Manitoba in that they can't report back to us. They can't tell us what it is that their findings were based upon. I think, not that it's analogous specifically, but we have debated here today and yesterday about the need for transparency and the need to ensure that justice isn't only done but it's seen to be done. There's a perception that there can be reliance on information or on a quasi-judicial or judicial process that goes forward. That's very much in keeping with what the Member for Inkster is bringing forward.

We've seen that there has been a report that's come back, and I say report in the loosest term because it's really just a one-line sentence, a one-line sentence that says there won't be a proceeding under The Elections Manitoba Act, but it doesn't say on what foundation that's based upon. It doesn't say what the investigation entails. It doesn't say who was interviewed. It doesn't say who was talked to. All those questions need to be answered because it wasn't simply the Member for Inkster who stood up, or myself, prior to the election, who stood up without foundation, without evidence. There were, in fact, a number of documents brought forward by somebody who believes that he was asked not to run for a nomination in exchange for something. That's really the heart of the issue here that it appeared to be, according to the allegation brought forward, a quid pro quo situation where the individual has said, don't do this and we will provide you something else through the government. If that was the case, would clearly be in violation of certain criminal code provisions and also of our Elections Manitoba Act. So that's the background for the concerns, I know, that have been brought forward by the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux).

\* (14:40)

Of course, the other substantive part of it is that the chief of staff or the principal secretary for the Premier is the one who has been alleged to have made this particular offer. That's where the allegations stem from, and that's particularly troubling because it reaches into the highest office that can be obtained here in the province of Manitoba, somebody who not only would have the ear but the confidence or the influence of the Premier. That individual, through these allegations brought forward by an NDP supporter, has said that this particular set of facts took place.

So I think what the Member for Inkster is trying to do, and perhaps he'll correct me if I'm wrong, but I

think he's trying to clear the air, and some might say he's actually trying to do the Premier a favour by giving him the opportunity to come forward to his own constituents, because I'm sure that there are constituents within Concordia who themselves are uncertain or confused about this set of facts or uncertain what happened and would want to hear from their own representative. I'm sure that the Premier wouldn't want another MLA going into a constituency and saying these sort of things without ensuring that he can put his own set of facts forward and giving an assurance and giving a comfort to his very own constituents that this didn't happen.

So I would encourage the Premier (Mr. Doer) to do that. I know in a past situation, a different sort of situation, the Member for Inkster came to my own riding. I certainly wasn't the subject of this sort of investigation or allegations. It was regarding election processes and change in the democratic system. The Member for Inkster graciously contacted me, and said, do you want to come to this particular forum I'm holding at your school? I said, yes, I'd love to come, and so I went to the forum that the member was having. We had a good discussion, I think a bipartisan discussion, about how to increase turnout at elections, how to improve the democratic system. While I recognize this isn't exactly the same situation, that it might be slightly more charged, the reality is that the Member for Inkster is going and giving the opportunity to the Premier, an opportunity he himself hasn't seen fit to take, giving him the opportunity to come, to speak to his own constituents about what happened with these allegations.

So, rather than the members opposite, the New Democratic members, throwing barbs and allegations at the Member for Inkster, I think they should look at it as though he's doing them a favour, that in fact he might be considered a friendly advocate on behalf of the Premier by allowing this opportunity to take place.

I think too often in this Chamber we look at everything as being a partisan effort, and I'm not sure, perhaps it is a partisan effort on behalf of the Member for Inkster, but I think it can be looked at a different way. It could be looked at in a way to ensure that the Premier has this opportunity to do the right thing.

So I know there's been plenty of advance notice. I know that members opposite, and certainly the Premier's aware of this going on. I'm sure there'll be many constituents of his at the event, and I would



encourage the Premier to take that short period of time to go to the event, the venue, and ensure that he puts his facts on the record so that not only his constituents can be satisfied that nothing bad or nefarious happened here but that all Manitobans who are concerned about the allegations that have been put forward can get a resolution or an answer to them.

So, with those comments, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to hearing the outcome of the member's forum that he's providing and ensuring that the Premier puts forward a full set of facts at that meeting.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader):** As previously agreed.

**Mr. Speaker:** As previously agreed, we will now have the Opposition Day Motion.

#### OPPOSITION DAY MOTION

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** I move, seconded by the Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson), that

WHEREAS Manitoba Hydro has been directed, against its advice, by the NDP government to construct a third high voltage BiPole transmission line ("BiPole III") down the west side of Lake Winnipegosis instead of the east side of Lake Winnipeg; and

WHEREAS the western route (the "NDP Detour") is more than 400 kilometres longer than the eastern route recommended by Manitoba Hydro experts known as (the "Recommended Route"); and

WHEREAS the NDP Detour will lead to an unnecessary debt of at least \$400 million related to the capital cost of line construction alone, to be left to future generations of Manitobans; and

WHEREAS the NDP Detour will result in increased line losses due to friction leading to losses of energy sales of between \$250 million and \$1 billion over the life of the project; and

WHEREAS the added debt and lost sales created by the NDP Detour will make every Manitoba family at least \$3,000 poorer; and

WHEREAS the unnecessary line losses created by the NDP Detour will also result in a lost opportunity to displace dirty coal generated

electricity, which will create added and unnecessary greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to an additional 40,000 cars on our roads; and

WHEREAS the abandonment of the recommended route takes away significant economic development opportunities for east-side First Nation communities that are currently among the poorest in Canada; and

WHEREAS Manitoba's leading constitutional expert says it is possible that the recommended route can co-exist with a UNESCO designation on the east side of Lake Winnipeg; and

WHEREAS Xcel Energy, a major Manitoba Hydro customer, has said that power sales will not be impacted by the line location; and

WHEREAS Manitoba Hydro President and CEO Bob Brennan has stated that the recommended route is the preferred option from the company's perspective; and

WHEREAS former NDP MLA Elijah Harper has stated that the east-side communities are devastated by the government's decision to abandon the recommended route, leaving them in poverty in perpetuity; and

WHEREAS Manitoba Keewatinook Ininew Okimowin, MKO, an organization that represents northern Manitoba First Nations chiefs, has stated that the government has acted unilaterally to abandon the recommended route without consultation with northern First Nations despite repeated requests by MKO for consultations.

AND WHEREAS the Premier (Mr. Doer) has stated that avoiding a conflict with Robert Kennedy Jr., who is on record as opposing any and all future hydro development, is a reason to choose the NDP Detour.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to abandon the NDP Detour on the basis that it will result in massive financial, economic, environmental and social damage to Manitoba; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to consider proceeding with the recommended route, subject to necessary regulatory approvals.

**Mr. Speaker:** It has been moved by the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. McFadyen), seconded by the honourable Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson), that—dispense?

**An Honourable Member:** Dispense.

**Mr. Speaker:** Dispense.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to put some comments on the record with respect to the resolution currently before the House, with respect to what is the third-largest capital project currently on the books for the Province of Manitoba, third only to the proposed generating stations at Conawapa and Gull-Keeyask.

In some respects, Mr. Speaker, given the time lines, this could very well end up being the largest or second-largest capital project of our generation in our province of Manitoba, and so it is a very significant decision made by a government as to where and how to go about the construction of this major strategic asset, which belongs to all of the people of Manitoba.

*Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair*

Madam Deputy Speaker, as we go back through the history, we know that in the early 1990s with the prospect of power sales to Ontario, that planning was undertaken within Manitoba Hydro with respect to a third major transmission line, with two existing transmission lines, then and now, in operation through the Interlake region of Manitoba, carrying power from the very large northern generating stations, which stations were begun and built thanks to the vision and the courage of Premier Duff Roblin, a great Progressive Conservative premier, who had a vision for a bold, forward-looking progressive Manitoba that would be built on the great natural resources within the boundaries of our great province. Duff Roblin had a vision that we would power our future and build the prosperity of the people of our province through enhanced hydro generation through northern Manitoba and in other parts of our province of Manitoba. So this is where much of the energy was initially applied and the vision for a great hydro-powered future for the people of Manitoba.

In the subsequent years, governments, in response to demand from other places and in response to growing demand within our province of Manitoba, embarked on various capital projects to meet that demand. That included various projects

along the way. Former Premier Sterling Lyon had a vision for growth in the hydro sector, and that's been a vision that's been shared by premiers and parties of all political stripes.

\* (14:50)

But the great period of progress was really commenced under the leadership of former Premier Duff Roblin, and I believe it's important to put on the record and acknowledge the vision that he had for the future of our province.

As we progressed forward, Madam Deputy Speaker, the building that was undertaken was done in response to demand, as I've said. The Province of Ontario started expressing interest in power deals with Manitoba. Unfortunately, to date, no such major sale has been undertaken. Unfortunately, much to the disappointment of all members of this Chamber, nothing has been achieved by the current government after eight years in power with respect to major sales to Ontario. No deal has been secured. In spite of the best efforts of previous governments, no such deal was, in the end, completed.

So, in view of the prospect of such a deal, work was undertaken at Hydro and the recommendation that came forward very strongly from the experts at Manitoba Hydro beginning in the late 1980s, throughout the 1990s and right up until just a few weeks ago, was that the right thing to do for Manitoba Hydro and indeed for all Manitobans was to construct a third major high voltage transmission line down the east side of Lake Winnipeg. The logic is and was compelling. The reasons that the experts put forward firstly is that this would be the shortest route. The shortest route, thereby, reduces risks to our power supply. It cuts the risk of vandalism. It increases the amount of power that can be transmitted through that line. It reduces issues around maintenance and upgrades and other issues.

It also reduces the cost of the project by a dramatic amount. That cost is something that has been analyzed and debated and discussed to date in this Legislature. We know for sure that at a minimum, we're looking at an additional cost of \$410 million just for the added line alone. This is not in addition to all of the other elements of the project. This is the CEO of Hydro who indicated, contrary to the government's assertions that it would be \$300 million, that it was in fact going to amount to \$410 million to be financed through debt to be left to future generations of Manitobans.

*Mr. Speaker in the Chair*

We've also got an indication that power, lost power, along the way at a discounted number, once all of the generating stations are constructed, will be in the range of 40 megawatts. This is not at full capacity once these generating stations are built. It is a conservative estimate based on operating at less than full capacity. Forty megawatts last year would have translated into \$17-million worth of power sales for the benefit of Manitobans if that power had been exported. Forty megawatts translates, as we look forward at \$17 million annually, to roughly \$680 million over 40 years, assuming that prices rise in step with inflation. That assumption is a fair one based on the projections presented at committee by Manitoba Hydro about future projected price increases in terms of our ability to secure better prices down the road.

That makes great intuitive sense, Mr. Speaker, when you consider the great challenge of humanity today is the looming energy shortage which we face as a planet. When we see conflict in the Middle East and when we see massive projects being undertaken and we see the issues that are being created as a result of a looming worldwide energy shortage, it stands to reason that Manitoba's precious clean hydro-electricity would be a sought-after commodity, and that prices for that commodity will rise into the future, giving us all cause for great optimism, but also cause for concern that when you throw away 40 megawatts of that precious clean energy that this is a massive lost opportunity for future generations of Manitobans. So, Mr. Speaker, the financial case could not be more compelling.

Looking at the environmental arguments, 40 megawatts of power lost presents a missed opportunity to displace coal-fired energy in places beyond our borders. When we look at the massive coal-fired plants in places like Nanticoke in Ontario and in Minnesota and in other places outside of the borders of Manitoba, that we see that these are major contributors to greenhouse gas emissions, to climate change, to smog and to dirtier air, generally, within our world. Anybody who has travelled in southwestern Ontario and in particular, into Toronto, would be familiar with the yellow haze that overhangs that city, much of which is contributed to by the coal emissions coming from plants such as those at Nanticoke and along the northern coast of Lake Ontario.

So we have an opportunity to, in a significant, in the grand scheme of things modest but still significant, way contribute to the reduction in coal-fired energy production outside of the borders of our province. That is an opportunity that's being lost, Mr. Speaker.

So we look at the environmental case. We look at the financial case. We look at the case with respect to the boreal forest which will be cut whether we go west or east, and we know that we have to look at the case of some of the poorest communities in Manitoba on the east side of the lake, increasingly, as the facts become known, lining up to say yes to an east-side line.

This morning, Mr. Speaker, chiefs saying they haven't been consulted. As they get to understand what the potential benefits are, they're saying, yes to an east-side line. They're aligning with our party. They're aligning with common-sense people across Manitoba who're saying no to debt, no to wasted energy, yes to economic opportunity, yes to a cleaner environment. That is why the case could not be more clear for an east-side line.

We ask the Premier to show leadership. He has a mandate to lead. He has an opportunity to do what's right for future generations of Manitobans. We urge all members, Mr. Speaker, to support the resolution for this Legislature to send a clear message to the Premier and his Cabinet. They're on the wrong track. The detour is the wrong way to go. Do what's best for your constituents. Do what's best for Manitobans. Listen to the First Nations people on the east side of Lake Winnipeg. Give them a share in the opportunity for growth. Vote yes to the resolution currently before this House. Thank you.

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** The last time we had a resolution from the Conservative Party of Manitoba dealing with an important public issue was dealing with their opposition to the MTS Centre, and history will show, and it's very recent, how wrong they were to have voted against the MTS Centre in downtown Winnipeg and how, having a courageous view and taking a long-term view is always the right way to go in terms of having a vision and being right, Mr. Speaker. *[interjection]* The Member for Minnedosa (Mrs. Rowat) can chirp from her seat, but she voted against it. It's on the record, and it's in *Hansard*. Chirping doesn't make up for the lack of her judgment, when it comes right down to it.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, the history as related by the member opposite would be well to pay attention to the neocons that came after Premier Roblin. Premier Roblin was a builder. The people that came after were people that did not build any hydro-electric power.

Mr. Speaker, it's fair to say that Limestone was on the books and proposed by former Premier Schreyer, who, of course, built the whole massive infrastructure for Manitoba to develop and harness the potential of hydro. The development was very, very positive for Manitoba. That included Limestone, which, of course, was cancelled by the Conservatives between '77 and '81. Again, they used the same twisted, short-term economic logic that we hear now from their descendents, the honourable member for Whyte Ridge.

The whole issue, Mr. Speaker, of saying that Limestone would create debt. Has that created debt or has it reduced debt? The answer has been, it's reduced debt. Limestone would not have any sales and therefore, we would have all this massive capital investment and have no appropriate revenues to come in. They cancelled Limestone. We built it. We now have the lowest hydro-electric rates in the world because we are builders. We are builders that get things done in the most appropriate way. Members opposite are mothballers and privatizers. We are builders with vision.

\* (15:00)

Also, we saw, Mr. Speaker, the whole issue of Conawapa. We negotiated Conawapa in 1986-87. It was a project to sell power to Ontario. We had a memorandum of agreement for 300 megawatts of power to Ontario, and we had an agreement to have the Conawapa project. What happened when the member opposite was chief of staff? They sold the telephone system and cancelled Conawapa.

They also—[interjection] We pledged not to benefit from the pilfering of the public purse. [interjection] I don't think there are any New Democrats sitting on the board of directors, Mr. Speaker, of the Manitoba telephone system.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Doer:** Thank you. We had the courtesy to listen to the Leader of the Opposition's (Mr. McFadyen) resolution. I would expect the same.

If this is an important issue for members opposite, they would treat it in an important way. I do believe it's an important resolution and I do believe it's an important debate, because what we were faced with in terms of recommendations from Hydro was to build an east-side transmission line back in 1991 and '92. Why? For purposes of reliability.

The former government did not proceed with that recommendation. They did not proceed with it, Mr. Speaker, because one can only imagine—

**An Honourable Member:** Bob Rae cancelled the deal.

**Mr. Doer:** No, he didn't cancel the deal. You keep putting false information on the record. The Rae government asked for an extension in terms of the timing, and the former Filmon government cancelled the deal. Those are the facts of the matter. You can't change history. You may want to change history but you can't change it.

Mr. Speaker, there was a recommendation from Hydro to build a line on the east side that was not proceeded with by the former government. The issue of reliability and recommendations on reliability was placed before us when we were elected in '99 and became aware of the recommendations in 2000 and 2001.

We also were very aware that there were many environmental groups in Manitoba and many First Nations people in Manitoba that were opposed to the building of a transmission line on the east side. So we looked at the three options, the option of the east side, the option of the west side and the option of the Interlake for purposes of reliability, purposes of export sales. Obviously, one of those options is across the north, but if you build a line across the north at an east-west grid, that will not deal with the reliability in southern Manitoba which requires a capacity to southern Manitoba with a third line.

We believe, Mr. Speaker, that if you look at the risks associated with building on the east side and you look at the opportunities, yes, one line is shorter if it can ever be built. Mr. Brennan last week said in committee that there's a lot greater opposition to the east side than there is to other options. He's right.

There is considerably more opposition to the east side in Manitoba, but there's also an opportunity. There's also an opportunity to have an undisturbed boreal forest on the east side that will allow us to proceed with an UNESCO World Heritage site and proceed with ecotourism which will create a lot more economic opportunity on the east side for First Nations than clearing brush. That's something we took out to people on the east side, and that brush clearing came back to us loud and clear; brush clearing is not an economic goal for the people on the east side.

So we had honest public hearings with people. We didn't promise to build a \$400-million road, as the member opposite said. The road and the transmission line would be separated because Hydro wasn't proposing to build a road.

We also, Mr. Speaker, did not propose to have the ownership of Hydro which has been disingenuously promised by surrogates of the Conservative Party and by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) back and forth in promising ownership of the hydro line, because Hydro wasn't proposing to have an ownership of the hydro line. So to have a referendum on a line that's going to be owned by people when it's not going to be owned by people is another disingenuous proposal. We're not surprised, coming from members opposite.

Mr. Speaker, so the issue is, where's the best to site it? Well, what about our customers? Anybody who rolls the dice, like the member opposite—now they don't know anything about customers because they haven't sold a megawatt in any one of their political careers. They have not sold any power. They're the mothball party. But those of us who deal with markets and sell power and have power agreements know the relationships with customers is extremely important. If members opposite think that opposition on the east side would not translate or could not translate to potential opposition in the regulatory bodies in Minnesota or other markets, they're sadly mistaken.

Even Mr. Brennan said there's no question that customer issues in Minnesota, regulatory bodies dealing with Minnesota, could put millions of dollars of contracts at risk with those bodies. So that's a risk, a liability; \$800 million last year, which is twice as much revenue as a transmission line will cost over a 40-year period in a one-time-only sale.

Dealing with the costs. We have reduced the debt equity from 87 percent to 80 percent. We need no lectures for the debt party opposite on hydro-electric power. Secondly, Mr. Brennan said, and I quote: The hydro line will produce energy from Conawapa and it will have increased sales from Keeyask. It will produce millions and millions of dollars, greater revenue than the cost of the transmission line. When you have greater sales than you have capital costs and it goes on in perpetuity, Mr. Speaker, the economic equation is this is positive for Manitoba, but you've got to look at the big picture not the little picture, like the member opposite is doing.

**Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East):** I'm pleased to stand in my place today and certainly support the resolution that has been put forward by our leader, Mr. Speaker, on hydro development and the misguided direction that this NDP government is taking.

Mr. Speaker, certainly, in my years in the Legislature—and I know that the Premier was elected the same year I was elected—I have never seen a Crown corporation make such a significant announcement on its own with the Premier and the minister and any of his colleagues being there to stand up and take credit for a significant announcement of such a major capital undertaking as the Manitoba Hydro new transmission line, bipole 3. It's unfortunate that the government, the Premier, the minister of Hydro or any of his colleagues, didn't have the intestinal fortitude to stand up and make the announcement.

You know it was on the first day of the session, Mr. Speaker, under the guise of things coming back, hiding behind the new holiday that was announced in February, that they put the president, the CEO of Manitoba Hydro up to make such a significant capital announcement, and the government was nowhere to be seen.

Now, Mr. Speaker, maybe they were trying to create the impression that Manitoba Hydro and Bob Brennan were supportive, and they wanted Hydro to make the announcement to make it look like Hydro was supportive and behind the initiative to take the longer route down the west side.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we know better and Manitobans aren't fools. Manitobans know full well that the wrong-headed detour and the longer line that's going to be going down the west side as a result of this government's decision is wrong. It's a

weak position. It's a position that Manitobans, anyone with any common sense knows that the most direct line, recommended by the experts at Manitoba Hydro, was the right way to go.

\* (15:10)

The Premier spent most of his time in debate on this resolution talking about the past and not even defending his rationale or his reasoning for the line that he is proposing under the guise of Manitoba Hydro, because he didn't have the strength to stand up and be counted and make the announcement himself. Again, I say, never in the history of this province has a Crown corporation made such a significant capital announcement on its own without government there taking the lead. Now we can understand why. Because the arguments are weak to go down the west side.

Mr. Speaker, we know that the Premier's having difficulty, and more difficulty, day after day, as more experts and more individuals come out opposed to the direction that this government is taking and supporting the east side. Only today, did we see, and I know the Premier (Mr. Doer) made the argument in his comments that there was so much opposition and it may never happen if it went down the east side, but we know today that chiefs and members, those in leadership positions on the east side have come out in support of the east-side line. I would hope that members on the government side of the House, as a result, would take a sober second thought and look at the support on the east side by many, many that stand to benefit in a significant way from line development on the east side. We know that communities on the east side of the lake are poor, are in despair and are in need of some kind of economic development.

You know, for a government to stand up and say that we've got a heritage designation and we have undisturbed forest on the east side that we want to protect, well, Mr. Speaker, we know again that we've got a government that's announced that it wants to plough a road down the east side. Now, tell me, and I don't know if anyone over there can tell me or indicate to me how the forest is going to be protected when trees are going to be ploughed down, as announced by this government, to build a road on the east side.

Mr. Speaker, they have no argument. They have absolutely no basis. No one with any expertise or understanding around hydro development and bipole 3 is supportive of the government's position. Now I would hope that the government would take

note, use some common sense, and support and sit down and get into some true negotiations with the leadership on the east side who, only this morning, indicated that they wanted to be a part of an east-side bipole 3 line development. How can the government ignore them, turn their backs on them and say, no, you had your chance?

Mr. Speaker, it makes ultimate common sense to go down the east side. We support the chiefs. We support the leadership. We support the communities that are looking for that economic development opportunity and some hope for their future. We, on this side of this side of the House, wholeheartedly support this resolution and want to indicate that our leader has done an excellent job in putting our position and good thought behind his position and our position.

I would hope that the Premier (Mr. Doer), that the Minister of Finance, would stand up and I would hope that members opposite would be listening, listening to the leadership on the east side and listening to other Manitobans because I know they've been receiving calls. I would hope that the Premier, today, on this resolution, would allow all of his members to stand up and have a free vote, vote their conscience, vote common sense, and vote what their constituents are telling them, that it is a wrong-headed decision to go down the west side, that it is a weak position and that they will stand up. They will have the opportunity, be afforded the opportunity to stand up and vote their conscience and vote common sense and support this resolution.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to address this resolution here today. We've had, in my view, quite a good debate about the east-side/west-side discussion. It was a debate that started back in 2005 when the then-minister of Hydro made a public announcement that there was no intention of going down the east side. There was only an intention of going down the west side. That was communicated, not only to the public, but through the WNO process. That was followed up on with an election debate, and the results of that were quite clear. Now we're having further discussion on it.

Why bipole 3, Mr. Speaker? Well, first of all, since 1990, there have been studies recommending an additional bipole in the province of Manitoba for greater reliability, greater security, and nothing had been done on that. Even after a major number of

towers were knocked out in the 1996 period, there was no firm resolution by the government of that day to move forward on additional transmission reliability measures.

So we have now come to the stage where we have to move forward for a variety of reasons, but mostly to secure the ability to provide Manitobans with reliable power and to service our export markets. This takes many years of forward planning, Mr. Speaker, and it's best gotten on with as we move forward on that planning for more generation as well as more development.

More than 75 percent of Manitoba's hydro-electricity comes down through two bipoles in the Interlake region, and it's interesting to note that the government of the day did not diversify those bipoles but put them both together, which increased the risk of them both being taken out at the same time. But the reality is now we have to build a third bipole, and it makes sense to build it in such a way that it provides additional security and additional power transmission, particularly when we finally have a government that's working with the Crown corporation to move forward on projects like Wuskwatim, which will not need this bipole, projects like Conawapa, which will need this bipole, and projects like Gull or Keeyask which will also need this bipole.

So it's very important that we move ahead with this, and we have to move ahead with it in a way that minimizes the risk to Manitoba Hydro. We have to minimize the risk to the environment, and we know that the boreal forest on the east side is considered to be of outstanding, outstanding universal value, as identified by the UNESCO technical committee on boreal forests. We know it's supported by the 1,500 scientists which have come out and said the boreal forest has to be protected. We know it provides us with an outstanding opportunity to preserve boreal forest in the same way people have been saying for 30 years, we need to preserve the Amazon to ensure that the lungs of the planet function both in the north and the south of this great planet that we live on.

It is one world, Mr. Speaker. We all have to participate in the solutions for climate change, global warming, clean water and pristine forests which can provide a legacy and a permanent economic opportunity for the peoples on the east side as we go forward.

It also puts at risk the UNESCO World Heritage designation. Members have made light of this. This is the highest designation you can get from UNESCO, the highest designation. It puts the site that we're talking about protecting among world-class sites around the world, such as sites in Greece like the Acropolis, such as sites as Québec City for its cultural aspects. This designation of a World Heritage site has two dimensions to it—very unique. It has the natural habitat or the environmental designation as well as the cultural component. It has both components, which is extremely rare, an extremely rare opportunity to get a UNESCO World Heritage designation.

It also, by trying to put the transmission line down the east side, members argue that it will be less expensive. The reality is a divisive licensing process, with many delays built into it, could actually wind up being more expensive. We've seen this in other jurisdictions. We just saw, a few weeks ago in Alberta, a transmission line between Calgary and Alberta was halted in its tracks due to objections from community members, and they had to essentially start all over again.

Members opposite would like to take a chance at having a delayed, protracted, divisive and, potentially, more expensive licensing process.

\* (15:20)

Fourthly, they're willing to take a risk with Manitoba Hydro and the government of Manitoba's reputation in our export markets, and if you put your reputation at risk, it's not being responsible environmentally. You put at risk the ability to market our products to customers who want a high-quality product, who want a green product, and don't kid yourself for one second whether people wouldn't seize on the opportunity, with forcing a transmission line down the east side, to discredit Manitoba Hydro's product, to discredit that, and the additional cost would be more than lost in just one year of reduction of export sales. One year at \$600 million would more than make up for the additional cost of \$300 million to \$400 million on transmission and \$100 million on the difference on energy costs through line loss.

Now, what's our position going forward? In a nutshell, we have to improve the reliability needs of Manitoba Hydro. We have to preserve the intact pristine boreal forest, and we have to preserve our export markets and grow our exports markets. Members opposite have said the east side is already

developed; there are already hydro lines and roads there. Really this is a misrepresentation of the scale of the difference. There are local transmission lines. There are local roads. All communities need these services. That's quite different than a major transmission corridor, and, Mr. Speaker, we will build a road and improve the roads on the east side to allow those communities to have greater access to goods and services, to allow them to develop the ecotourism industry that they need for the future.

So forcing an east-side pole—and let's not kid ourselves. The members opposite never told the people on the east side this before the election, that they're not prepared to share ownership of the transmission line; they're not prepared to share revenues. They did tell them in the election they would not build a road for them. They said they wouldn't build roads in the north.

So we know that the members' opposite vision for the east side is no roads, no transmission line sharing, no revenue sharing, basically no integrity to what they said because they didn't announce all those features of their policy until after the election. They didn't announce all those features of the policy until they engaged in debate with us, and we forced them to disclose to the people on the east side that they had no intentions of sharing anything with them except the risk of having the line go down the east side.

That's very unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, that that kind of misinformation campaign continues to be put on the record. It's very unfortunate because it leads people to have high expectations that cannot be met no matter who the government is because they're not realistic, they're not doable, and they're not supported by Manitoba Hydro, itself, in the way they want to develop their projects.

So this is the reality we see here now. We have a government saying to people, we want to build reliability into the system, and we want to do it in a way that does not damage boreal forest. We want to do it in a way that does not throw away the chance of a UNESCO World Heritage designation, and we want to do it in a way that does not provide additional risk to our export markets. All of those things make an important difference.

Now, members have said we will lose power by going down the west side. The reality is bipole 1 and 2 already lose power, that every hydro transmission line has an 8 percent to 9 percent loss of efficiency as the line moves power from the start point to the

finish point. *[interjection]* Two minutes. Thank you for the notice, Mr. Speaker.

The reality is building bipole 3 will gain us 75 megawatts of additional power because it will reduce the losses of bipoles 1 and 2. That additional power will be available to us for export sales. Those export sales could generate up to \$440 million to \$500 million of additional revenue. That revenue will pay for the cost of building the extra mileage required to build bipole 3. Mr. Brennan himself said, among his first interviews when he discussed this, that the export revenues would pay for the additional cost of the bipole. Members opposite have been scrupulous in denying that fact. They have been scrupulous in avoiding that record that's been put on the public record by the CEO and president of Manitoba Hydro.

If they threaten export sales, that could cost us \$5.5 billion of revenue over the next 10 years. That's a very high-risk proposition that the members opposite wish to take with our Crown corporation, which they wanted to privatize and still want to privatize. They want to privatize it in a variety of ways, through the way they finance the development of it, through the way they control the ownership of it. That's what they're really trying to do, and they're trying to do that in a variety of ways, including damaging the reputation of the corporation in the way it builds its bipoles, including damaging the reputation of the corporation in its export markets, including damaging the reputation of the corporation in the international community.

All of those things would make Manitoba Hydro weaker and more vulnerable to privatization which is the real agenda of the members opposite. They've never denied that at any point in their public discussions about this matter, and it's about time they went on the record about where they stand on this.

Now, the other thing that has come up, Mr. Speaker—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Time has expired.

**Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon West):** Mr. Speaker, I've heard some of those lame arguments and I really do have—I thank the opportunity of getting up and making some comments.

On this particular issue of east side/west side, it is October 31 and it's Halloween and at some point in time I wish somebody would pinch me and just wake me up and tell me that this is really just a cruel joke, that in fact this government will not listen to logic,



will not listen to the proponents of this particular east-side development. That really it's just a joke, Mr. Speaker, that it's a nightmare that I'm having and certainly, being Halloween, nightmares are probably the right way to describe the position of this government with respect to the east side/west side.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the last resolve says it best and I'd just like to say, "BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to consider proceeding with the"—and I quote—"recommended route, subject to necessary regulatory approvals." The recommended route.

Now, let's talk a little about Manitoba Hydro and, by the way, let me just also put to rest this fearmongering. Again, it's Halloween and I understand the Finance Minister's alternative, to fearmonger this privatization and the sale of Manitoba Hydro, and all the goblins are coming out, and all those witches are going to be flying around the Legislature, Mr. Speaker.

That is fearmongering and nothing but fearmongering because we know on this side that Manitoba Hydro is, in fact, the Crown jewel of Manitoba. We've always recognized Manitoba Hydro as being our natural resource here in Manitoba. Like the natural resources that they have in Alberta and Saskatchewan, we see the value as a province with Manitoba Hydro.

Now in saying that, Mr. Speaker, not only do we see the value of Manitoba Hydro, but we also see the value of not killing the goose that lays the golden egg. We have to recognize that there is a need for Manitoba Hydro, the professionals, the engineers, the management, the CEO of Manitoba Hydro, who know what's best for them to put forward to Manitobans what it is that they desire.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as I said in that resolve, the recommended route, the east-side route is the recommended route for Manitoba Hydro. Now a long, long, long time ago in another life a wise man once said to me, he said, the best business philosophy that you can have is let managers manage. We pay them to be professional. We pay them to manage, whether it be Manitoba Hydro or whether it be any other corporation. What's happening here is interference of the worst kind, blatant interference, political interference, interfering with the operations of a Crown corporation.

The recommended route that came from the professionals is the east side. The political route, and that's the key—the term we have to use, the political route is the west side. When I say pinch me and wake me up, I've gone through all of the information, all of the documents, all of the data, all of the financials and for the life of me I cannot understand why this government is so bent on making the wrong decision.

It doesn't have the opposition it says it has on the east side. It isn't in fact going to be detrimental for a UNESCO site. It isn't, Mr. Speaker, going to have environmentalists falling from the hydro lines if they should decide to go on the west side. That's fearmongering. That's ghouls and that's monsters.

*Ms. Marilyn Brick, Acting Speaker, in the Chair*

The fact of the matter is there are none of those. Those have all been refuted. So the only reason I can expect that this government has decided to go on the west side is true, honest-to-goodness politics, and it's wrong. Stay out of Manitoba Hydro's business. Let them operate the best way that they say to operate, Madam Acting Speaker.

\* (15:30)

Again, not only has the recommended route been the east side, but logic dictates, and I've been running into a number of people, just regular every-day Manitobans, right now, who have been awakened to the folly of this government who have said to me, I can't understand why the government wants to do the west side. I just can't understand why they would go that far out of their way to provide this transmission line, and I don't have any answers for them because nobody with any logical thinking mind has any understanding as to why they would do the west side as opposed to the east side.

The closest distance between two points, Madam Acting Speaker—this is pretty simple—is a straight line, a straight line from the north to the south. If we look at the maps here in the Manitoba Hydro financial statement, it's pretty clear that that straight line is north to south, not from north to west back east to the south. There are 400 kilometres of additional line that's required, 400 kilometres.

Now, people scratch their heads and say why would you want to go 400 kilometres out of your way at a cost, Madam Acting Speaker, of some \$400 million just simply because of politics. There's no other rationale. There's no other justification. It's just simply because of politics. We're going to go

400 kilometres out of our way and spend \$400 million, plus we're talking about the possibility of a converter station, an additional cost to the line. We're talking about additional line loss that's going to go down the west end. The Finance Minister said, oh, no, no, we're going to reroute some electricity from the east line to the west line. We're going to save 75 megawatts. Well, the fact of the matter is, we're going to lose about 40 to 50 megawatts of line power going down the west side, and we could save that. We could save all of that money for Manitobans. We could save it for Manitoba Hydro.

Now the last thing I'd like to say, Madam Acting Speaker, is the finances here have not been discussed all that much. Manitoba Hydro is the goose that lays the golden egg. This government is, unfortunately, putting that corporation, that Crown corporation, in jeopardy. Their debt to equity is now 20-80, and we've heard how they're so wonderful about that. We've now got it to an 80 percent debt to equity.

The fact of the matter is there is going to be substantial debt that's going to be incurred by Manitoba Hydro in the not too distant future, if they ever have the opportunity of developing the Wuskwatim. As we've just heard, there hasn't been any uptake of their contract, so we still have some serious issues on Wuskwatim. We have some serious issues with the additional capital cost requirements of Wuskwatim. If there's nobody prepared to build it now, those costs are not going to go down, Madam Acting Speaker. They're going to go up, and that's going to be debt. That's going to be a requirement for debt servicing for Manitoba Hydro.

We have a building that's been developed which I'm sure will have somebody's name at the top of it. It's this massive Hydro building that we have in downtown Winnipeg. By the way, the only crane in the sky of Winnipeg right now is that of Manitoba Hydro, which I will also discuss at a later time. I'm very disappointed we don't have any other private-sector cranes going up here in the city of Winnipeg, but we do have a public-sector crane. Madam Acting Speaker, that's going to require substantial debt for Manitoba Hydro. That also requires debt servicing.

We have, Madam Acting Speaker, an additional \$400-million worth of a transmission line, but that's only a part of it. There's still billions and who knows, within three years, four years, it could be billions of dollars that are going to be required for debt for Manitoba Hydro. Manitoba Hydro cannot

accommodate all that debt. We, in fact, have to make sure that we do not jeopardize the operations of Manitoba Hydro like this government is doing.

And the last comment: I would like to reiterate the comment that was made earlier. We would love to see a free vote on this resolution. If this government believes in the democracy they say they believe in, then let their members, their backbenchers, have a free vote. There are constituencies out there who do not believe that we should be spending an additional \$400 million just for a legacy to somebody's ego. Let's have the free vote, Madam Acting Speaker. Let them let their people stand up and vote the way their constituents want them to. Thank you very much.

**Hon. Eric Robinson (Minister of Culture, Heritage, Tourism and Sport):** I want to take this opportunity to thank members for voicing their opinions on this very important matter that's before all our collective attention. I'm glad especially because it gives us an opportunity for once in this Chamber to talk about Aboriginal issues.

We simply don't want to politicize the issues facing Aboriginal people in the province of Manitoba, but we want to take this opportunity to set the record straight. Madam Acting Speaker, you've heard the Premier (Mr. Doer) and other ministers say, time and time again in this Chamber, that we held a series of meetings with the citizens living on the east side, the 16 communities that live on the east side of our province, commencing with Brokenhead, Sagkeeng, Black River, Hollow Water, Bloodvein, Berens River, Poplar River, Pauingassi, Little Grand Rapids—I am travelling north here—St. Theresa Point, Garden Hill, Wasagamack, Red Sucker Lake, Oxford House, Gods River, Gods Lake Narrows. These communities, every one of these communities, the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Struthers), the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (Mr. Lathlin), myself and other ministers from this government, took the opportunity of going to hear, first-hand from the people that live there: the fishermen, the elders, the young men and women, the trappers, the people that live and make their livelihood off the land. They told us, in no uncertain terms, that that land ought to be undisturbed with a power or a transmission line.

I grew up, Madam Acting Speaker, in northern Manitoba, and I grew up in the shadow of mega-projects. I was born in Norway House; I was raised in Cross Lake; I was raised in Grand Rapids;

and I was raised in Churchill as well, and I saw the effects that hydro development had on those communities. I also saw the after-effects with transmission lines and I saw traditional economies being lost for a generation and more, and regrettably, what is the issue here? The bottom line, is it the cost, or is the bottom line the lives of people? That's what I have to question in my own mind.

Having grown up in these communities and as my colleagues had mentioned on this side of the House, we need—we have known about the bipole project for quite some time. Everybody here has, but it was this party in 2004 that we had those series of meetings with those communities on the east side. We heard first-hand when we went to the elders about the concerns that they had.

The bottom line—and there's much to say and I don't have all day to say it; we have limited time in these times to talk about these things, so it's very difficult for me to get my mind around the few minutes that we have. But I want to say to the Member for Brandon West (Mr. Borotsik), when he said, on this side of the House I'd have listened to logic. Well, in fact, Madam Acting Speaker, I think we have done that. We have listened to the logic of the elders that have the knowledge of the past and I am very proud that we've been able to do that.

Yesterday, I met with the young people of the Island Lake communities of Wasagamack, St. Theresa Point, Red Sucker Lake and Garden Hill. Those are tomorrow's leaders, and they told me, in no uncertain terms, that they support a transmission line down the east side—

**An Honourable Member:** West side. West side.

**Mr. Robinson:** —the east side of Lake Winnipeg. The east side, they didn't, they did not support a transmission line.

**An Honourable Member:** All right. I knew that's what you meant.

**Mr. Robinson:** Sometimes your mind thinks ahead of your mouth.

Now members opposite, Madam Acting Speaker, have attacked our government for pandering to American environmentalists. I really take that as an insult not only to myself, but indeed, to visionaries from my community, the First Nations community, and particularly the east-side people like Sophia Rabliauskas and many, many others,

William Young, Gary Raven, people that live along the east side of our province.

\* (15:40)

We don't attack Manitobans with the foresight to see beyond the hollow promise of the short-term gain for long-term pain, and we applaud these people, these leaders, for their courage in standing up for their traditional ways and their traditional beliefs. It is true that very recently, some east-side leaders have come out in favour of bipole 3 being built through their traditional territories, and it's understandable because, hey, let's face it, we have some economic challenges, but I believe those can be addressed in another way. We don't believe that providing seasonal opportunities, seasonal jobs, for a couple years maybe, to make way for a transmission line is in any way addressing the desperate economic disparity that exists with Indian people on that side of the province.

As I mentioned before, there's a great deal of information that's being circulated by those with private interests in any potential transmission line, and I regret that some people have to use that—have to not tell the complete information about what the people have in mind in those areas.

The result of our discussions with the people that live on the east side, and leaders, is that the WNO accord that we made in early April of this year is a government-to-government agreement that gives a voice to decisions, for once, affecting the lives of Indian people that live on the east side of our province, affecting their traditional lands, and funding the complete comprehensive land-use planning to ensure that any development is in line with the priorities of that given community.

The WNO further, Madam Acting Speaker, does not provide a veto to east-side leaders over provincial decisions, as members opposite have said. The WNO does serve as an important recognition of section 35 of the Constitution regarding the Province's duty to consult with First Nations on activities in their backyards, and this is something we don't expect members opposite to understand because I know that the members opposite have not gone to each community, have not gone home to home, have not seen the desperate situation of many of our people living under in those communities.

I was quite disappointed with my friend, Sydney Garrioch, this morning when he called upon the government to do whatever he said we had to do or

should be doing in this province. I was quite disappointed. Sydney Garrioch and I have known each other for all our lives. We come from the same community. We knew each other as young men and as children, really, and if I recall, in fact, I think I was in residential school with the man. I was disappointed to hear about what he had to say this morning because I took some of the remarks that were made personally, because they were directed at me personally. I don't think this is a forum nor is this the issue to attack people on a personal level. I can tell you that first-hand because a columnist, of all people, from one of the major papers has taken it upon himself to be the champion of Indian people on the east side and has taken personal attacks on me and I don't find that to be very—I find that very distasteful, Madam Acting Speaker.

I'm also deeply saddened by the position of a good friend of mine, Elijah Harper, who is the former MLA for Rupertsland, that he's decided to take this issue on the way he has, because I regard him as a brother, and I will continue to do so, even though I disagree with his position. But I will still maintain a great deal of respect for him and what he symbolizes for Indian people across the nation and other Aboriginal people. Unfortunately, obviously, we don't see eye to eye on this issue, but nevertheless life will go on and this issue will probably continue to fester long after we're out of the political scene.

What our government has done, on the other hand, Madam Acting Speaker, is—remember the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry? Remember what our government did to bring life back to that document, after several years of the Conservative government's domination in this province? In 1991 this report was tabled; in 1999-2000 we took it out, dusted it off, literally, from the Minister of Justice's office and we began implementing many of the recommendations, including the creation of a child welfare system that should be run by Aboriginal people in our province.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Marilyn Brick):** The honourable minister's time has expired.

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden):** It's my privilege to be able to speak to our Opposition Day motion in the House today.

I want to just put a few comments on the record just to expand on a few items that I didn't get off in my grievance yesterday in regard to this issue. I had an opportunity to speak to this disastrous decision of the provincial government in regard to building a line down the west side of Manitoba, a hydro line

called bipole 3, a transmission line for future hydro development to carry the power needs down around and through The Pas and down the west side of the province, the west side of Lake Winnipegosis, and back to the east side of Winnipeg, Madam Acting Speaker, particularly when a line coming straight down the east side of Lake Winnipeg is certainly the shorter route, the cheaper route, the safest route and the most secure route and will give us the most power to be able to—also, the most environmentally friendly route in regard to future power usage in the world as well. The ministers, the Premier (Mr. Doer), particularly, has been sort of trying to couch this in a world scenario, the UNESCO situation and everything else.

Certainly I do, too. I believe strongly in the fact that we need to look at the power usage that we have around the world and maximize the opportunities of reducing greenhouse gas emissions wherever we have the opportunity. Here we have an excellent opportunity to be leaders right here in Manitoba in regard to the maximization of the use of clean energy, particularly hydro power in this particular case. But the wrong-headed decision will cost Manitobans \$500 million. It's a minimum of 400 kilometres longer line. There are more stations that are required, converter stations that are required at a higher cost, as well, in this particular route.

All of those funds used in the west-side line are going to lead to greater poverty for our east-side First Nations people, the east side of Lake Winnipeg First Nations people, Madam Acting Speaker. I think that's regrettable. I would certainly be in favour of looking at opportunities there, opportunities for training and development, as we've done in other areas. But I believe that we need to support Manitoba Hydro and Mr. Bob Brennan, its chairman and president, looking at the opportunities that Manitoba Hydro was initially coming forward with in regard to the support for an east-side line and not force them, our greatest Crown corporation, into an alternate position because the Premier wants to have a legacy in regard to future development.

It's a very short-sighted vision on behalf of the Premier, Madam Acting Speaker, because we can have both. There are opportunities to provide development on the east side, carry the power that we need to export more power not only to Ontario but also into places like South Dakota, our neighbours to the south in North Dakota and Minnesota as well. As I've said a few times in this House, Governor Rounds in South Dakota knows

that they are short of power in that state. They are continuing to have to continue to use coal from Wyoming and Montana. They don't want to continue to do that because they know that they would get more power out of the Missouri River if the water was high enough, but they've been going through a seven-year drought, and, as they indicated to us, it's very expensive power to produce on that river at this particular moment because of the water being about 25 feet lower than normal. So that's just one of the ways that we could maximize the export of this clean product that we have and develop it here in Manitoba.

I also want to say that the argument of maintaining the boreal forest is an excellent one, but the fact that there are already extremely—in my role as the transport critic in the past number of years in this House, I'm certainly aware of the fact that the government has cleared more roads and winter roads in the eastern part of Manitoba than any government in the previous history of this province, Madam Acting Speaker. They've gone away from using the lakes, the ice on the lakes, as much, and tried to do more with crossing the actual land and rock that they can wherever they can. That's to be looked at in itself, but from the point of view of knocking down more trees and more boreal forest, they've certainly already done a great deal of that.

The minister makes the comment, I think it was the minister responsible for Hydro today, that there's quite a difference between knocking down trees for a winter road than what would be required here. But, Madam Acting Speaker, it's 75 metres wide. That's the strip that's required to build this power line. It would be more than a winter road, but the point is if it was so important in the first place, they would have found an alternative route to move these products in and out of those areas than the winter roads that we've already got on the go and need to utilize. There are already power lines through this particular area of Manitoba as well.

\* (15:50)

So to say that this is going to be pristine, there are portions of it that already have power to it. The greatest part is access to some of the reserves and small communities that are already there, and this government is willing to leave them in the dark forever by its decision in regard to not building the line on the east side.

Of course, they talked about the consultation that they had, and of course, we see today by the chiefs

on the east side the frustration of them wanting the power line, coming out and saying they want the power line on the east side of Lake Winnipeg now. Where was the consultation in regard to the extra 400 kilometres of line going down the west side? Obviously, they didn't have a consultation process with anyone there.

One of the other comments before I step down, Madam Acting Speaker, is that yesterday I didn't get around to mentioning the fact that this original map had a line for part of this line to come from Dauphin through Brandon, right through Riding Mountain National Park, which the government knows is a national park. It'd be very, very hard pressed to ever get a line through that particular area under the stringent rules that national parks are governed under in our country today, never mind the enviro-UNESCO site that's already around the Riding Mountain park.

I also want to say, and I know the Premier (Mr. Doer) was going on about how one side of the House or the other has had more experience in selling power or not, Madam Acting Speaker, I would put up any member on this side of the House against the business acumen of anyone from their side of the House any day of the week. I know that many, many of these people understand business plans, they understand economics, they understand what it takes to run a business. Not that the members on the other side don't understand economics. I'm sure that they do a very good job, as all of our members do, in balancing their home books and keeping their families looked after. But this is about managing and being able to look after running a business, and there's very, very little, if any, experience on that side of the House, Madam Acting Speaker. It's a concern to all Manitobans. They know that. They know which side of the House is more responsible with funds. They know that this government's only operating the way it is because 38 percent of its budget comes from the federal transfer payments today as well. That leads me to put on the record as well that this government is also—part of the fund of building an east-west line is federal money in the Eco-Fund, Madam Acting Speaker. This government may be piggybacking on—they put some of those funds at risk by what they're doing.

I would only like to put out a word of caution that I would hope that this government wouldn't misuse any of that federal money that's being used to underwrite the east-west line, to put any of it in

jeopardy by their decision to go the extra 400 kilometres.

So, with those comments, I think I'll just close there and leave it, give the rest of my colleagues an opportunity to put their words and recommendations on the record. Thank you.

**Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** Madam Acting Speaker, one of the key issues that defined Manitoba politics, probably the last 30-plus years, has been in terms of Manitoba Hydro. I think it's important as we look at the current discussion and debate over the future of Manitoba Hydro that we look at one clear fact.

*Mr. Speaker in the Chair.*

That is that over the last 30 years, it's trick question here, how many developments have we seen under Conservative governments? How many hydro dams? It's a trick question because the answer's not one. Not one.

How many dams have they shut down? Well, actually two. They shut down Limestone. The NDP built it. They shut down Conawapa. That's the first clear difference. By the way, their position in the 1990s was to buy hydro from the United States. You know, in the 1970s they wanted to build coal-fired plants instead of Manitoba Hydro.

Now, you may notice I haven't referenced the Liberals. Their great contribution to the Manitoba Hydro debate over the last number of years was to call Limestone "lemonstone." We now have a leader of the Liberal Party—and I'm not going to spend too much time on the Leader of the Liberal Party—you know, in the last election, Mr. Speaker, he didn't travel to remote communities in northern Manitoba because he said he wasn't going to travel by plane because of greenhouse gas emissions. Well, I've got news for him. We have 22 communities that don't have all-weather road access. He wrote them out of his map of Manitoba. If he'd maybe taken the time to visit those communities, he might actually have a position on the current debate, because he's firmly impaled on the fence, on the key issue of the east side/west side.

Now let's discuss what the Tory position is because it's an evolving position, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I have difficulty today when I hear them quoting any northern leader, any First Nations leader, because just a matter of weeks ago, they were saying that there were the 16 chiefs of the WNO were a select group that had a veto over the future of the

province. They attacked the WNO chiefs, and today they came in and tried to pretend that they're somehow speaking for the east side and the WNO chiefs. They do not speak for the east side of Lake Winnipeg. They don't speak for northern Manitoba.

We saw clear evidence of that in the election. Not just the election result, but let's not forget that they, in the 2003 election, had one cut that they announced, was cut the UCN, the new UCN that we'd brought in. In the last election they had one cut, as well. It just happened to be highways in northern Manitoba.

If there was any doubt about what the real issue here is, let's understand what the aspiration of the east side is. The east side wants development, economic development. Ask any of the people on the east side. By the way, I visited every east-side community. I know that the Member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson) has visited every east-side community, and many of the members on this side. People want development.

You know what, Mr. Speaker? There were more than 80 meetings as part of the WNO process that start from the very simple premise that you start by asking the people whose traditional lands are impacted by any development, what the future direction should be in that area. There was a clear indication and there continues to be many people on the east side who indicated clearly that the real issue was development, not a bipole that would have a disruption in terms of the environment and would create, at most, two years of seasonal jobs, mostly in terms of brush clearing. And that is not what people want.

But the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) gave away the Tory agenda, again, in Question Period, and I quote, October 29, 2007, because most people on the east side, even those that supported the east-side line, they saw it as potentially a way of getting an all-weather road. Because, Mr. Speaker, the winter roads are becoming more and more unreliable and if you don't have an all-weather road, you have very expensive transportation costs—*[interjection]*

Since the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) whose party is against spending money in northern Manitoba, should understand that the NDP government is building the road to Bloodvein, and

we've put in place a route selection process for the entire east side. We're moving ahead with road construction.

But the Leader of the Opposition, on October 29, argued that the reason that the transmission line should go on the east side is because there are no roads, and he says the east-side route would be virtually completely removed from highways and roads. Well, Mr. Speaker, there it was, in black and white, the clear decision that people on the east side would have.

The Tories offer one thing: rhetoric, lip-service, and maybe a couple of seasons of seasonal jobs. They are opposed to having roads on the east side, very clearly stated here, very clearly stated in the election. We are committed to working with the communities on the east side to expand the all-weather road network. With the all-weather road network you bring development. A choice between no roads under the Tories, and roads and development under the NDP.

But I want to go one step further, because the most ridiculous argument I've seen from the members opposite, I heard in committee the other day, was the line loss from the east side versus the west side, which comes to a grand total of 16 megawatts.

Now, I want to put on the record that we're now having the construction of Wuskwatim. Now, what was the original design for Wuskwatim? Three hundred and twenty megawatts. What is it currently? It's 200 megawatts. When was it downscaled? In the 1990s by Manitoba Hydro, and that was under the Conservative government of the day because they recognized that the original plans for Wuskwatim would have led to major flooding on the Burntwood River, affecting Thompson and Nelson House, equivalent to the first development.

\*(16:00)

So they cut 120 megawatts out of the design. Not 16 megawatts, 120 megawatts out of the design. What was that for? Maybe it might have had some opposition from environmentalists. Maybe in the U.S., maybe in Manitoba. Maybe even Robert Kennedy Jr. might have opposed it. But for them to get up and talk about the line loss of 16 megawatts, when 120 megawatts was cut out of the design of Wuskwatim in the 1990s because of environmental pressure, shows you the degree to which they're getting desperate in terms of their arguments. It's not

about the line loss, Mr. Speaker, and they know it. All of the red herrings they put up in terms of the environment has proved that.

But let's understand one thing as we move forward in terms of this, Mr. Speaker. It's not about the current position today of the Conservatives. What this is about is understanding on the east side the importance of the east side, the last intact boreal forest, the traditional lands which First Nations people have occupied for thousands of years, and the real need for development, not a couple of years, a couple of seasons or three months. I think the Tory symbol on the east side would be the chainsaw. What we want is, we want real development, and that's why we're building roads on the east side as we speak. They didn't add a single hydro dam, but they didn't add a single road to the Manitoba road network when they were in power.

That is the key issue here. With climate change and with the challenges on the east side, we know we have a big challenge ahead. But our vision is roads and economic development. Their vision is no roads and a couple of years of seasonal jobs for the people on the east side. I trust in the leadership shown by the Member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson). I trust in our Premier (Mr. Doer), by the way, who has taken the time, time and time again, to visit northern Manitoba. I trust in the fact, Mr. Speaker, that we have a track record for 30-plus years of putting northern and Aboriginal people on the map in this province, on the map, unlike the Tories who like to have the kind of divisive politics we saw in the last two elections trying to pit Manitobans against each other.

That is the key issue here with the east side. The real issue here is the needs of the people in the communities on the east side. They need development and they need roads. We are moving ahead with that, Mr. Speaker, and we are quite prepared to engage in an open public debate with anyone. But let not anyone believe that the Tories are friends of the east side. They're not. Let not anyone think that they're going to do anything else other than cut back in terms of transportation in northern Manitoba. The words of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) in Virden still sting many people in northern Manitoba. You know, the *Thompson Citizen* said, and I quote from their editorial, that he's not welcome in northern Manitoba.

They're no friends of northern Manitoba, Mr. Speaker. We will work with the people. We'll

even have a healthy debate because when we can finally have the people on the east side of Lake Winnipeg and all northern Manitoba connected with roads, with economic development, when we can deal with the poverty in this province that many people in the north are faced with right now, that is going to be when we will have a true Manitoba that brings together all the skills of this great province.

Their approach is to divide and conquer. Ours is to unite this province. We have a real commitment to northern Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, and the right decision, by the way, a part of that on the east side is not a hydro line; it is roads and development for the northern and Aboriginal people of that area.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to talk to this resolution. Our view is that given the information at the moment, we would lean toward a route on the east side, and we will support the resolution.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, we believe that there are some important issues which need to be on the table instead of hidden behind and in the depths of the forest or the depths of the minds of people in the government or Manitoba Hydro.

We also see that in fairness and so that we have a democratic process, that there should be a putting on the table of all these issues in terms of a clear delineation of routes, for example. What are the easement payments that would be made both to farmers and First Nations communities, the environmental, social and economic costs and benefits, and that when these are all put down for all to see for both east and west sides, we then see that what there should be is a referendum on the east side and a referendum on the west side with regard to the transmission line and that those referendums and the vote should include all the residents of the area. That would be First Nations, Métis and non-Aboriginal people, that there needs to be input, that there needs to be more openness about this than we have had.

What was very clear when we had the Crown Corporations Committee meeting last week was president and CEO of Manitoba Hydro, Mr. Bob Brennan, enumerating many uncertainties with regard to both a line on the west side and a line on the east side. He's very clear that on the west side there's only a broad concept of where the line might go. We don't know, given such a broad concept of

where the line is fully, what the economic, environmental, social issues are.

It's also apparent from various discussions and rumours that there may be more than one alternative on the east side. For example, an alternative close to the lake or an alternative which goes to the east of the traditional territory of Poplar River and then winds around, and that we need to have these issues on the table, we need to have an assessment of what the environmental issues with both lines are. We have heard Mr. Brennan say that he was going to avoid every conceivable park or reserve on the west side. Well, I mean, we need to know where that line is so that you can make a reasonable assessment of what the social, economic and environmental issues are.

On the east side of Lake Winnipeg there is clearly a very critical issue here which I think concerns all of us, and that is the proposed World Heritage site. Now, it is my view that a transmission line down the east side and a World Heritage site are not necessarily mutually exclusive, and that it is possible to have both. We don't at this point know what the final boundaries of the proposed World Heritage site are, and it is also conceivable that there may be some benefits of having a corridor for the transmission line down the east side in relationship to a World Heritage site.

Let me give, for example, if there were, as a result of the environmental problems of a transmission line corridor running near or through a World Heritage site, it may be that to mitigate the environmental problems there could be a significant amount of funds that was made available to the World Heritage site initiative in order to mitigate these environmental problems and to make sure that the World Heritage site was based on a sound financial moving-forward position because, of course, UNESCO doesn't provide any funding. UNESCO provides a framework. It's a designation, and what is also clear, and this needs to be made apparent with regard to a World Heritage site, is that there are some major issues which are unresolved, which could have been much further ahead if this government had been moving.

In order to have a World Heritage site you need to have clearly designated protected areas, and not all the areas are designated at this point. You need to have land-use plans completed and not all areas have land-use plans, although there has been some progress made. You need to have a clear governance



structure. Now there is a World Heritage site assembly, which includes four or five First Nations. One may or may not be in, but what is important is that that structure is further along so that we can understand better and people can judge better situations of the World Heritage site and the transmission line.

\*(16:10)

I think that those who would suggest that you cannot have both, I would argue, are wrong, and I think that many would agree with me. There is no doubt that having a World Heritage site will make certain aspects of the planning of a transmission line down the east side, you know, more rigorous, let's put it that way, that there are challenges, but I don't believe those are insurmountable. I believe that where we are at the moment, it is, in fact, given the uncertainties, premature to make an ultimate, final and unequivocal decision that it should be east side or west side.

As I have indicated, we would lean toward the east side, but I would put on the table this, as I asked President and CEO Bob Brennan on Thursday night that the costs of construction on the east side on a per-kilometre basis—because you're in an area where there are no roads or winter roads—is actually likely to be much higher than a per-kilometre basis of construction down the west side.

So we should know that the numbers we were presented with were on a per-kilometre basis, didn't distinguish whether there was a difference in the per-kilometre costs, and so, it is important that we know what the real costs are, we know what the real routes are, before there is a final and ultimate decision. I would suggest that the government has been a little precipitous in 100 percent ruling out an east-side route, and I would suggest that those who completely rule out a west-side route, at this juncture, need to keep that as an open mind.

We are going to be better, I believe, in moving forward if we can have a better and more careful look at both options in all their full details, both the positive and the negative, from a variety of points of view put on the table, and then we can have the residents on both sides participate in voting in a referendum. Those referendums on east side, I would suggest, would not necessarily be legally binding. We do need a transmission line down one side or the other, but they would clearly have a significant impact on the final decision.

So that, Mr. Speaker, is our view, and it is put on the table today.

**Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Conservation):** I want to start by saying that I wish that we could take every single resident of every single east-side community and put them into this public gallery here today so that they could listen to us quibble and argue over their communities. Mr. Speaker, we did 16 ministerial visits to those communities in amongst over 80 meetings of consultation with communities on the east side.

Mr. Speaker, members opposite may not think it's even polite to listen to other people, but I think we have a right to be heard. I think every member has a right to be heard in this Legislature. Every single person in this Legislature, every single person in Manitoba has a place on Mother Earth that we think is special, a place that's on this planet that we go to, that we go to when we need to refresh and to regenerate, where we go to refresh and regenerate. Maybe for some, it's this Legislature, and that's fine, because that's your personal choice. Every single Manitoban has a place where they go when the weight of the world becomes such that they need to reconnect with Mother Earth. Every single Manitoban has that. Every single Manitoban has that right, every single Manitoban has that right, including the people on the east side of Lake Winnipeg.

Mr. Speaker, for me that special place is 43 acres of spruce swamp on the northwest corner of one of our quarters of land in the Swan River Valley. That place is very special to me. That place is where I spent a lot of time when I was a kid, with my grandfather, with my dad. I learned a lot there. Every Manitoban has that place. It may be your place in Steinbach. It may be your place in the city of Winnipeg. It may be that green space that the city has across from your place in Winnipeg. That's an individual thing. It's important.

I'm telling you, Mr. Speaker, that if somebody came along to that place that I think is special for me, I would be very defensive about that place. If I was to take the advice of the members opposite, long ago our family would have cut those trees down because that's good for the bottom line. If all we think about is the bottom line and all we think about is the economy and how much money we could put in our pockets off of Mother Earth, then that's the decision we would have made a long time ago. Some

of our neighbours did. Some of our neighbours did, and, you know, that's their choice.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say, too, that if somebody came along and said, your neighbours are going to have a referendum to decide what is going to happen on your land there, I would not put up with that. I would not put up with that. It's not good enough for us to say that.

Mr. Speaker, democracy is not using the tools of democracy to enforce your will on somebody else. Our great province was not built on that. Our great province was built on consultations. Our great province was built because people of vision could see past just the simple little arguments that I see coming from the other side of this House.

I attended those meetings on the east side, Mr. Speaker. I will never forget the advice an elder gave to me, never, never forget an elder talking to me about his trapline, an elder in Berens River who came to me and said—and I made sure, at every meeting, every single one of these meetings, that the question was asked about supporting the location of an east-side bipole, every single one of these meetings that we as ministers went to. This trapper said, absolutely not. That's not worth it. The puny fund that Hydro was putting forward at the time was described to me by one of the chiefs in one of the communities as nickels, and we're not going to give up our land for the nickels that Hydro was talking about.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that this is not just a debate about line loss here and megawatts there. This is a fundamental debate that we're having. This is a fundamental historic debate. It's bigger than what the opposition has put on the table up to this point. They can quibble about all that little stuff if they like. This is a fundamental, historic debate. It's rooted in section 35 of our country's Constitution, and if members don't know about that—

**An Honourable Member:** Does that work on the west side, too, that section 35?

**Mr. Struthers:** The philistine views of the Member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon) serve as a great contrast to some of what we've heard here today. Mr. Speaker, the section 35 clause of the Canadian Constitution talks about our obligation, our duty to meaningfully consult and accommodate. It's not about whether it's 16 megawatts or how many trees get cut. It's about, first and foremost, that duty to consult.

\* (16:20)

Here's the problem that members opposite face. They face a government who took that duty to consult seriously, went out to those communities, did that consultation with chiefs and councils, with elders and youth, and members of the community, and in every single community we were told, no, to an east-side line. Every single community said no. We took that advice. We took that consultation and made a decision not to go down the east side which was enunciated at the WNO in April of 2005 by the then-minister of Hydro. Then it was announced publicly, and I followed that up with a letter to chiefs indicating that.

Nobody can say they were taken by surprise unless the members opposite had their heads in the sand, which could be. I will admit that. That could be. But that was not anything that was done through stealth or any other method. That was up front. That was a section 35 consultation, and we did it.

Mr. Speaker, we were given a document coming out of those meetings entitled *Promises to Keep*. Promises to keep. It's a foreign concept to members opposite, I know that, but the document's title was *Promises to Keep*. There were 102 recommendations in that document and we have worked through every one of those 102 recommendations, including the promise that we made, that they said to us we had to keep, to not run a bipole down the east side of Lake Winnipeg.

Promises to keep, Mr. Speaker. It wasn't titled that, we'll do one thing before the election and then do something else after, like the Tories do with the sale of MTS. That's not the title of this document. This was a document produced by the First Nations through the WNO, produced by the people who actually attended these meetings, unlike our opposition; produced by those people who said to us, you have a solemn duty to follow through on the *Promises to Keep* document, and all these recommendations on that is what we're doing.

That's what we're doing, Mr. Speaker. We're taking the lead of the First Nations in the area and we're saying to them, we're doing what you've asked us to do. We're not going to be like others who come forward and say, we're going to pave your streets with gold by building a bipole down the east side. That's just ridiculous. That's the Conservative Party of Manitoba who could care less about the economic development of the people on the east side of Lake Winnipeg, setting it up so that they could run a

bipole down the east side, sell power somewhere else.

This is a direct-current line, by the way, if anybody on the other side cares to know that. You can't just run your booster cables up from the local TV station and get power. What's the economic development opportunity here? Two summers of bush clearing. That's the price that our friends across the way think is good on behalf of the people who live on the east side of Lake Winnipeg. That's what they think is a good deal economically for the people on this side make. We think they deserve better.

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

**Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to put my thoughts on the record in support of the Opposition Day motion on Manitoba Hydro bipole.

I want to start with referencing the Premier's (Mr. Doer) comments earlier today when he made reference to the last Opposition Day debate, was on a motion that was debated before I was elected. To me, that's offensive. In 2003 I was elected. He has a gap of four years. He does not realize that we have had debates on health care and, more importantly to my constituency, in the economic aspects, is the debate we had on BSE. But I guess the Premier of this province, who represents a party that, federally, can't decide the difference between the BSE and SARS, I shouldn't be surprised.

Mr. Speaker, I really want to put some notes on record here regarding this east-side/west-side debate. I want to speak to you about our policy that we put out during the election on the east side. Any development of the east side would be done in full co-operation with the communities that would be affected. We would ensure that they are fully involved in the process and are assured that any developments would only be undertaken so that the benefits are mutual.

An east-side line presents an opportunity to proactively develop the east side of Lake Winnipeg, and we believe that this is an opportunity that must be taken, not as the Member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson) had indicated, that it's a short-term gain for long-term pain.

Mr. Speaker, I want to speak about the benefits of an east-side line and the reasons for that. The United Nations ranks Canada sixth among 174 countries for the quality of life enjoyed by our

citizens. However, according to statistics from the Assembly of First Nations and other sources, if the standard of living experienced by Aboriginal communities in Canada were measured, it would rank 68th. Currently, the 67th, 68th and 69th ranked countries are Belarus, Dominica and Brazil.

Currently, 23 First Nations are not accessible by an all-weather road. This represents more than half of Manitoba's First Nations people. There are also many Aboriginal Manitobans living off-reserve in the north and in rural Manitoba and including the Métis, Mr. Speaker, who are disconnected from the rest of the province. The Manitoba First Nations communities that are not served by an all-weather road must rely on winter roads or air service to transport goods. This drives up costs and limits access to fresh produce, meat and dairy products.

Mr. Speaker, a study conducted by the Caledon Institute of Social Policy found that Manitoba has the highest drop-out rate among on-reserve youth in Canada. A study found that 70 percent of the on-reserve First Nations never complete high school. We need to be looking at ways to have children of the north to complete school, to get an education, to appreciate and value the benefits that we all appreciate and enjoy in society.

On isolated reserves and in many northern communities, the unemployment rate is extremely high with some communities experiencing unemployment rates as high as 90 percent. Mr. Speaker, many of these communities have health challenges. First Nations people are 1.7 percent more likely to be diagnosed with arthritis or rheumatism, 2.7 percent times more likely to suffer from hypertension, 2.9 times more likely to have heart disease, 6.5 times more likely to have tuberculosis, 10.7 times more likely to have AIDS or HIV, and experience epidemic rates of diabetes. The life expectancy of First Nations people is 7.4 percent years less than males, and 5.2 percent years less for females than it is for non-Aboriginals.

Mr. Speaker, we're talking about the reasons for an east-side development. We're talking about the economics and the health benefits for communities that want to get past these statistics, to improve the statistics so that they can lead healthy, long lives.

We've heard from the Island Lake Tribal Council. They represent four Island Lake First Nations who wrote the Premier (Mr. Doer) on October 10. The letter states the decision is a significant setback to economic potential and

opportunity for First Nations and for the province of Manitoba. The trade-off is simply too exorbitant a price to pay, Mr. Speaker. The chiefs believe that the Premier should have factored in the economic benefits to one of the most economically depressed regions in the province when making a decision on bipole 3.

Mr. Speaker, David Chartrand of the MMF has stated that Manitoba Métis people have not been consulted. The Métis people have a long, historical attachment to lands on both the east side and west side of Lake Winnipeg. Economically, these lands are very important for the health and well-being of these people. People of the land, as the minister from Rupertsland had indicated, but they were not consulted. I find this extremely disturbing that the minister and others from the other side of the House have indicated that consultations have taken place. We have leaders from these communities who have said consultation has not taken place. So they've contradicted themselves and have offended many in these communities.

Elijah Harper has stated that it is immoral to block hydro line and perpetuate poverty. He has highlighted that more than 95 percent of the residents of the east side of Manitoba are First Nations citizens. The population is growing rapidly. Living conditions fall far below the standard expected for Canadians, and, Mr. Speaker, unemployment, poverty and disease rates are high. A few months ago, one opinion in a Supreme Court of Canada case noted that the small community of God's Lake consisting of fewer than 1,300 people accounts for 10 percent of the tuberculosis cases of Manitoba.

\* (16:30)

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The hour being 4:30, pursuant to rule 28(14), I must interrupt the debate to put the question on the motion of the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. McFadyen).

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some Honourable Members:** Yes.

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

#### Voice Vote

**Mr. Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion, say yea.

**Some Honourable Members:** Yea.

**Mr. Speaker:** All those opposed to the motion, say nay.

**Some Honourable Members:** Nay.

**Mr. Speaker:** In my opinion, the Nays have it.

#### Formal Vote

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition Deputy House Leader):** I request a recorded vote, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** A recorded vote having been requested, call in the members.

The question before the House is the Opposition Day Motion as moved by the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

#### Division

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

#### Yeas

*Briese, Derkach, Driedger, Dyck, Eichler, Faurshou, Gerrard, Goertzen, Graydon, Lamoureux, Maguire, McFadyen, Mitchelson, Pedersen, Rowat, Schuler, Stefanson, Taillieu.*

#### Nays

*Allan, Altemeyer, Ashton, Bjornson, Blady, Braun, Brick, Chomiak, Dewar, Doer, Howard, Irvin-Ross, Jennissen, Jha, Korzeniowski, Lemieux, Mackintosh, Maloway, Marcelino, Martindale, McGifford, Melnick, Nevakshonoff, Oswald, Reid, Robinson, Rondeau, Saran, Selby, Selinger, Struthers, Swan, Wowchuk.*

**Madam Deputy Clerk (Bev Bosiak):** Yeas 18, Nays 33.

**Mr. Speaker:** I declare the motion lost.

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**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader):** Yes, Mr. Speaker, I wonder if it's the willingness of the House to call it 5 o'clock.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is it the will of the House to call it 5 o'clock? *[Agreed]*

It's been agreed to, so, the hour being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow (Thursday).

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, October 31, 2007

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