

Letter: Paul Davis must be dreaming in Technicolor

The Telegram

Published: Jan 25, 2018 at 12:39 a.m.

Updated: Jan 27, 2018 at 6 a.m.



Progressive Conservative Leader Paul Davis. — Telegram file photo

Paul Davis, former premier and current Leader of the Opposition, has grasped his last straw. He is sinking rapidly under the waters of the Muskrat Falls reserv. He is beyond saving.

According to The Telegram ("Pennies on the power," Jan. 23), Davis "counts himself among the camp of believers that the long-term benefits of Muskrat Fall will extend to future generations, and says the "Lower Churchill River developments have the potential to stand alongside projects like the Hoover Dam."

The good spinmeister is certainly going out in style. Or perhaps he's just dog paddling until the leadership convention when Ches Crosbie jumps in to save the lot of us.

Good grief! The good spinmeister is certainly going out in style. Or perhaps he's just dog paddling until the leadership convention when Ches Crosbie jumps in to save the lot of us.

A few facts regarding Hoover Dam will serve to uncover the galling ruse. Built from 1931 to 1936 for \$49 million (\$750 million today), that's about six per cent 2018 dollars of the current cost (\$12.7 billion) of Muskrat Falls.

Expected to take seven years to build, it was completed two years early and produces two and a half times (2,000 megawatts) the expected Muskrat Falls output (820 MW). And it has ample markets servicing 8 million people in three states. Even with its obvious merits, experts say that due to environmental concerns, it would not be approved today.

Muskat Falls alone will cost \$12,000 million more to build than Hoover Dam! If one was to add Phase 2, i.e. Gull Island (2,250 MW), into the cost equation, the numbers would be truly astronomical.

Comparing Hoover Dam to the lower Churchill reminds me of the 1998 U.S. vice-presidential debate when Dan Quayle compared himself to JFK, only to be forever reminded by an adversary "Senator, you are no Jack Kennedy."

To give the spin doctor his due, perhaps Davis was referring to the Lower Churchill's potential to attract tourists. After all, Hoover Dam attracts 7 million visitors a year, being only 500 miles from Las Vegas. That's about the same driving distance from St. Anthony to Happy Valley-Goose Bay. And only three times the distance from St. John's. Think about that when the lights go out after 2020 and you are waiting for Nalcor to find the terrestrial or sub-sea break.

I for one, however, would be willing to go up for a gawk. After all, how many times in your life can you expect to see an Italian styled, gold-brushed, white elephant with pink, white and green hues?

As for his comrades in the "camp of believers," are any of them running in the next provincial election? If so, please let us know who they are.

Tom Hawco

St. John's