



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Don Toth
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Speaker — Hon. Don Toth
 Premier — Hon. Brad Wall
 Leader of the Opposition — Dwain Lingenfelter

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Atkinson, Pat	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Belanger, Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Hon. Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Boyd, Hon. Bill	SP	Kindersley
Bradshaw, Fred	SP	Carrot River Valley
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
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Higgins, Deb	NDP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Hutchinson, Hon. Bill	SP	Regina South
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Junor, Judy	NDP	Saskatoon Eastview
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Krawetz, Hon. Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
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McMorris, Hon. Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
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Morgan, Hon. Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Morin, Sandra	NDP	Regina Walsh Acres
Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
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Quennell, Frank	NDP	Saskatoon Meewasin
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Tell, Hon. Christine	SP	Regina Wascana Plains
Toth, Hon. Don	SP	Moosomin
Trew, Kim	NDP	Regina Coronation Park
Vermette, Doyle	NDP	Cumberland
Wall, Hon. Brad	SP	Swift Current
Weekes, Randy	SP	Biggar
Wilson, Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Yates, Kevin	NDP	Regina Dewdney

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Crown Investments Corporation.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to rise today to welcome some very special guests in the legislature. Joining with us today in your gallery are members of the Campbell Collegiate chapter of Students Against Drinking and Driving, otherwise known as SADD; their adviser Jessica Hodsmen; Tim Spelliscy, the provincial director of SADD Saskatchewan; Darrell Liebrecht from the SaskTel Pioneers; and Shannon Ell from SGI's [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] traffic safety promotion area. Welcome to this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, the guests are here today to launch SADD's annual Red Ribbon campaign by distributing red ribbons to all members of the Assembly. The red ribbons are for people to display on their vehicle to show their commitment not to drink and drive. And thanks to the financial support of SaskTel Pioneers, over 1 million ribbons have been distributed in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, impaired driving is the number one cause of fatal collisions on our province's roads. So today is a very special day because it's also the National Day of Remembrance for Road Crash Victims, a day to honour those who have been killed or seriously injured. SGI is very proud to work with SADD, one of their key safety partners to help raise awareness about drinking and driving.

So, Mr. Speaker, I ask all my colleagues to join with me in welcoming the SADD members and the other members in the legislature today.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Massey Place.

Mr. Broten: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join with the minister in welcoming the students, these important leaders, to the Assembly today, Mr. Speaker. The work that they do to increase awareness about the dangers of drinking and driving, and how, Mr. Speaker, drinking and driving is a real concern in society. Their work is good work, and I thank them for coming today. And I thank them for their work throughout the year. So I join with the member in welcoming the students.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for the Environment.

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you a number of guests that are seated in your gallery. Later today I'll be introducing a government Bill that will recognize the importance of hunting,

fishing, and trapping to Saskatchewan, and that it recognizes our heritage and our way of life.

And joining us today, Mr. Speaker, from Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation — I'd ask you to stand or wave — Ray Wild, Darrell Crabbe, Robert Fournier; from the Saskatchewan Outfitters Association, Hal Stupnikoff; from the Saskatchewan Flyfishers Association, Wayne and Janelle Phillips. From the Saskatchewan Trappers Association, Don Gordon; from the Saskatchewan Alliance for Wildlife and Agriculture, Joyce Lorenz, Helen Young, and Ron Young. From the Saskatchewan Black Powder Association, Sam Brailean and Brian Richmond. And joining us from the Ministry of Environment today as well are Lyle Saigeon and Lin Gallagher.

Mr. Speaker, a number of our guests also participate on our wildlife advisory committee. All the folks that are joining us today and the rest of the members of their organizations are dedicated to our province and to our environment and wildlife management.

And I would ask that all members join me in welcoming them to their Assembly today.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, I too would like to recognize and welcome the guests from the Wildlife Federation and other organizations to the legislature here today. Thank you for the good work that you do. And it's much appreciated by obviously the entire province because it's not always work that's recognized and thanked, but it's certainly most definitely appreciated. So I'd like to welcome the guests to the legislature here today, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly a group of producers, farmers, from around the province seated in your gallery who are here to visit with us in the Assembly. They're farmers who have been caught in the backdraft of the bankruptcy, the proposed bankruptcy, of Big Sky.

These are producers who in good faith grew the grain, produced it, hauled it to Big Sky, and haven't been paid. And they're here to listen in on the discussions. And I wish all members to join with me in welcoming them here today.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to present a petition in support of wage equity for CBO [community-based organization] workers. And I'd like to talk a little bit about that, that the low wages paid to the CBO workers, those in the community-based organizations, this low

wage results in high staff turnover. The subsequent lack of caregiver continuity has a negative impact on the quality of care clients receive. And we know that research demonstrates that CBO workers are paid on average 8 to \$10 an hour per hour less than employees performing work of equal value in government departments. And, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Assembly may be pleased to cause the development and implementation of a multi-year funding plan to ensure that CBO workers achieve wage equity with employees who perform work of equal value in government departments.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And, Mr. Speaker, these folks come from the good city of Regina. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition in support of a new long-term care facility in La Ronge. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately invest in the planning and construction of a new long-term care beds in La Ronge.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

It is signed by the good people of La Ronge and area and has had hundreds of signatures for this petition. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Massey Place.

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand today to present a petition in support of fairness for Saskatchewan students through the necessary expansion of the graduate retention program. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately expand the graduate retention program to include master's and Ph.D. graduates.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, the individuals who signed this petition, I see one is from the good constituency of Saskatoon Massey Place, and the other individuals are from the city of Regina. I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

Ms. Morin: — Thank you. I rise today, Mr. Speaker, to present yet another petition on behalf of rural residents of Saskatchewan who question why the Sask Party government is leaving them behind with respect to providing safe and affordable water, and who have yet not heard a word from the

Sask Party as to any commitment of assistance. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to financially assist the town of Duck Lake residents for the good of their health and safety due to the exorbitant water rates being forced on them by a government agency, and that this government fulfills its commitment to rural Saskatchewan.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, these petitions are signed by the good residents of Duck Lake. I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Fairview.

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition in support of maintaining quality health care services. And we all hope the Government of Saskatchewan recognize the essential role of all health care providers as valued members to the health care team.

Mr. Speaker, we all understand that through the commitment of adequate funding and installation of good faith, and collective bargaining process would go a long way to doing that. And the petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to commit to maintaining quality health care services and job security for all public health care providers.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And the petitions are signed, Mr. Speaker, by people from Clavet, Martensville, Delisle, Saskatoon, Guernsey, and Lanigan. I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from The Battlefords.

Mr. Taylor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased today to rise to present a petition in support of affordable rents and housing in The Battlefords, Mr. Speaker.

The petitioners note that the vacancy rate for rental accommodation in The Battlefords is very low, but the cost of rental accommodation is increasing at an alarming rate. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to call upon the Government of Saskatchewan to develop an affordable housing program that will result in a greater number of quality and affordable rental units to be made available to a greater number of people throughout The Battlefords and that will implement a process of rent review or rent control to better protect tenants in a non-competitive housing environment.

Mr. Speaker, the petitioners are all residents of Killdeer Apartments in the city of North Battleford. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present petitions on behalf of concerned residents of our province as it relates to the unprecedented mismanagement of their finances by the Sask Party. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the Sask Party government to start managing our provincial finances responsibly and prudently to ensure that it does not continue its trend of massive budgetary shortfalls, runaway and unsustainable spending, equity stripping from our Crowns, and irresponsible revenue setting.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

These are signed by good folks and concerned residents of Regina and Kindersley. I so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Carrot River Valley.

Students Against Drinking and Driving

Mr. Bradshaw: — Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the young people from Students Against Drinking and Driving, also known as SADD, who are in your gallery with us here today, Mr. Speaker.

SADD is committed to helping reduce the number of impaired driving collisions in Saskatchewan down to zero. A lofty goal, Mr. Speaker, but an extremely worthwhile one. Mr. Speaker, last year alone, 71 people were killed in Saskatchewan and almost 1,000 more were injured in collisions involving a drunken driver. These numbers certainly demonstrate the needs for groups like SADD who are dedicated to helping make our roads safer.

Initiatives like the Red Ribbon campaign demonstrate how SADD is a leader in raising public awareness on the dangers of impaired driving. Thanks to SADD and the generous financial support of the SaskTel Pioneers, well over 1 million red ribbons have been distributed throughout Saskatchewan. Each one of these ribbons serves as a visual reminder of the dangers of impaired driving. I know I will display my red ribbon proudly on my vehicle, and I welcome and encourage all members to do the same.

These SADD members are indeed a part of a bright and impressive generation. Our future is in good hands.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

La Ronge Seniors Club

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to draw attention to the amazing work done by the La Ronge Seniors Club and its members from La Ronge, Air Ronge, and surrounding area. The La Ronge Seniors Club was started 40 years ago by Lyla Gibson and Chris Holmstrup in an effort to provide services and support to the seniors in La Ronge.

The Seniors Club is non-profit and is mostly run by volunteers. The continuation of the club is a testament to the undying spirit and hard work done by its members. Although there are only 15 members, they keep going, running solely on their dedication to the club.

The Seniors Club recently had a substantial fundraising drive to raise funds for a new building. They raised an amazing \$210,000 through lunches, exhibition bingos, several suppers for different occasions, and carpet bowling. Getting a new building was costly, but I am happy to report that it is now partially opened. They do have to pay for utilities, but their land tax is free, a donation from the town of La Ronge.

The facility is now being used by home care for foot care and for fitness classes. They also have regular Friday bingos and serve lunches for craft fairs. The services that they provide contribute to the strong sense of community in the La Ronge and area and are very much appreciated.

Mr. Speaker, I am asking all members to join me in congratulating the La Ronge Seniors Club for their continued operation, hard work, and dedication. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Thunder Creek.

Saskatchewan Order of Merit Recipients

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Tuesday, November 17th, five people were invested by Lieutenant Governor Gordon Barnhart into the Saskatchewan Order of Merit at a ceremony here in Regina.

Harold MacKay, a Regina lawyer, has served with numerous organizations and has received many awards and honours including the Order of Canada.

[13:45]

Linda Rudachyk, a social worker from Weyburn, has served with many groups and has received many awards as well for her efforts on behalf of at-risk children.

Lorne Scott of Indian Head is a former provincial Environment minister who has served with many organizations dedicated to preserving the natural world in addition to his many years as a public servant.

Grant Devine, whose hard work led to the diversification of our economy, was elected leader of the Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan in 1979 and was premier of Saskatchewan from 1982 to 1991.

Dr. David Millar, a chiropractor from Regina, is a tireless

volunteer who is currently working on Creative Kids, a community-based initiative for helping vulnerable children to participate in the arts.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask the House to join me in congratulating these individuals for their great achievements. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

Nine-Man Football Championship

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last Saturday the Saskatchewan High Schools Athletic Association held the 2009 nine-man provincial football championship in Lumsden. The final game saw the Swan Valley Tigers taking on the Lumsden Devils. I congratulate both teams and their coaches for making it to the final.

Lumsden was trailing early on, but scored 28 straight points before half-time, sailing their way to victory. I would like to extend special congratulations to head coach Luke Dunville, defensive coach Dan McDougall, and special teams coach Verne Barber.

The Lumsden Devils were led by no. 12, Jesse Kearly; no. 20, Kelsey Peterson; no. 25, Shylo Neumann; no. 66, Joshua Taylor; no. 69, Brett Burns; and no. 70, Brian Skidmore.

We all know how important football is to our province as all citizens, no matter their political stripes, unite behind the Saskatchewan Roughriders. I'm sure we'll all be cheering on Sunday as they take on the Stamps. In the tradition of many great Saskatchewan football players, perhaps some of these talented, young players may one day grace the fields at Taylor Field and don the green and white for our province.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join with me in congratulating the Lumsden Devils on their victory, and all Saskatchewan nine-man football teams for their dedication, athleticism, and sportsmanship. And of course, Mr. Speaker, go Roughriders. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Northwest.

Addictions Awareness Week

Mr. LeClerc: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today is Saskatchewan's Addictions Awareness Week which coincides with National Addictions Awareness Week. Communities, organizations, and agencies across the province are holding various activities to raise public awareness.

Mr. Speaker, addictions do not discriminate. It can affect every family. As most are aware, I too was a 20-year drug addict at one time. I'm also the founder of Teen Challenge Saskatchewan, a long-term, residential addiction treatment centre. Past MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] Ted Merriman, who I replaced in my riding, highlighted this issue with his own daughter Kelly, who was fighting a crystal meth addiction. The Ministry of Health provides support for Addiction Awareness Week by helping to develop, produce,

and distribute resource material for the folks of Saskatchewan.

Our government is committed to reducing drug and alcohol use and breaking the cycle of all addictions. We recently announced the formation of a new addiction advisory committee with the goal of creating a provincial addictions agency to strengthen the current systems of prevention, education, and treatment services. We are moving forward by ensuring people with addictions and their families get the support they need and deserve. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Dance Students Perform with Moscow Ballet

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, six dance students from Moose Jaw's Dance Images by BJ tried out for the Moscow Ballet's performance of *The Nutcracker* that was presented this month here in Regina.

There was no guarantee that the six students would meet the strict requirements of the ballet company. However Line Kyed, Hannah Brown, Cordell Bellrose, Rachael Carline, Riley Copeman, and Tessa Gray accompanied the professionals on stage at the Conexus Art Centre. The dancers, ranging in age from 8 to 15, have been rehearsing in Regina once a week since August and continued on this gruelling schedule right up until the show.

Being part of the Moscow Ballet's performance is a big commitment, but teacher and owner of the dance studio, Barb Jackman, is confident that her students have what it takes to shine in their individual performances.

This is not the first year that the dance studio has had students participate in the ballet, but to have six dancers this year is very exciting. The characters that the dancers have been cast in range from a partygoer, to a mouse, to an angel, and one dancer who has been given the opportunity to do some pointe work.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members join me in congratulating these young dancers and Barb Jackman for their dedication to the art of entertainment and their contribution, not only to international culture, but to Moose Jaw's cultural heritage. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Sutherland.

8th Annual Home Safe Home Gala

Ms. Schriemer: — Mr. Speaker, last weekend I had the privilege of attending the 8th annual Home Safe Home gala dinner in support of Saskatoon Interval and Adelle House. Interval and Adelle House provide a safe environment for women and their children in times of need. Adelle House provides a 12-unit affordable housing program that assists and supports a new start. They also provide counselling, referral, and advocacy services.

Mr. Speaker, the cycle of abuse is psychologically complicated and often victims of violence will blame themselves and not

tell. Dinner speaker, CTV [Canadian Television Network Ltd.] news anchor Trish Cheveldayoff, grew up keeping the secret of what went on behind closed doors in her childhood home. Her brave face never disclosed the trials she experienced.

Trish shared her journey, which included facing critical issues. She chose spirituality and acknowledged how the love and joy of her family provides strength. Trish displays a positive sense of humour and the belief that everything will be okay. Trish's journey is a powerful statement to the human spirit. Stories like Trish's inspire the work being done at Interval and Adelle House.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in applauding Trish for sharing her journey, and also thanking Interval and Adelle House staff for recognizing and nurturing the human spirit in others. Thank you.

QUESTION PERIOD

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Support for Farmers

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Agriculture. And the minister will know that over the last couple of decades, up till 2007, the hog industry in this province was growing, flourishing, reaching a peak in 2007. And since that time, like much of the economy of Saskatchewan, the hog production has been in decline. And in fact, last week, Big Sky Farms, one of the largest, or if not the largest hog operation, filed for credit protection.

My question to the minister is, in this process many grain farmers have been delivering grain to Big Sky Farms. They grew the grain in good faith. They fertilized. They harvested. They brought the grain to Big Sky, and now haven't been paid. My question to the minister: how many farmers are left holding the bag for this credit protection under the mismanagement of this government?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And to the member opposite, that we certainly also empathize with the producers that are caught out there with money owing them from Big Sky, as we do with all accounts receivable to Big Sky. There's a number of other businesses out there also caught in this process.

Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding that as of today Big Sky is contacting producers — if they haven't already, will be contacting producers — to update them on the situation. But also that contracts are being offered to producers out there who have hauled grain in the past to Big Sky, up to 40,000 bushels of barley at 40 cents per bushel over the current price, or 35,000 bushels of wheat at 50 cents over mill price.

Mr. Speaker, we hope also additionally that producers can recover some of the money that they're owed, if not all of it, through the settlement that comes out of Ernst & Young, and we are certainly hoping that happens.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, the minister will know that he has a number of representatives on the board of Big Sky Farms. Now let me get this straight. The agreement or the help that is being offered is, the farmers who are owed money can haul more grain. And their promise is a 40-cent premium on the grain that they haul in the future, but no money for the grain they've hauled to date. That doesn't sound like a very good deal.

And my advice to farmers, to be very careful when dealing with this government when they make that kind of promise. I say to the minister, in light of the fact that Big Sky is now under credit protection and 63 per cent of this company is owned by the government and the government has members on the board, is it not the responsibility of his government to come forward and pay the bills owed to these farmers?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Bjornerud: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't think I have to remind the member opposite and the Leader of the Opposition who got us into this mess. Every taxpayer, every taxpayer in this province knows that that NDP [New Democratic Party] government was famous for picking winners and losers. We saw them put \$30 million into Big Sky and totally neglect every other part of the pork industry in this province. Mr. Speaker, if it wasn't for the NDP, we wouldn't be having this conversation today.

Mr. Speaker, I want to also remind the Leader of the Opposition about Moose Jaw pork, another venture that the NDP put taxpayers' dollars in and went under. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure my memory serves me correctly that there was producers like we have today that were owed money under that government's investment into Worldwide Pork. Did they get any compensation when the NDP was in power? Not one red cent, Mr. Speaker. So it's hypocritical of that leader to be saying today, don't do as I do; do as I say.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, the member, the minister can argue politics with me, but that's cold comfort for the hundreds of farmers, the hundreds of farmers who are out of pocket tens of thousands of dollars.

In fact, one of the farmers who is here today is owed \$100,000. This individual has also contracted a trucker to deliver that \$100,000 worth of grain and owes the trucking company \$7,000. Many of these farmers also have taken out a cash advance from the Canadian Wheat Board on their grain and are expected to pay it back.

My question to the minister is: when will he come to his senses and realize that it's his responsibility and the responsibility of the shareholders of the company to pay these farmers? Not a handout. This is for grain they delivered to a company that he's responsible for.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Bjornerud: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I find this line of questioning amazing. They were in power for 16 years. And I'll give you the example of Moose Jaw pork, which you had invested in and you did not compensate creditors in that situation. But, Mr. Speaker, I've got another example — Quadra and Community Pork Ventures, 2004 under the NDP. And there's a number of creditors across that area, investors out in that area. And did the NDP compensate any of those producers? Not one, Mr. Speaker.

So for that member, the Leader of the Opposition, to get up and say, well now we're not in power; you should be doing these things — after it was them that invested the \$30 million of taxpayers' money and lost it — I find very hypocritical once again, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Question to the minister. Obviously he's unaware of the fact that the federal government has put billions of dollars into the auto industry in Ontario, along with the taxpayers of Ontario and the taxpayers of Saskatchewan. General Motors is now coming out, paying back the debt. And that's how governments in this country operate. And we argue and urge this minister to go to Ottawa and get the support for the hog industry that other governments have got for their industry. That's what we're asking.

My question to the minister is this: they argue that they have no money left, that they can't afford to pay the people who grew the grain. And yet they have money for Doug Emsley. They have money for Garnet Garven. They have money for the friends of the Sask Party, but none for the grain producers who are left holding the bag. When are they going to change this unfair attitude and come to the assistance of these grain farmers?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Bjornerud: — Well, Mr. Speaker, last night I had the good fortune to go to a pork symposium in Saskatoon. And the message was loud and clear from the entire pork industry out there: do not continue to pick winners and losers and do not continue to support Big Sky at the expense of every other hog producer in this province. And they reminded me that actually a number of the other hog producers with tax dollars were going in to support Big Sky while at the same time neglecting the entire industry.

Mr. Speaker, let's go back to some of the other investments this NDP government made when they were in power. SPUDCO, [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company] does that come to mind? \$35 million, Mr. Speaker. We could do a lot for farmers in this province if we had that 35 million. Navigata, Mr. Speaker.

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. Order. Members will come to order and allow the minister to respond to the question. The Minister of Agriculture.

[14:00]

Hon. Mr. Bjornerud: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Navigata alone was a \$90 million loss. We could do a lot for hog producers and producers like are in the gallery today if we still had that. But that government invested it and lost those taxpayer dollars.

On top of that, the Agri-Food Equity Fund, the member opposite knows well, this was programs to invest in private business out there. That NDP government invested 31 million in those ventures, lost \$22 million. Mr. Speaker, when you add that up, that's in excess of \$150 million. We could do a lot for farmers in this province if we still had those taxpayers' dollars in the General Revenue Fund.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Criminal Record Checks

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the government has tabled legislation to make public any criminal record checks for individuals running for elected positions at the municipal level. When asked what type of records would be made public, the minister said, and I quote:

It would be a level 1 criminal record check. It makes public that there is a record and states what the offence was.

There are four levels of criminal record checks in Canada that have a range of documents that are made public as a result of the check. For example, a level 3 check might tell you that an individual has been charged with a multitude of offences, some of which were plea bargained away and some of which were stayed — that is, put on the shelf but not disposed of finally.

To the Minister of Municipal Affairs: why does he feel that these sorts of charges are not relevant and that other documents are?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Municipal Affairs.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the critic for her first question on this. It's only taken about three or four weeks to get to an MA [Municipal Affairs] question. But I can tell the member opposite, Mr. Speaker, that the option of having criminal record checks was something requested by the northern committee reviewing the Act. This was something that they asked for. This was something that we were happy to respond to, Mr. Speaker, and it's included in the Act.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Ms. Higgins: — Well, Mr. Speaker, we found out yesterday from the government that they are interested in making it compulsory for criminal background checks to be made public for people seeking public office as MLAs at the provincial level.

The Minister of Justice said, and I quote, "It was a bit of a

non-issue for our government because we already included as part of the process when a candidate wants to run for the party, they have to file a criminal record check.” When asked if there was anyone in the Sask Party caucus that had a criminal record, the Minister of Justice said, and I quote, “I’m not aware of anybody.” He also said on making it mandatory at the provincial level, “. . . the more the public knows about a candidate before they run for office, the better-informed their decision is . . .”

So to the Minister of Justice: is he saying that if a member of the Sask Party caucus has a criminal record check that is not currently public, does he agree that it should be made public?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Municipal Affairs.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that I can see why the NDP would be worried about criminal record checks for members of the legislature being made public, Mr. Speaker, with the current predicament that the Leader of the Opposition finds himself in.

Mr. Speaker, with regard to the Sask Party, I don’t see how that’s within the administrative competence of the government. But I can tell, I can tell the House that the Saskatchewan Party requires criminal record checks to be conducted for anybody looking to seek our nomination, which is not the case for the NDP.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Ms. Higgins: — Well, Mr. Speaker, on the topic of *The Election Act* and the possible changes that the Sask Party are planning on bringing forward, a reporter asked the Minister of Justice, and I quote, “If somebody had a drunk driving conviction from 20 years ago, would that disqualify them as a Sask Party candidate?” The Minister of Justice said, and I quote, “No. They file the document, and the party and the constituency association would make a determination on it.”

Well the current Minister of Energy and Resources does in fact have this issue in his recent past. I have a court document here where the minister was charged in 2005 where he, and I quote, “. . . did, while his ability to operate a motor vehicle was impaired by alcohol, did operate a grey 2001 Chev pickup.” And then the minister was also charged with, and I quote, “. . . without reasonable excuse, refused to comply with a demand made to him to provide samples of his breath.”

My question is: was the Sask Party policy followed? And were these charges brought to the attention of the party and the Kindersley constituency association?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, this is nothing but a horrible drive-by smear from the members of the opposition. They should be embarrassed. And I would ask them to stand in their place and withdraw any kind of this kind of accusation.

The Saskatchewan Party has a long-standing practice, since its

inception, of expecting to have criminal record checks done. The information is provided by the prospective candidate, analyzed by the appropriate committee, and determinations are made whether a candidate is appropriate to run for office. And, Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that the members on this side of the House are quality candidates, good citizens, good members of their community. And, Mr. Speaker, we look at those things.

We make careful and accurate, well assessed determinations, unlike the members opposite who have no kind of scrutiny, no kind of assessment whatever. And now they have the nerve to stand in the House today and make accusations of the members on this side of the House. Mr. Speaker, that is going to be a strange method of them doing anything, Mr. Speaker. The public should have no confidence in that kind of members opposite — none whatever.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Ms. Higgins: — Well, Mr. Speaker, just to take a minute to examine the possible changes that the Sask Party are bringing forward to *The Election Act*. The charge of refusing to blow in the Criminal Code carries the exact same penalties as driving while impaired. The two charges are basically considered to be identical for all practical purposes.

The charges against the Minister of Energy and Resources were stayed. It is exactly these types of charges that would show up on a level 3 check, but not necessarily on a level 1 check. And it’s appalling that the minister would expect others to live by standards that he is not willing to stand up to.

To the Minister of Justice: when it comes time to bring forward legislation for people seeking to become an MLA, will it be a level 3 check or will he stick with the level 1 check to protect people like members of his caucus?

And my question to the minister is: has the Sask Party policy been followed and were these charges brought to the attention of the party and the Kindersley constituency association?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, there’s been a review prepared through the Chief Electoral Officer of *The Election Act*. There is a search under way for a new Chief Electoral Officer. Various things dealing with the election . . . will be dealt with and will be dealt with in due course. Probably in the next few months, there’ll be a review taken. There’ll be consultation with the members opposite.

And what I would like to invite the members opposite to do is consider amending their practice so that they would require criminal record checks of their prospective candidates. It’s something that is already being done on this side of the House and I’d like to challenge the members over there to perhaps start conducting that review.

And maybe they would like to start conducting that review immediately instead of waiting for the next election, because the members over here did it the last election, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

Management of Provincial Economy

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Tomorrow the minister will be releasing his replacement for the most irresponsible budget in this province's history when we see the mid-year report. This document will confirm that the minister's budget was based on phony revenue projections, particularly those of potash.

Simple question to the minister: what is he now forecasting potash revenues to be for this budget year, and how did he get this projection so very, very wrong?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Gantfoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know that the members opposite are awaiting with great anticipation the mid-year report that'll be released tomorrow, and so I will leave it until tomorrow to answer the specific nature of the member's question.

In general detail, I acknowledge that there are some challenges in this province with the potash file. That is for sure, Mr. Speaker, and that will be made even more clear tomorrow. The bottom line is in this province has got two stories occurring in it. They certainly have the challenges of the potash story. But there also is a very good news story related to all of the things that are happening in this province. Mr. Speaker, this government in this province has been able to realize \$300 million in tax savings for the people of Saskatchewan. And that is very, very important.

Mr. Speaker, because of our efforts we've taken 80,000 people off the tax rolls of this province completely. Mr. Speaker, that means for a family of four with \$35,000 income that they'll save over \$2,600. A single parent with two school-age children and a \$35,000 income will save more than 2,800. Mr. Speaker, this is the good news part of the story of Saskatchewan.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, there are a few distinct differences between this side of the Assembly and that side of the Assembly. This side of the Assembly chooses books over balloons. This side of the Assembly chooses accounting over cheerleading. And this side of the Assembly chooses plain talk over pompoms, Mr. Speaker.

The minister keeps trying to excuse his phony revenue projections by saying nobody could've known. Not correct, Mr. Speaker. An analyst's report from Merrill Lynch dated October 2008 states the effect of falling grain prices. I quote: "Grain sell-off pressures fertilizer demand and prices." Further, a report from Rabobank, the world's largest lender to farmers, dated January 7, I quote,

Global prices for fertilizer and agricultural chemicals are expected to be "significantly" lower in 2009 . . . driven by a fall in demand and the global financial crisis . . .

A report from the Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Illinois, dated January 14, I quote, "Fertilizer prices likely to decline in 2009."

Question to the minister: can he not read?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Gantfoer: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, when the member opposite said there's a distinct difference between members on that side of the House and this side of the House, he is absolutely correct. This side of the House believes in the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, this side of the House will accept the challenge of the falling potash revenue and do it with a balanced approach, and we will deal with it.

But, Mr. Speaker, we will also make sure that this side of the House recognizes the other side of Saskatchewan's economy which is doing very well, thank you. Sébastien Levoie, the Laurentian Bank economist, says, "Saskatchewan and Manitoba are breezing through the economic and financial crisis with an ease that must make other regions envious."

Mr. Speaker, the Dominion Bond Rating Service has given Saskatchewan a credit upgrade, saying that particularly they cite debt reduction, fiscal prudence, and sound economic fundamentals as the reason why they're giving us the upgrade. These are the experts in the field that are looking at Saskatchewan in comparison to other provinces and saying Saskatchewan is the place to be. The only people who don't realize that are the 20 members opposite.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, that same bond rating agency that the minister refers to, and again he selectively plucks statistics, also says that under the Sask Party, their economy, our economy is shrinking, and that's a concern, Mr. Speaker.

The minister continues to try to explain away his unprecedented mistake on potash revenues. I wonder how he's going to explain this one. I have here a news release dated on January 5th, 2009 which says, I quote:

"Toward the end of the quarter . . . worldwide crop nutrient sales activity dropped sharply and it is expected to remain weak through at least the third quarter" . . .

"Because of these conditions, we are reducing our production to manage excess inventories . . ."

These words, Mr. Speaker, these words, where did these come from? They came from our own backyard, from Mosaic, one of Saskatchewan's leading potash producers. How did the minister miss these comments, Mr. Speaker?

Was the minister too busy listening to the Premier's empty rhetoric and cheerleading to hear and see the storm clouds gathering?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Gantefer: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I have acknowledged and I will certainly further acknowledge tomorrow in the mid-year report the challenge of the decreased potash sales in this province. That is a fact that is true, and in hindsight everyone is looking back and wondering how it could have changed so dramatically.

Mr. Speaker, that is not only true of the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Energy and Resources. It is also true of the potash companies themselves. But, Mr. Speaker, those same potash companies believe in a very concrete fashion in the future of the potash industry because they're committed to continue their capital expansion to the tunes of several billions of dollars in this province. BHP Billiton is actively exploring the creation of a new mine in the Jansen area. And so those sorts of things are going to help us moving forward.

[14:15]

But, Mr. Speaker, the fact is is that this province's economy is doing very, very well in general and the people of this province know that, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the *Financial Post*/CFIB [Canadian Federation of Independent Business] ranks five of the 10 best cities in the country to do business and five of them are in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. That's good news. And people in those cities understand that the economy is doing very well as opposed to those members.

The Speaker: — Order. I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, in recent days in daily newspapers, political and business columnists in articles have referred to this minister with many terms. These include confused, disingenuous, misleading, incompetent, to name but a few.

To the Minister of Finance: after his fine display of fiscal incompetence and blunder after blunder, why should Saskatchewan people have any trust in this minister or any faith in this minister as he tables his mid-year report tomorrow?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Gantefer: — Mr. Speaker, I've been around a good many years and I've had names called of me by better people than the minister opposite, or the member opposite. And you learn to get a little bit thick-skinned in this job, Mr. Speaker, and, you know, to understand that the . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You also learn to . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. That's once. Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You also

learn to understand that the people of this province are very, very positive about this government, about this economy, and about the direction for the course of the finances. All those members opposite have to do is look back last weekend, I believe, and look at the results of the two polls that were conducted in Saskatchewan to see what the people think of this government and what they think of the members of the opposition.

The Speaker: — Order. Before we move on, I just want to make this comment. I'm concerned about some of the level of questioning, and in particular the one question reflecting on individual members. There are certain guidelines. I didn't interrupt today because I want to make sure I've got the rules understood correctly. I will be reviewing some of the questions that were presented today to ensure that members and their well-being and personal accusations were not infringed upon.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 117 — *The Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Heritage Act*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 117, *The Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Heritage Act* be now introduced and read the first time.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Environment has moved first reading of Bill No. 117, *The Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Heritage Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried.

Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — When shall the Bill be considered a second time? I recognize the Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 118 — *The Milk Control Repeal Act*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 118, *The Milk Control Repeal Act* be now introduced and read the first time.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Agriculture has moved first reading of Bill 118, *The Milk Control Repeal Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried.

Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — When shall the Bill be considered a second time? I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Bjornerud: — Next sitting, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answers to questions 407 through 498.

The Speaker: — 407 through 498 tabled.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Dewdney.

Plan for Climate Change

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to continue speaking to the motion that's before the Assembly. And, Mr. Speaker, we listened with great interest yesterday as the minister brought the motion forward and explained to us what the intent of the motion was. We listened in great detail as the Premier urged us all to participate in this debate and to support moving forward on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan with a plan.

Mr. Speaker, we agree. We agree we need to move forward with a plan. And in fact, Mr. Speaker, at the conclusion of my remarks, I'm going to move an amendment to the motion that in fact will put their own plan forward, Mr. Speaker. It'll be their own plan, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, what we're urging the government to do is to reintroduce their own Bill, Bill No. 95, because we support that Bill. And, Mr. Speaker, we urge them to include in that Bill their own targets from their own election platform, Mr. Speaker, because we also support those.

So, Mr. Speaker, all we're asking this government to do is to support itself, Mr. Speaker, support its own position in moving forward, Mr. Speaker. So at the end of my remarks today, I'm going to move the following motion:

That the motion be amended by adding the following words at the end of the motion:

That this Assembly will support the government's plan as follows:

That Bill No. 95, *An Act Respecting the Management and Reduction of Greenhouse Gases and Adaptation to Climate Change* from the previous legislative session be reintroduced; and

That the targets the government campaigned on in the election from their platform document *Securing the Future: New Ideas for Saskatchewan*, that is a 32 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from current levels by 2020 and an 80 per cent reduction from current levels by 2050, be added as legislative targets into the legislation; and

That this legislation shall be passed by December the 3rd, 2009 giving the minister clear authority and an actual plan to present at Copenhagen.

So, Mr. Speaker, we're simply taking their own legislation. Legislation they put before this House saying they wanted it passed, which incidentally they haven't reintroduced, but we want reintroduced today, tomorrow, or as soon as possible so we can pass it prior to December the 3rd, 2009.

We want their legislation passed, Mr. Speaker. We want the government to have its legislation and direction passed. And, Mr. Speaker, we want their targets from their campaign platform passed, Mr. Speaker. And we support those targets and that legislation. And we commit today to pass it prior to December the 3rd, 2009, prior to the minister going to Copenhagen, so that there is clear, solid direction from this Assembly for the minister to take to the Copenhagen.

And, Mr. Speaker, we're not proposing amending anything. We're proposing accepting their legislation as it is. We're proposing to accept their targets as they are from their platform, Mr. Speaker. So we're being co-operative. We're being positive, and we want this minister to have, to have that mandate. We want that legislation passed prior to her going to Copenhagen on December the 3rd, 2009. And we the official opposition will support this. We will support their own legislation, and we'll support their own targets.

Mr. Speaker, if this government will live up to their own commitments, will actually re-table their own legislation, if they'll walk the talk, we're there with them. We're with the minister. We'll support her and we'll send her off to Copenhagen with a unanimous motion supporting that legislation, with a mandate, with a real plan with real substance. Not just a motion saying we have a plan, but actually with a plan. And, Mr. Speaker, that's what our amendment is about.

We listened to the Premier yesterday talking about, we need to be positive. We need to move forward. We need to have a vision for tomorrow that we can all live with, and we need to participate in our democracy. And we need to do it in a positive way, Mr. Speaker.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we've now had the opportunity to review some additional information that was provided, including Bill 95. We reviewed it in detail, and we support Bill 95. We want you to bring it into the legislature, and we want to pass it. And we support your targets. We support the 32 per cent by 2020, and we support the 80 per cent by 2050. We support your

election platform, and we support you bringing it forward.

And we make a solemn commitment today that we will pass that legislation with those targets in it before, before the minister has to go to Copenhagen. We'll do that. We'll take your position and we'll support it and we'll support you and we'll support the minister going to Copenhagen. We'll be positive. We're willing to be positive, Mr. Speaker.

And we, to show our true intent, Mr. Speaker, and our willingness to co-operate with the government in reaching its own legislation — it's not the opposition's legislation — and their own emission reduction targets, Mr. Speaker, we'll support them both. We'll support what they had in their election platform, Mr. Speaker, and we'll support their legislation.

And we encourage all members of this House to do just that because to do otherwise would be contrary to what our leader and Premier said yesterday. The Premier, the head of our government, asked us to be positive and co-operative. And, Mr. Speaker, we're doing just that. We want to be positive. We want to be co-operative. And we want to move forward with a real plan, a plan that was designed by the government, but we will say this: a good plan. It was your plan. We'll say the legislation is good legislation, Mr. Speaker. We'll say your targets in your election platform were good targets — 32 per cent by 2020. We applaud the minister for having that in their platform, and we applaud the government for putting that forward.

And, Mr. Speaker, we say we accept that. We accept their 32 per cent reduction by 2020, and we accept their legislation, Bill 95. And in combination of their real plan, their real substance, it achieves what the Premier asked us to do yesterday, by looking forward in a positive manner to really have a vision for tomorrow — a vision that looks after both our environment and our economy, Mr. Speaker.

And we agree with the government. We agree with the government. And we believe we can move forward in a constructive manner, in a way in which all of us can support, Mr. Speaker.

And we spent some time examining in detail the legislation, examining in detail the implications of their own targets within that legislation. And, Mr. Speaker, we applaud the Minister of the Environment for Bill No. 95, for the direction she's setting, for the contents of that Bill, and for the targets that they had in their election platform.

Mr. Speaker, the minister has done a wonderful job in putting forward this legislation in conjunction with their election platform targets. And we're actually going to say today that we will commit, and our motion locks us into a commitment to pass that Bill, with those targets, prior to December the 3rd, 2009.

And we want to send to the Premier a message that, yes, we want to be positive and co-operative in dealing with this very difficult challenge, perhaps the most difficult challenge that our province and the future generations in our province face. It's the combination of dealing with the issue of the environment and climate change in coordination and in consideration of our

economy.

And, Mr. Speaker, we all care. Every single one of the 58 members in this Assembly, I know, cares about our environment and care about our economy. And, Mr. Speaker, for those reasons, and taking the Premier's direction yesterday to heart when he asked us all to be willing to move forward in a positive way on this issue, we took that to heart.

And, Mr. Speaker, that's why today the official opposition is prepared to agree to their Bill No. 95 which we would like reintroduced immediately so we can actually move forward in a positive way. We ask the government to put that Bill back in and to simply include their own platform reduction targets, Mr. Speaker, and we have what we would call a real plan.

And it's their plan, Mr. Speaker. But when good work is done, you want to actually talk about good work. And if in fact you bring forward Bill 95 with those targets in it, Mr. Speaker, that is incredible work. It's the Copenhagen plan from Saskatchewan. The minister can go there with the support of all 58 members of this Assembly. Mr. Speaker, what more could the minister ask for? It's a positive alternative. It's direction, and it's meaningful.

Now we ask the government to simply introduce their own legislation, to simply put their own targets in the legislation, and we're all happy. We live up to what the Premier's asked us to do. The Premier wants us to move forward in a positive way. The members on both sides of the House can then support it and, Mr. Speaker, I think that we can actually then move forward in a meaningful way.

[14:30]

Now, Mr. Speaker, we've heard from the members opposite that they want this done. They want this motion passed. They want to have a meaningful plan to go to Copenhagen with.

They want the minister to have the endorsement of this Assembly, and we agree. And we agree with their plan. We just need to put it all together so everybody understands what the plan is. It's theirs. It's not ours. We're going to call it, in the future we can refer to it as the Copenhagen plan, the Saskatchewan Copenhagen plan. And the minister shall have the opportunity to talk to her colleagues and say, it's what we want to do. It's the right thing to do.

We heard in some detail yesterday, Mr. Speaker, that this motion had to be passed. In discussions we understand that the government has the desire to have the motion passed. We need to have a comprehensive plan, that the federal government understands it's a position of this legislature. It's a position of the government, but also supported by the opposition, strengthens the minister's hand and her position.

So on close examination and taking the Premier's request to heart, we spent considerable time reviewing their legislation. We spent hours in fact reviewing their legislation, looking at their targets from their election platform, and deciding that yes, yes, we could support their Bill No. 95, and we could support their targets from their election platform.

And in conjunction, Mr. Speaker, it makes a terrific plan. It makes a plan that the people of Saskatchewan can be proud of. It makes a plan that the government can be proud of. It makes a plan that the minister can take forward to Copenhagen and to her colleagues on the national stage and the international stage with pride, Mr. Speaker.

And in fact it does what the Premier asked the official opposition to do yesterday. And, Mr. Speaker, we're proud that we were able to compromise and come to a point that in fact we are responding to the request of the government, the Premier, in a positive way, in a manner in which would allow this issue to come to conclusion today. With this amendment, we're prepared to vote on the motion today, and as early as Monday or as early as tomorrow, if the government so wished, to pass the superseding motion as early as tomorrow, to move to deal with this legislation, Bill No. 95, to get it in place so the minister has her plan endorsed by this legislature in order to move forward.

Now, Mr. Speaker, our side of the House is now in a position to endorse the government's positions. And we're happy to move forward with Bill No. 95, to get it reintroduced in the House as early as today. We will, if necessary, if the government will agree to the motion as amended, I can be the final speaker, Mr. Speaker, and as early as later this afternoon, we can introduce Bill No. 95.

And we will allow the government, give them leave to do it outside the normal process so that we can in fact move forward with this very, very important piece of legislation in a expeditious manner. And, Mr. Speaker, I think that's in the interest of all of us.

And as we move forward, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that we want to have the Minister of the Environment have a solid footing when she goes to Copenhagen. We want her to clearly have a plan that's endorsed by this legislature. And you know, she put forward legislation last . . . on actually May the 11th. Unfortunately it was very close to the end of the session. But on reflection of that legislation, Mr. Speaker, it is something that in fact does put forward a concrete plan. All you have to do is add their very own targets, Mr. Speaker, from their own platform, to the document and in fact becomes a comprehensive plan. A plan in which you can just go to Copenhagen and say, Saskatchewan is united — united — both sides of the House.

In moving forward when dealing with the issue of climate change in conjunction with, you know, reinforcing the need to have a strong economy — meaning to balance the issues of economic growth and environmental sustainability — we can do that in Saskatchewan because we have a desire to do it. And I'm going to say that all 58 members of this Assembly have that same desire.

So all we have to do, Mr. Speaker, is take the government's own legislation and their own targets, and that's their plan. It's not the opposition's plan. It's their plan. Mr. Speaker, where credit's due, credit should be given. And we're going to give them credit for Bill No. 95 and their own, you know, greenhouse gas reduction targets from your election platform. Mr. Speaker, I'm sure they spent considerable time, considerable time putting their election platform together before

taking those promises to the people of Saskatchewan, before taking those very detailed promises to the people of Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, because we believe the Minister of the Environment, then the Environment critic, spent that type of time, we're going to agree to her 32 per cent reductions by 2020 and we're going to agree to her 80 per cent reductions from current levels by 2050. And, Mr. Speaker, we're going to agree with the legislation, Bill No. 95, that she introduced in this House and gave first reading to on May the 11th, 2009.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the only difficulty we have is getting the government to reintroduce their own legislation and get those targets in the legislation. But, Mr. Speaker, my amendment to their motion gives the framework to move forward. And if they agree to our amendment which clearly, clearly puts us in a position that we will pass this by December the 3rd, 2009, the last day of this fall sitting of the legislature, Mr. Speaker, so she will have that in hand to go to Copenhagen.

And after listening yesterday to an appeal by the Premier that we be co-operative in this issue, that we work together in the interest of the people of the province of Saskatchewan, we spent considerable time reviewing Bill No. 95. And we've come to the conclusion we'll live with Bill No. 95.

You know, to say it's absolutely perfect, you know, there are things that could be improved in Bill No. 95. But because it can be introduced quickly and passed by December the 3rd with our support and our help, we're prepared to accept the Bill as it was tabled with the targets which they promised the people of Saskatchewan, which they campaigned upon, and are their targets, Mr. Speaker — the 32 per cent reduction by 2020 and the 80 per cent reduction by 2050.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know what the people of Saskatchewan could expect or should expect any less from their government to keep their own targets and pass their own legislation. I think that's a reasonable expectation from the people of the province of Saskatchewan that the government would in fact pass its own legislation, keep its own targets.

And, Mr. Speaker, their targets . . . We realize that targets aren't always attainable, but they're targets. And it means that we may be, in some people's minds, reaching for more than is attainable.

But as we've often heard from the members opposite, you have to have hope in the future. You have to have vision. You have to reach for the stars. Well, Mr. Speaker, we'll support them in doing that. We'll support them in their targets and we'll support them in their legislation. And, Mr. Speaker, all we're asking is they support our amendment, an amendment that in fact brings forward their own legislation, their own targets, puts them in place, and becomes a comprehensive plan that we can actually pass prior to December 3rd, 2009.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it is a very, very, very important piece of legislation, Bill No. 95, because it's actually the plan. And if we pass Bill No. 95, we then have a concrete plan that we've all been able to see and examine, that we will have the opportunity to debate in the House over the next few days, hopefully. I will

undertake today, on behalf of the official opposition, to see the introduction and the speedy debate on this issue, such that we can get this very, important piece of legislation passed prior to December the 3rd, 2009.

Mr. Speaker, I think the Premier stood with a great deal of sincerity yesterday, asking for our co-operation, asking for us to work with the government to give a mandate to the Minister of the Environment. And, Mr. Speaker, yes we can do that, because we accept their own emission reduction targets from their election platform, Mr. Speaker. We will accept the 32 per cent by 2020 and we will accept the 80 per cent reduction by 2050. And, Mr. Speaker, we will accept their legislation, Bill No. 95, as they wrote it.

Mr. Speaker, as I said a few minutes ago, it's not perfect. With every piece of legislation there are things that each individual may be concerned about, but in its entirety the Bill and those reduction targets formulate a real plan, a plan of substance. And it's what they campaigned on. It's what they brought before this House. And now the Premier yesterday implored upon the official opposition to co-operate and work with them.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard repeatedly from the Premier, a promise made, a promise kept. He promised the people of Saskatchewan that they would reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 32 per cent for 2020, Mr. Speaker. Now that promise of course would take many years, till 2020, to keep. We don't expect today to see the actual outcome. It's 11 years from now. We'd all have to work together and co-operatively to reach those targets. But, Mr. Speaker, they are their targets. They passed, they brought forward legislation this spring that is a plan to move forward to reach those targets, Mr. Speaker, in combination. It is a real plan with real substance, and gives Saskatchewan something to move forward with.

Mr. Speaker, in the attitude and the direction of the Premier yesterday which we're now, upon review, prepared to help him reach his own targets, we'll pass their legislation. We'll help them bring it in and, Mr. Speaker, we can all stand, hopefully before December 3, 2009, and say, we, by working together, have achieved a great deal.

It's not for us, Mr. Speaker. It's for future generations. It's for our children and for our grandchildren. We should all be more concerned about our children and our grandchildren and the future of our province. And by working together we can achieve more than by working against each other.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier asked for that co-operation yesterday. Today, on behalf of the official opposition, we're extending that olive branch. We're willing to work together. We're willing to support the Minister of the Environment. We're willing to work with her. We know that she wants to do the right thing because she in fact brought forward Bill No. 95. She in fact was the author of their reduction targets, Mr. Speaker. So the minister wants this because they're her own targets. It's her own legislation, and by working together we can achieve this.

And they have showed a strong commitment through their campaign, saying that these targets were achievable and that they were theirs. And we are committed to help them achieve those targets. We're committed to helping them pass their own

legislation, Bill No. 95. And, Mr. Speaker, I don't know what more the Premier could have meant by his request yesterday for us to work co-operatively together. We're prepared to do that.

Mr. Speaker, all we need is for the amendment, the amendment that the members of this Assembly, the official opposition, is putting forward, which isn't our, it's not our plan. All we're putting forward is their plan. We're putting forward their ideas. We're putting forward their targets, their legislation, the things that they have been promoting, Mr. Speaker.

And now we're prepared to put forward the olive branch and support the minister, support the minister in a real plan, and Mr. Speaker, all we need is a commitment that they will pass their own Bill and their own targets in the Bill prior to December 3rd, 2009, the last sitting day this fall.

[14:45]

And, Mr. Speaker, we will wait with a great deal of anticipation to hear the response from the government to their own plan. It's not a response to our plan. It's their plan. I can expect, I think, the only thing we can expect is a very loud and resounding yes that they agree. And if in fact that's the response, Mr. Speaker, look, we can vote this motion off, and we can even try to get that legislation in the House as early as today.

Let's give it a try. How many people agree with us here?

An Hon. Member: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Yates: — You're hearing it obviously from the official opposition. We're agreeing with their reduction targets. We're agreeing with their legislation. I'm not hearing such a hearty response from the government about their own legislation and their own targets, Mr. Speaker. But hopefully that's just simply because they're a little tired and they haven't taken time to consider all the opportunities.

And, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to continue talking about the attributes of their legislation, Bill No. 95, and the quality of their reduction targets as contained in their election platform that the current Minister of Environment championed, that the Premier championed with the people of Saskatchewan through an election. And in his famous words, a promise made is a promise kept, Mr. Speaker. And we're going to help them do that. We're going to give him the opportunity to do just that.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to say this: the Premier yesterday asked us for our co-operation. I'm going to take him at face value with great sincerity. And in fact he wanted that co-operation. In that light, we've spent considerable time reviewing their legislation, the difficulties and some of the pitfalls in it, but on balance decided we can live with that legislation because we need a solid plan to move forward.

We decided we could agree with their targets. The targets aren't perfect, Mr. Speaker, but once again, we can live with those targets. We can work co-operatively together in this province to try to achieve for our children and grandchildren a real plan — a plan that the minister can then take forward to her colleagues across the nation and actually work to achieve.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I don't know what else we could do. It's only through working co-operatively can we move this forward in the time frame in which we need to have a comprehensive plan for Copenhagen.

And, Mr. Speaker, the minister taking forward that the plan as being articulated in her amendment should make her proud. She should be proud of the fact that she will have unanimous support of the legislature of Saskatchewan. How many ministers going forward to their national colleagues and to the Copenhagen conference will have the unanimous support of their governments and their oppositions? Not many. I would suggest it would be very few, if any.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I don't know how many oppositions across Canada and perhaps around the world would be courageous enough to actually put forward the government's own plan and say that we're prepared to accept their plan. But this opposition is prepared to do that. The Premier called upon us to be positive, to act responsibly, to act in the interests of future generations, Mr. Speaker. And this issue is too important to neglect. It's too important to our children, our grandchildren, and the future to not take forward in a meaningful way. So, Mr. Speaker, we're prepared to do that. We are prepared to work with the government. We're prepared to accept their legislation and their targets, and we're prepared to move forward together, unified with all 58 members.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to spend a few minutes talking about what's contained in the legislation for the people of Saskatchewan who may not be aware. Mr. Speaker, this was Bill No. 95 and the government can reinstate this Bill, Mr. Speaker. I know and I understand, Mr. Speaker, it will require a motion and unanimous consent to do so. Mr. Speaker, I commit today, on behalf of the official opposition, we will give that consent. We will let this legislation be reinstated, although it is outside the time frames for our own rules, Mr. Speaker. Now that can be done in Assembly with unanimous consent, Mr. Speaker, and we undertake to give that unanimous consent.

I don't want there to be any impression that we will put up any roadblock, any roadblock at all to the reintroduction of this legislation. We don't want a rule, that was put in place to make sure that there was responsible management of the House, to stop this Bill from coming forward. Because, Mr. Speaker, as you well know and as the members of the House know, we can in fact do things with the unanimous consent of this House.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill contains . . . and it's a Bill entitled the climate change Act, its short title, the climate change Act. It talks about the fact that there will be emission targets. And, Mr. Speaker, the targets are simple. They're the targets that the government brought forward in their election campaign, that the Premier told the people of Saskatchewan were his targets — 32 per cent by 2020 and 80 per cent by 2050. Pretty straightforward.

Mr. Speaker, it talks about an advisory council and how it's established, Mr. Speaker, to help the government and the minister in dealing with the issues of climate change. It talks about an office of climate change, Mr. Speaker. It talks about the properties of the office and the activity of the office of climate change.

Mr. Speaker, this is a Bill that has substance and structure in which to accomplish the goals of which the government has brought forward. Mr. Speaker, although as I indicated earlier it's not 100 per cent perfect, no piece of legislation is in its initial form. As members of this House will know, many times pieces of legislation are amended year after year in order to improve them because little things come up during the course of the administration of an Act that need to be amended or modified in some way. Mr. Speaker, we all understand that a year from now, we may have requirements to modify legislation. But, Mr. Speaker, it is a framework. It is substance. It is a plan. Mr. Speaker, that is what the government said they needed.

Now, Mr. Speaker, they didn't need to look any further than their own legislation. They didn't need our help. Mr. Speaker, we're thankful that we're able to help them. We're thankful that the Premier asked us yesterday to be helpful, Mr. Speaker. But their legislation provides that framework, provides that plan moving forward.

Mr. Speaker, it talks about a technology fund, Mr. Speaker, that we've had talked about by the minister. We agree. We agree. We agree with your legislation. We agree with your Bill. And we want to help you in moving forward in your comprehensive plan.

Talks about a foundation, Mr. Speaker — we agree with the Climate Change Foundation. We agree with the structures proposed in the minister's legislation.

But, Mr. Speaker, we need that Bill before this House. And we are prepared to give unanimous consent for the immediate introduction of that Bill and make a commitment in our amendment to the motion that will, in fact, pass this legislation with their targets, Mr. Speaker, in place prior to December the 3rd, 2009. So this minister can have a true mandate and a true plan to go to Copenhagen, not just a motion without substance that people don't know what it means. Mr. Speaker, not a motion without substance that people wouldn't know and understand. Mr. Speaker, we have a piece of legislation here, a real plan with real substance, and we are prepared to support that.

Mr. Speaker, once again we listened carefully to the Premier yesterday asking for us to work together in co-operation on this very important issue, and we are. And we are prepared to do that. We are prepared to work with the government. We are prepared to accept their legislation and their targets. It's not our plan, Mr. Speaker. It's theirs. And I think they should be proud of their plan because it deals with the very issue that they want to deal with. Mr. Speaker, it has the substance that you need to have in a plan so that people can have confidence of how you're going to achieve the outcome.

Mr. Speaker, you know, with any plan it doesn't always work perfectly. Over time there is always, like I said, improvements that are made. Mr. Speaker, the first targets are now 11 years away — 32 per cent by 2020. Still 11 years away, and we've got a great deal of work to do. Collectively we have a great deal of work to do, and we have a collective responsibility to future generations and the people of the province of Saskatchewan to make it work. And, Mr. Speaker, make it work we shall. We

shall work together to achieve this. There are not many alternatives to working together in a positive way once we make this commitment. And, Mr. Speaker, this commitment shall be made.

Mr. Speaker, I could spend hours talking about the important elements of this legislation, the anticipated outcomes of their targets, emission reduction targets, Mr. Speaker. But I think at this time, Mr. Speaker, in the interest of allowing many, many of my colleagues who'd like to speak . . . Unless the government is prepared to accept today our amendment. Then we'll pass the motion immediately, and we'll wait for the Government House Leader to bring forward Bill 95, including their targets.

And, Mr. Speaker, we can all work together in a co-operative manner to achieve what the Premier asked us to do yesterday, which is to take the plan forward, give the minister a solid plan to go to Copenhagen with a plan that all 58 members of this legislature should be able to accept.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would move at this time, officially, that the motion be amended by adding the following words at the end of the motion:

That this Assembly will support the government's plan as follows:

That the government Bill No. 95, *An Act respecting the Management and Reduction of Greenhouse Gases and Adaptation to Climate Change* from the previous legislative session be reintroduced; and

That the targets that the government campaigned on in the election, from the platform document, *Securing the Future New Ideas for Saskatchewan*, that is, a 32 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from the current levels by 2020 and an 80 cent reduction from current levels by 2050 be added as legislative targets into the legislation; and

That this legislation should be passed by December 3rd, 2009 giving the minister clear authority and an actual plan to present at Copenhagen.

I so move.

The Speaker: — The amendment before the Assembly, presented by the member from Regina Dewdney, reads that:

The motion be amended by adding the following words at the end of the motion:

That this Assembly will support the government's plan as follows:

That the government's Bill 95, *An Act respecting the Management and Reduction of Greenhouse Gases and Adaptation to Climate Change* from the previous legislative session be reintroduced; and

That the targets that the government campaigned on in the election from the platform document, *Securing the Future*

New Ideas for Saskatchewan, that is, a 32 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from the current levels by 2020 and an 80 cent reduction from current levels by 2050 be added as legislative targets into the legislation; and

That this legislation should be passed by December 3rd, 2009 giving the minister clear authority and an actual plan to present at Copenhagen.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to say a few words about the opposition's amendment to our motion. I find it first of all pretty interesting, Mr. Speaker, that the NDP motion today actually contradicts what their leader said out in a scrum yesterday afternoon.

And this is the thing that I find so very interesting about the NDP's attempt to have a position on environmental issues. I was trying to explain to my colleagues this morning what their current position was and, Mr. Speaker, it's so convoluted I actually gave up trying to explain it because you can't even keep it straight from day to day, let alone from hour to hour.

The Leader of the Opposition was out in a scrum yesterday after question period, and he said a few things that were interesting, things that contradict their motion today. He had said, Mr. Speaker, that we should actually be looking at what the Americans are going to be doing. He said, and I quote, "I think to do something other than the Americans is going to be very, very difficult."

[15:00]

Well, Mr. Speaker, there's a few interesting things about that. First of all, the American targets that are being proposed currently through the Waxman-Markey Bill are a 17 per cent reduction. That's less than the targets that this government has adopted. It's about half of what the NDP are asking us to do. So, Mr. Speaker, they present a motion today asking us to adopt targets that their very own leader is apparently not even in support of.

And, Mr. Speaker, also while he was out there giving his scrum on the environment . . . And I know the Leader of the Opposition hasn't been in our province very long, Mr. Speaker, and he might not be aware of what the NDP have said in the past. But when he was asked about targets, Mr. Speaker, about the 20 per cent reduction that this government has adopted, he said, I think that's a minimal target.

Well, Mr. Speaker, if the NDP are now asking us to adopt a 32 per cent reduction in emissions, should not 32 per cent be the minimal target that they are going for? Mr. Speaker, apparently the Leader of the Opposition thinks a 20 per cent target is a minimal target. That's great. We could maybe try to achieve 32 per cent, but let's start with 20. It's what he said yesterday, Mr. Speaker.

So their very own motion today completely contradicts what their leader is out there saying. And, Mr. Speaker, I don't know

if it's because he's not briefed on the file or if he has another position that he hasn't told his members about. I think probably perhaps, Mr. Speaker, it's the latter, that the NDP actually don't have a plan on this.

And I found it interesting as well, Mr. Speaker, that yesterday, about the exact same time that their Environment critic was in this House speaking to the government motion, the NDP opposition leader was outside scrumming, and they were contradicting themselves at exactly the same time. This is how confused they are on this file.

So, Mr. Speaker, while the Environment critic was in this House yesterday talking about the NDP plan, she was praising it. She said, and I quote, when we look at the original plan that the NDP had put into place, this was a wonderful plan. Guess she's pretty supportive of it.

Well, Mr. Speaker, at exactly the same time, the NDP opposition leader was out in a scrum, and guess what he had to say about the NDP plan? Apparently there isn't one, because he said about an NDP plan, and I quote, "My view is that we will watch as this develops and through our policy forums come forward with our proposal."

So, Mr. Speaker, apparently the 2002 climate change discussion paper that the NDP released, I'm pretty sure that the member for Regina Douglas Park was not in the province in 2002. I don't think he was. And then, Mr. Speaker, again in 2007 the NDP put forward their glossy brochure on climate change. And they stand, at least their Environment critic stands in the House, and now the member for Regina Dewdney, praising the NDP plan.

Well, Mr. Speaker, apparently their leader doesn't think they have one. They'll get to it. They're going to have these policy forums somewhere in the future. They're going to discuss the environment. They're going to discuss climate change. And then perhaps at some point they're going to come up with their proposal. Not my words, Mr. Speaker, that's the NDP Opposition Leader and that's from yesterday.

So somewhere between yesterday in the scrum and today at about 3 o'clock, they've come up with this motion, but I don't know if they passed it by their leader or not because according to him we don't have a plan. He says the 20 per cent target is a minimal target that we should be achieving. But then while he says it's a 20 per cent target we should be achieving, we should also look at the American plan which is a 17 per cent reduction.

So, Mr. Speaker, you can understand my difficulty this morning when briefing my colleagues on where the NDP are in this issue. We don't know. Mr. Speaker, I don't think they know. And so as far as this motion goes, if they had something concrete to bring forward, I suppose we could have a discussion about it. But, Mr. Speaker, as far as I can tell, the only consistency in the NDP approach to environmental policy is their inconsistency. So, Mr. Speaker, you know it's a nice attempt to try to have a position on this, but I don't think they've done a very good job of actually articulating what their position is.

And, Mr. Speaker, the other thing that the Opposition Leader

had said is, you know, we shouldn't have a patchwork approach across the country. That's not going to work. North America or Canada are shared jurisdictions. We should not have a patchwork approach. Well, Mr. Speaker, to adopt the NDP targets would put us in a more of a patchwork approach than what we're currently at because, Mr. Speaker, we have adopted the federal targets. That puts us pretty much on the same line. They're almost identical to what the US is proposing. So we're kind of all on the same page, and the NDP are the ones who are now promoting the fact that we move towards a more patchwork approach than what currently exists in our country.

And, Mr. Speaker, the NDP Environment critic said yesterday in her speech that this wonderful plan that the NDP had was researched. I find it interesting because, Mr. Speaker, when I became Minister of the Environment I had asked the ministry for their cost analysis, their impact analysis on our economy for the NDP targets at 32 per cent reduction, and I didn't get any of them. There was nothing that showed up on my desk. So if it was researched, I'm not sure who it was researched from. Maybe the researchers in their opposition office, I'm not sure.

But, Mr. Speaker, when we were examining the targets and the impact on our economy, we actually did research. We contracted Jaccard to do an impact analysis and a cost analysis. And, Mr. Speaker, the NDP stand up today and say that they want us to adopt different targets, that . . . [inaudible] . . . really has no impact, that we should just do this. And, you know, we're all going to be fine. We just have to work together.

Well, Mr. Speaker, if we did that, the difference on the impact on our economy between 2010 and 2020 is \$700 million. And I know that the Minister for Public Safety has a long list of the things that the NDP has wasted money on. The Agriculture minister was up today with another list. So apparently in the NDP's world, \$700 million is nothing. You can just throw that away. Well, Mr. Speaker, the \$700 million in Saskatchewan, that would be borne almost exclusively by SaskPower. So guess what that means. It means SaskPower ratepayers are on the hook for an additional \$700 million.

Mr. Speaker, if the NDP want to promote this idea, I would challenge them to go out and promote the idea that they are fine with putting SaskPower ratepayers, the residents of this province, on the hook for an additional \$700 million. But, Mr. Speaker, apparently they aren't very interested in that because the former Environment minister, the member for Regina Lakeview said, and I quote, "And this is one area where people can contribute, is to actually pay . . ."

Mr. Speaker, they were fine charging the people of our province for these targets. Well as I said, we did the cost analysis. We did the impact analysis and, Mr. Speaker, we have said from the very beginning that our position is to balance the economy with environmental protection. And when it comes to the economics, although the NDP Environment critic said, talking about economics, when we're talking about the environment as a red herring. We don't agree with that. We think it's a very important discussion. And those economics affect the residents of this province, Mr. Speaker, and we are not going to put them in jeopardy.

And, Mr. Speaker, *The StarPhoenix* ran an editorial earlier this

year, talking about the NDP's approach to climate change and SaskPower rates. And it says, and I quote, "For years under the former regime, Saskatchewan was accused by environmental groups of being the country's worst laggard in acting to cut emissions."

And, Mr. Speaker, I would point out when he's talking about the country's worst laggard, it's the NDP government, not our government, that they were accused of being the country's worst laggard in acting to cut emissions. It goes on to say, Mr. Speaker, it's "... an irony that can't be lost on anyone ... that it's a fool's game to believe that this province can reduce emissions without cost."

Mr. Speaker, it will cost our province. We did the analysis. And we don't think that a \$700 million hit to SaskPower ratepayers is something that the people of this province are going to accept.

And as I stated yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the percentage of emissions coming from Saskatchewan is about 9 to 10 per cent of the country's emissions. Canada is 2 per cent of global emissions. And so, Mr. Speaker, we are a fraction of 1 per cent of global emissions. We are fully committed to doing our fair share, but we will not do it at the expense of our economy, and we will not do it by dipping into the pockets and the wallets of the people of this province, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, as I pointed out, the NDP opposition leader, apparently a little confused on targets and where we should be going. And contradicting their motion today with where we should be going and saying we shouldn't have a patchwork approach, well, Mr. Speaker, that's exactly what we are trying to avoid. We are trying to avoid a patchwork approach. We have targets that are in line with the federal government. We have targets that are virtually in line with the US [United States] government's proposals. And, Mr. Speaker, I know that I read this into the record yesterday, but I would like to restate a comment made by the federal Environment minister Jim Prentice. And he said, and I quote:

If we do more than the U.S., we will suffer economic pain for no real environmental gain — economic pain that could impede our ability to invest in new clean technologies. But if we do less, we will risk facing [new] border barriers into the American market.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we are currently at a 20 per cent reduction by 2020 over 2006 levels. We are completely in line with the federal government and very much in line with what the US government is doing, Mr. Speaker. So I think we have found that balance between doing our fair share and making sure that our economy is protected.

But, Mr. Speaker, just a few more points as to the NDP's position. I think they would have a little bit more credibility for two reasons, Mr. Speaker. One, if they'd actually done anything. In 1998, the NDP put together an advisory group on climate change. That's fantastic.

Well, Mr. Speaker, it took four years for them to release their first discussion paper on climate change in 2002. And around that time, the former leader of the NDP Lorne Calvert had said

this, Mr. Speaker: "From day one . . . this government has made it clear . . . we do not object to taking on the challenge of greenhouse gas emissions."

Again fantastic. Except they didn't do anything. So that was in 2002.

It took them another five years and they released yet another paper, in 2007. Releasing papers doesn't do anything, Mr. Speaker. It doesn't reduce emissions. It doesn't put legislation in place. It doesn't put regulations in place. It doesn't get us equivalency agreements with the federal government. It does absolutely nothing. And that is all they did, Mr. Speaker, for a decade. They sat on their hands — well, other than releasing papers, they sat on their hands, Mr. Speaker.

In 18 months, this government drafted legislation. We've done extensive consultations. We've tabled legislation which will be re-tabled this fall. We have signed an agreement in principle with the federal government. And, Mr. Speaker, we have restructured the Go Green Fund to make sure that we have quantifiable outcomes for the money that we invest. Mr. Speaker, 18 months.

They waited a decade; did absolutely nothing. So if they're going to lecture us on our position, I don't think they have the credibility to do that, Mr. Speaker.

And the other point I would like to make is their ongoing contradictions. The Opposition Leader, it was noted in the *Leader-Post* today that he said that when it comes to SaskPower and energy efficiency targets, a 300 megawatt in energy savings fall short.

Well again, Mr. Speaker, we know that the Opposition Leader has not been in our province very long, and he's missed a whole chunk of time. And in that chunk of time, he's kind of missed what's been going on. Because in the 2007 paper that the NDP released, Mr. Speaker, it says, and I quote, this is the NDP paper, "Develop a conservation program to reduce SaskPower's electricity load by [how many megawatts?] 300 . . ."

Exactly what he said yesterday wasn't good enough. The NDP thought it was good enough two years ago. Apparently maybe they're going to discuss this more at their policy forums that are going to happen sometime in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I have a whole list of contradictions that happen when the NDP Environment critic was talking in the House yesterday while her leader was out in the scrum. They can't get their stories straight when they're talking at exactly the same time, and they want us to take their advice on a position that our province is going to present to Copenhagen.

Mr. Speaker, like I said, if they had any credibility on this file, that might be something that we would take into account. But I think I've pointed out that increasing our targets back to the 32 per cent would be detrimental to our economy. It would make our SaskPower ratepayers pay and, Mr. Speaker, I just don't think that is the approach that our government wants to take.

I don't think it's the approach that the people in our province want to take. And, Mr. Speaker, to go back to the 32 per cent

returns is to a patchwork approach that they say we shouldn't be doing.

They're contradicting themselves at every turn, Mr. Speaker. They have no position. They have no credibility. And I'm pretty sure, Mr. Speaker, that my colleagues will agree with me that if and when the amendment on our motion, the NDP amendment on our motion comes to a vote, Mr. Speaker, we will not be supporting it because we will be supporting Saskatchewan's economy, Saskatchewan jobs, and the ratepayers of this province, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, if I could ask the members to join with me in welcoming . . . With leave to introduce guests.

The Speaker: — The member has asked leave.

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the members giving me leave to introduce a special guest, Sandra LeBlanc, who is seated in the Speaker's gallery. Sandra has worked hard and long in the oil industry in Calgary. She's presently working with Westdev International and has formerly worked with Burj Petroleum, but also was one of my directors on the Canadair business council for a number of years. And I just want to say to Sandra, welcome to the Assembly.

She represents a broad base of the oil industry in Calgary. Her father was very much involved in the construction work in the oil field in Western Canada right across the piece. In fact, Sandra has a very interesting background, not only having worked in the oil patch, but actually as a catskiner for a while, and has worked her way up to an impressive position with the oil industry, and in an international way also has served Canada well on a number of international organizations.

So welcome, Sandra, to the Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

[15:15]

ADJOURNED DEBATES

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Plan for Climate Change (continued)

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise today and speak to the amendment that was put forward by the member for Regina Dewdney.

The amendment put forward simply substantiates what the expectations are of the people of this province with respect to what this Sask Party government should be doing in addressing

issues of climate change in the province.

Now the Minister of the Environment has quite frankly what I would almost deem as an obsession in talking about what the NDP had done in the past and what the NDP's intentions are and what the NDP plans should be right now. But it seems to be that the minister currently doesn't understand that she's actually sitting in the government benches, Mr. Speaker, and that the onus is on the government to come up with a plan and actually have something concrete to offer the citizens of Saskatchewan in terms of addressing the issues around climate change. All we've had so far, Mr. Speaker, is a lot of hot air. That's it, Mr. Speaker. And that's only contributing to the issue of greenhouse gases in this province quite frankly.

So it would be a real welcome change if we could get a plan from the minister. Something that's actually on paper; something that actually has targets. Something that actually has some measure against a baseline in terms of what can be measured for the citizens of this province to really know what this government is doing to address what, in the Premier's own words, is one of the most serious issues that not only Saskatchewan is dealing with, not only Canada is dealing with, but the entire world.

The entire global economy is dealing with the issue of how to address the issues around climate change. And it would be very nice if this government, the Sask Party government, actually came up with a plan with some concrete targets that they would actually stick to, versus the empty promise they made in their election platform, and then had to break that promise because they decided to adopt something from the NDP, the former administration. And yet had absolutely no concept, no concept whatsoever, as to how they were going to achieve those targets that they adopted from the NDP into their election platform.

Now in case they had forgotten what they put in their election platform, Mr. Speaker, I thought it would be extremely important for me to read from their document, from the Sask Party election platform. It's called *Securing the Future*. It's got a nice shiny picture of Premier Wall on the front of it and on page 38, it says:

Meeting Saskatchewan's Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction Targets.

It says:

A Saskatchewan Party government will invest in environmental innovation and energy conservation measures while working with industry and the province's Crown Corporations to meet the province's greenhouse gas emission reduction target to:

Stabilize greenhouse gas emissions by 2010;

Reduce greenhouse gases by 32 per cent from current levels by 2020; and

Reduce greenhouse gases by 80 per cent from current levels by 2050.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this was their promise, their promise to the

citizens of this province in November of 2007. That's a mere two years ago, and they've already said, guess what? We can't meet that promise because we had no plan. We simply adopted this from the NDP. We thought we would simply take over what the NDP did and keep promising it to the citizens of Saskatchewan.

But what did they do? They had no plan and instead of simply continuing on with the plan that the NDP had already put forward and had set in motion, plus the \$320 million that it had dedicated to the issues of climate change, what did the government do? What did the Sask Party government do? They decided to completely gut the plan that the NDP had, completely gut the fund that the NDP had set aside. They took that fund from \$320 million down to \$40 million — we're not even sure what they did with the 40 million — and the rest of it simply got eaten up in the General Revenue Fund to fund their exorbitant spending habits that this government has.

And that's why, Mr. Speaker, tomorrow we're going to see dismal, dismal, dismal news come forward in the mid-year report, the mid-year financial report.

So that's what they had promised the citizens of this province and did not deliver on. Now the minister likes to talk about the fact that the NDP didn't want to talk about how the economy is going to play into the issue of the environment and dealing with the issues of climate change. Well guess what? Her own experts, her own experts — in terms of the work that she had commissioned — told her this: that yes, it would be a cost of approximately \$700 million to the Saskatchewan economy over the years up to 2020. And yes, the majority of that would be borne by one large emitter, which would be SaskPower.

But what else did they tell that minister? It's a salient point that she forgets to make today. It's something that she has never mentioned because it's an embarrassment to her excuse as to why they couldn't continue on with a 32 per cent reduction and had to move, or wanted to move to 20 per cent to, you know, be in line with their federal cousins in Ottawa, the Harper Conservatives.

That difference to the ratepayers of SaskPower, that difference to SaskPower ratepayers would have been anywhere between a point five to 2 per cent. The reduction of greenhouse gas emissions to 20 per cent — which is what they've reduced it to; they broke their promise and they've gone to a 20 per cent reduction instead of 32 per cent — is costing the SaskPower ratepayers approximately 20 per cent in increases over the next 10 years. Had it stayed at 32 per cent, it would have been anywhere from 20 to 22 per cent over the next 10 years.

So that is a disingenuous excuse that is being used by the minister currently, the Environment minister, as to why they couldn't proceed with their 32 per cent reduction in greenhouse gases. And simply, she says, because it was based on issues around the economy. It doesn't wash, Mr. Speaker. It doesn't wash at all.

SaskPower ratepayers were looking at an extra point five to 2 per cent increase on their rates and continuing on with their expending, glad-handing — I mean how should I say — overspending with respect to the capital projects that they want

to currently do. It looks as though the SaskPower ratepayers are going to potentially be paying even more than that just to fund the shortfall that this government is incurring in their financial situation at this point already.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting that the minister thinks that it warrants an expenditure of almost \$25,000 — \$24,700 to be precise — in terms of the written question that was responded to by the opposition. The minister thinks that it's warranted to spend \$24,700 to send herself and maybe one or two officials to the climate change conference in Copenhagen. To do what, is what we would like to know, Mr. Speaker. We want to know what the return of it on our investment is. We want to know what the minister is going to do in Copenhagen.

Because right now all we can see is that the minister's going to go there and say, gosh, golly, gee, I'd like to have a plan. We broke our promise on greenhouse gas reduction targets. But we don't have one and we're hoping you'll still like us anyways because, you know, we're hoping to do something in the future. May or may not, as the minister said yesterday in her response here in the question period. She's not even sure what she's going to do because it's a may-or-may-not situation.

So we're wondering what the minister's going to do in Copenhagen, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker. Despite the fact that, you know, she's wanting to cheerlead for Saskatchewan, which I understand. We all like to be proud of our province and be able to cheerlead Saskatchewan wherever we go and whatever we do. But, Mr. Speaker, this is a very serious conference on the global issues around climate change and she has nothing to offer.

Now I think, Mr. Speaker, that that's why they came forward with this motion in the House yesterday, was because they have nothing to offer. They want to somehow substantiate their position by having the opposition support whatever it is they want to do in the future, but we're not sure exactly what it is they want to do. But somehow they wanted to substantiate that by going to Copenhagen and saying, but you know what? We're going to be unanimous in our position in Saskatchewan. The opposition agrees with us. Well we'd like to agree with them if we knew what the heck that plan was, Mr. Speaker.

And that's why, Mr. Speaker, we're putting forward this amendment today — so we have something to understand as to what the Sask Party government is actually going to be selling in Copenhagen, and what they are going to be promoting.

Now, Mr. Speaker, despite the urgent calls for action from Saskatchewan people and reports from the international panel on climate change, from the International Energy Agency, and from numerous environmental organizations like the Pembina Institute and the David Suzuki Foundation, the Saskatchewan Party and their federal cousins, the Harper government, are failing to deliver meaningful action to reduce carbon emissions.

Mr. Speaker, the fourth annual report from the international panel on climate change released in 2007 confirms the need for meaningful action to reduce carbon emissions — a plan that entails binding and serious cuts, targets to reduce climate change, a plan that covers and accounts for all industries, and a plan that does not delay action on the government's

responsibility to reduce coal-fired emissions by introducing cost-proven and cost-effective renewable energy projects.

The international panel on climate change, a scientific body established by the United Nations, provides regular assessment reports at regular intervals for the state of knowledge on climate change. The latest one is *Climate Change 2007*, the fourth IPCC [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change] assessment report. It is important to note, Mr. Speaker, that the reports and publications of the international panel on climate change follow strict procedures agreed by the panel. The work is guided by the international panel's Chair and the working group and task force Co-Chairs.

Hundreds of experts from all over the world contribute to the preparation of IPCC reports as authors and reviewers. The compositions of author teams reflect a range of views, expertise, and geographical representation. Review by governments and experts are required elements of preparation of IPCC reports, and as such, reports from the IPCC represent the consensus of scientific information concerning human-induced climate change, the impacts of human-induced climate change, and the options and adaptations and mitigations.

Within the most recent assessment, the fourth assessment, published in 2007, the international panel on climate change observed that:

Warming of the climate system is unequivocal, as is now evident from observations of increases in global average air and ocean temperatures, widespread melting of snow and ice and rising . . . average sea level.

Which is from the synthesis report in 2007, Mr. Speaker.

Average Northern Hemisphere temperatures during the second half of the 20th century were *very likely* higher than during any other 50-year period in the last 500 years and *likely* the highest in at least the highest in the past 1300 years.

Another quote:

Observational evidence from all continents and most oceans show that many natural systems are being affected by regional climate changes, particularly temperature increases.

And this is also from the synthesis report in 2007. The international report goes on, Mr. Speaker, to say:

There is *high agreement* and *much evidence* that with current climate change mitigation policies and related sustainable development practices, global greenhouse gas emissions will continue to grow over the next few decades.

It also goes on to say about weak mitigation policies, like that of the Conservative Party government in Ottawa, that "Even if the concentrations of all greenhouse gases and aerosols had been kept constant at year 2000 levels, a further warming of about 0.1°C per decade would be expected."

This means, Mr. Speaker, that the Sask Party's plan, adopted from the federal Conservatives after the Sask Party decided not to live up to their election promise to have aggressive carbon reduction targets, now have a so-called plan, or what is a really a public relations plan, Mr. Speaker, that will not take meaningful action to reduce greenhouse gases and therefore will not significantly reduce warming.

And as the Minister of Environment should know, the Prairie Adaptation Research Collaborative's report entitled *Climate Change Impacts on Canada's Prairie Provinces* concludes the Prairie region is warming at a comparatively faster rate, suggesting increased climate variability, more frequent extreme events, including a greater frequency of flooding and severe drought and the increased likelihood of extreme rainfalls.

Mr. Speaker, this speaks to the members of the Sask Party government that have been quoted many times over — and many of my colleagues I'm sure that are going to speak are going to be quoting again in the future — who still have skepticism that global warming is a reality. Mr. Speaker, there is no question in the eyes of the United Nations and the various panels that it isn't reality and hence the importance of this climate change conference that's taking place in Copenhagen in December.

Going back to the international panel on climate change report, the international panel finds that, "Climate change is *likely* to lead to some irreversible impacts." Finally the international panel finds the following about adaptation and mitigation options:

A wide array of adaptation options is available, but more extensive adaptation than is currently occurring is required to reduce vulnerability to climate change . . . There is *high confidence* that there are viable adaptation options that can be implemented in some sectors at low cost, and/or with high benefit-cost ratios.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party government and the Environment minister like to talk about the fact that we're not worried about the economy. Well it's completely contrary to that. The green economy, Mr. Speaker, in the province of Saskatchewan has huge opportunities . . .

The Speaker: — Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. Wotherspoon: — To ask for leave to introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The member from Regina Rosemont has asked for leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

[15:30]

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and

through you, seated in your gallery, I'd like to introduce two guests that are here today. My apologies to our Environment critic who's delivering an excellent presentation here today. And in fact I know the individuals who are in the gallery here today will be greatly interested in the presentation and the deliberations here today.

But I'd like to introduce a constituent, Mr. Clinton Kleisinger. Clinton is also one of the co-coaches with myself for the Rosemont Outdoor Hockey League site. He's pretty quick out there but sometimes I'm a little tougher in the corners, Mr. Speaker. And all in all we have an excellent cast of coaches in Rosemont.

Clinton's also done extensive work in the film industry here in our province, Mr. Speaker. And he's done a good job of recruiting, Mr. Speaker, because he went on travels about a year ago and he travelled the world and he met Ms. Camilla Pakka who joins us here today from Stockholm, Sweden, is on her first visit to Canada and first visit to Regina and is here today in our Assembly. And it's a pleasure to have Camilla join us here today. We would urge her to visit often and thank her for coming here today. And I ask all members to join with me in welcoming these two guests.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Plan for Climate Change (continued)

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No apology is needed for the member from Rosemont.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP has huge concern for how the economy's going to be affected by the issues surrounding global climate change. And so much so in fact, Mr. Speaker, that we were willing to place the amount of money that we had placed, which was \$320 million, into a fund which would address the issues of climate change. And one of those, Mr. Speaker, would be the issues around green technology and how one can further the issues of green technologies in the province of Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Pembina Institute just recently said that there was an opportunity in this province to increase employment by 50,000 jobs, Mr. Speaker. Now given the fact that under the Sask Party government in the last month alone we've seen a decrease of 10,000 jobs, an increase in this province through a greening of the economy of 50,000 jobs as the Pembina Institute has stated would be welcome, Mr. Speaker. And that is something that we have huge concern for and certainly are huge advocates of in terms of moving our province forward on the green technology front and the green initiatives front.

Saskatchewan people have always been very resourceful and very innovative, and I have no doubt that we can prove ourselves to the rest of the world in terms of the green technologies and innovations that we can come up with as this

society and as this province.

Now I want to quote again from the report, and that is:

Both bottom-up [meaning just technological-dependent changes] and top-down studies [meaning studies that assess economy-wide potential for mitigation of carbon emissions] indicate that there is high agreement and much evidence of substantial economic potential for the mitigation of . . . [greenhouse gas] emissions over the coming decades that could offset projected growth of global emissions or reduce emissions . . . by current levels.

In other words, Mr. Speaker, reducing greenhouse gases and the prosperity of our economy and our provinces are not separate like the Sask Party likes to assert. They are mutually exclusive. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions to mitigate the effects of a warming earth ensures a more stable natural environment so that we can continue to be prosperous, Mr. Speaker.

Moreover, Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party's reliance on megaprojects and technology does not provide a comprehensive solution to climate change at this point anyway. There must be significant reduction targets to be met by polluters. And as the international panel on climate change reports, "No single technology can provide all of the mitigation potential in any sector," Mr. Speaker. That doesn't mean that the NDP is opposed to any one technology, as the Minister of Environment likes to state over and over again because as I said, I think she still thinks she's sitting in the opposition benches versus actually sitting in the benches where something could be undertaken, which is in the government benches.

So as I said, no single technology is going to be the silver bullet, Mr. Speaker. All the different technologies that are available and the technologies that are being developed are all part of a toolbox or a package that are going to need to be used to address the issues around climate change:

The economic mitigation potential, [for instance, taking into account social costs and benefits] which is generally greater than the market mitigation potential, [for instance, those plans based on private costs to consumers and companies exclusively] can only be achieved when adequate policies are in place and barriers removed.

Mr. Speaker, this means that the Sask Party government narrowly focused on only private cost while failing to consider all the impacts of taking action to reduce carbon emissions, fails to really understand the scientifically proven requirement to have aggressive targets like those they put in their campaign platform and that they adopted from the former NDP government, which clearly they have so quickly forgotten, or had no plan in place and now had to break that major promise.

And my colleagues are encouraging me to read their promise in their campaign platform again, Mr. Speaker, and perhaps at some point I will. But I think it should still be fresh in the memories of everyone, given that I had just read it into record.

Emission reduction targets they have now abandoned and belatedly replaced with a watered-down, do-little approach are of cold comfort to the province of Saskatchewan and are of cold

comfort quite frankly to the country of Canada and the rest of the global economy.

I quote from the international panel on climate change again, Mr. Speaker:

Many impacts can be reduced, delayed or avoided by mitigation. Mitigation efforts and investments over the next two to three decades will have a large impact on opportunities to achieve lower stabilisation levels.

Delayed emission reductions significantly constrain the opportunities to achieve lower stabilisation levels and increase the risk of more severe climate change impacts.

And I want to quote from another paragraph:

In order to stabilize the concentration of . . . [greenhouse gases] in the atmosphere, emissions would need to peak and decline thereafter. The lower the stabilization level, the more quickly this peak and decline would need to occur.

Quote again: "Impacts of climate change are very likely to impose net annual costs, which will increase over time as global temperatures increase."

On this note of annual costs, I would like to remind the Sask Party government of the fact that most economists are already awake to the reality that climate change will certainly be the greatest threat to prosperity, Mr. Speaker.

Sir Nicholas Stern, the former chief economist of the World Bank, in his self-titled report of 2006 concluded that ". . . by the end of the twenty-first century global warming [if not abated] will cause a massive drop in the annual gross domestic product of up to twenty per cent." Stern estimated that the costs, risks of uncontrolled climate change are equivalent to a loss in global gross domestic product of, at the very least, 5 per cent and up to 20 per cent loss or more, now and forever, Mr. Speaker.

In other words, the cost of doing nothing, as we've seen from the Sask Party government so far since they were elected in November of 2007 — which means that they're already into the third year of their mandate — in other words the cost of doing nothing, the long-standing approach by the Sask Party government and the cost of the new do-little approach that is just brought forward, equally as hazardous, will create more harm to our province's future economic prosperity than taking meaningful aggressive action now, Mr. Speaker.

Sir Nicholas Stern's compelling description describes the economics of climate change as ". . . the greatest mark of failure the world has ever seen." Sending the message that governments and businesses have to account for the carbon they use.

Back to the final points elaborated by the international panel on climate change in their fourth report, Mr. Speaker.

Climate sensitivity is a key uncertainty for mitigation scenarios . . . [for] specific temperature levels.

Choices about the scale and timing of greenhouse gas mitigation involve balancing the economic costs of more rapid emission reduction now against the corresponding medium-term and long-term climate risks of today.

Mr. Speaker, the international panel on climate change is not alone in its scientific assessment that aggressive action to reduce greenhouse gases is absolutely required, Mr. Speaker. If an organization like the international panel on climate change, an organization where hundreds of scientists and many governments carefully review and weigh all evidence before coming to a consensus, can agree that aggressive action is needed, full-cost accounting of climate change is best and the dependence on technology alone is a losing approach, then it is equally surprising to have International Energy Agency concur with these sentiments.

The International Energy Agency is a body established from the Paris-based Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development or known as the OECD. The OECD is not typically a friend to environmentally progressive policies, but like the other economic focused organizations, it has come to view climate change as a threat to economic prosperity.

In their 2009 report, the international agency stated:

. . . some impacts of the increased greenhouse gas concentrations may be slow to become apparent since stability is an inherent characteristic of interacting climate, ecological, and socio-economic systems. Even after stabilization of the atmospheric concentration of CO₂, anthropogenic, for instance human-induced warming and sea level rise would continue for centuries due to the time scale associated with climate processes and feedbacks. Some changes in the climate system would be effectively irreversible.

They also quote that:

. . . given the long lifetime of CO₂ in the atmosphere stabilizing concentrations of greenhouse gases at any level would require large reductions of global CO₂ emission from current levels.

In the recently released report entitled *Climate Leadership, Economic Prosperity* by the Pembina Institute and the David Suzuki Foundation, a close look is taken at the federal Conservative government's emission reduction targets. The David Suzuki Foundation and the Pembina Institute commissioned the leading economic modelling from none other than M.K. Jaccard and Associates Inc. to conduct an in-depth study of federal and provincial government policies to meet the Kyoto requirement of a 2 degree Celsius reduction to reduce greenhouse gases by 25 per cent below the 1990 level by 2012-20 and the Conservative's new target.

They found the Government of Canada's current greenhouse targets of 20 per cent below the 2006 level. The position adopted by the Sask Party government ". . . is a much more modest reduction of just three per cent relative to the 1990 level."

This is despite the broad scientific evidence that more

aggressive greenhouse gas reduction to avoid a dangerous level of climate change is warranted. The analysis of M.K. Jaccard and Associates:

. . . shows that with strong federal and provincial policies, Canada can meet the 2° Celsius emission target in 2020 [which is the Kyoto target] and still have a strong growing economy, a quality of life higher than Canadians enjoy today, and continued job creation across the country.

Mr. Speaker, this is what the study says about the more aggressive targets like the binding targets of the Government of Canada in international agreements: “Copenhagen negotiations in December, 2009 our governments are to hammer out the final Kyoto-type deal.”

Mr. Speaker, I would also note that the study also states that in addressing in its modelling “. . . disproportionate increases in household energy costs in target regions, inter-regional financial flows, and . . . international competitiveness . . .”

And this is what the studies say about the Conservative government’s targets — federal government:

The analysis also shows that the federal government needs to implement far stronger policies than it has proposed to date, even to meet its current target to reduce Canada’s emissions to three per cent below the 1990 level by 2020.

Mr. Speaker, as this study indicates, even with less aggressive targets, like the federal Conservative government and their cousins the Saskatchewan Party government, more work is required. And, Mr. Speaker, more work is required, and less work is what the people of Saskatchewan are getting from this Sask Party government. All we get from, like I said, the Environment minister is a lot of hot air. A lot of, we are talking about this in the future, we’re hoping to bring this forward. And yesterday she said, may or may not achieve certain targets.

The fact that they’re in government means that they are supposed to come forward with a concrete plan, something that has been consulted with not just industry but also with environmental organizations and environmental groups, Mr. Speaker. And that’s exactly the opposite of what this Sask Party government is doing. They seem to think that they only need to consult with business on this issue. They’re forgetting the fact that environmental agencies and groups have great expertise and knowledge that they can bring to the table as well.

They seem to forget that the people of Saskatchewan counted on the promise that they made in their election platform to reach the aggressive targets they did , so that Saskatchewan could be a national leader on this front, Mr. Speaker, because that would have placed us as national leaders on this front, Mr. Speaker.

Having reduced their targets to meet their federal cousins of 20 per cent reduction of greenhouse gas emissions is simply not acceptable, Mr. Speaker, especially in the light of the fact that they should have had something in place to meet the promise that they made during the election campaign. And simply saying that they can’t meet that target because it’s going to negatively affect the economy in such a way that would be disastrous for the province is not entirely truthful, Mr. Speaker.

Matter of fact, it’s downright disingenuous, Mr. Speaker.

[15:45]

We know that the majority of that cost is going to be borne by SaskPower, according to the minister’s own experts. We know that the cost borne to SaskPower ratepayers would be anywhere between point five and 2 per cent because the current increase under the Sask Party government by 2020 is going to be approximately 20 per cent to SaskPower ratepayers. And we know that had they stuck to the 32 per cent reduction target, it would only have increased by another potential 2 per cent, Mr. Speaker. So the Sask Party is being very disingenuous in their position on why they reduced their climate change reduction targets from 32 per cent to 20 per cent. And being just as disingenuous, Mr. Speaker, about having a plan.

I want to remind anyone that’s currently tuned in that the Bill 95 that the Sask Party government came forward with in May literally came forward in the eleventh hour of the spring session. It didn’t even receive second reading, Mr. Speaker. That’s how disingenuous that this Sask Party government is about the issue of climate change. They don’t present a plan until the eleventh hour of the spring session. They don’t present a plan until just before we ended the session in May of 2009. They didn’t put it through second reading, Mr. Speaker.

So far this session, they have not reintroduced that Bill, Mr. Speaker. This Sask Party government is completely disingenuous when it comes to issues of climate change. No plan, no sincerity with respect to how they’re treating the situation and the issues of climate change in the province. And quite frankly I would have to say, Mr. Speaker, the fact that the minister and her officials are going to Copenhagen is going to be somewhat of an embarrassment for Saskatchewan citizens.

And, Mr. Speaker, we are hoping that the Sask Party government is going to support the amended motion that my colleague from Regina Dewdney put forward today. And at least there would be something that people could understand, that we are going to be moving forward with in a concrete fashion in the province of Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Lakeview.

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, by this time I think many in this Chamber but especially many who are watching the activities here in the Chamber across the province and, maybe for others, on the Internet, they’re wondering, what’s all the fuss about? What’s going on here? Why is this discussion taking place here in Saskatchewan at this time?

Mr. Speaker, my take on this, after listening to a number of comments from the members opposite and also looking at the kind of amendment that our party has brought forward to try to help the government get themselves out of this mess, my assessment is that we’re dealing with a leadership vacuum, both at the national level in Canada and at the provincial level. And, Mr. Speaker, I’m going to spend some time explaining why I say this.

What has happened over the last three to four years nationally is that this is an issue that the federal government doesn't seem to want to deal with. And because of that, Canada's reputation has been dropping like a stone on the international scene.

We know that just a few weeks ago when our federal Minister of Environment, the one that our provincial Minister of Environment intends to travel with to Copenhagen, we know that when he got up to speak at a conference, 80 countries, representatives from 80 countries left the room. Why? Because they were basically fed up with listening to Canada — Canada who has had a long reputation in the international field of being somebody who can come forward with reasonable common sense, maybe like what we'd like to say on the Prairies, you know, people who have the long-term vision because they can see a long ways. That kind of position is not the position that Canada has been presenting on an international scene.

Now in Saskatchewan we have some huge issues around our own per capita production of greenhouse gases, and we have set out some of the ways that we're going to try to deal with these. But in a broader perspective, we need to have leadership at the national level, and then we need to provide leadership at a provincial level.

When the provincial government, who is the people that are in power now, brought forward a plan to the people of Saskatchewan which basically said, trust us; we have a better plan for managing the economic success of the province, one of those areas where they said trust us was, we will go forward with the goals and the targets that have been set out by the previous provincial government. Well, Mr. Speaker, it didn't take very many months before that went sideways. And then since then, we really don't know what the plan is.

Yesterday the Premier was speaking to the main motion around the discussion we're having today. And he was asked across the floor, what is the plan? Well we thought maybe we'd get a chance to hear what the plan was. What we heard from him was almost word for word the simple words of this motion, but nothing more. There was no explanation of how it was going to be done. There was no explanation of what kinds of work was going to be done to go forward with that plan. It didn't exist.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's like many issues that we deal with in this province. The Premier has some words, but they're about an inch deep and a mile wide. And when you actually puncture through that surface, there's nothing there. Now some people use that as a description of balloons. You know, we were hearing lots about balloons and pompoms in this legislature.

But, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to this issue of what's happening with climate change in our province, we can't afford leadership like that. That's leadership at the senior level. And at the ministerial level, similar kind of thing — we get back words and words and words at such a pace that nobody can understand what's being said.

Mr. Speaker, the issue here is, what is the long-term future for our children, our grandchildren, and our great-grandchildren as they live here on the Prairies but also on the Earth? And, Mr. Speaker, what we attempted to do when we were in the government was to work towards some of these long-term

plans. And one of the ways that our present Premier used his ability with words to assuage the concerns of people was to say, well we'll just go along with what the previous government was going to do, and that's our plan. Well, Mr. Speaker, that's been thrown out, and now there doesn't appear to be any plan.

Now why are we concerned? Well, Mr. Speaker, no matter what happens on the Prairies and around the Earth, but especially here on the Prairies, we end up having to deal with a pretty serious problem. The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has projected that in the absence of interventions, the concentration of carbon dioxide under most scenarios will rise to the extent that it will trigger the average world temperature to increase by two and a half degrees Celsius by 2100. Now that's 90 years. Most of us won't be around. Extreme weather events, new deserts, agricultural failures, large-scale population movements, and mass starvation could result.

In Saskatchewan, climate change is expected to affect forestry, fisheries, agriculture, water, energy, and transportation — virtually all aspects of our life. Now what exactly will happen? Well the high levels of greenhouse gases already in the atmosphere, primarily from the developed nations, will remain and will continue to affect our environment for many years to come despite actions that have been taken already. Saskatchewan is already a little drier and warmer on average than it was decades ago. If trends over the past century continue, Saskatchewan will likely experience earlier springs and later falls. Average night temperatures in winter may increase by up to 10 degrees Celsius and summer temperatures may increase by up to two degrees. There will likely be more extremely hot days.

Now this week we're obviously seeing that 10 degree Celsius change in November weather, and we end up asking ourselves, well, you know, why is this happening? What is it that's happening? Well we have very capable people in Saskatchewan, both in Regina and Saskatoon and other parts of the province — in Regina at the Prairie Adaptation Research Collaborative, in Saskatoon at the Saskatchewan Research Council, in Prince Albert at the Saskatchewan forestry centre — and together with observers and people across this province, they're saying that we need to adapt to this change that's happening in our community. And, Mr. Speaker, that adaptation is just one piece of a broader response to what's happening in the world, but it's our response here.

What we're talking about today is, what are we going to present as a Saskatchewan perspective, as part of a broader Canadian perspective, to the international community that's already very skeptical of what Canada is saying? And, Mr. Speaker, the motion that we got from the government was pitiful. It didn't say anything. The explanation we got from the Premier was thin, as I said before, extremely thin. And we've been looking to try to find out what it is that this minister and this Premier intend to say on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan.

Now my colleague, the member from Regina Dewdney, brought forward the amendment today to try to add some substance to what they're talking about which is based on their own election platform two short years ago. And it also reflects some of the things that can be done that were based on the work

that's been done over quite a number of years here in Saskatchewan by the experts that we have and also people from other parts of Canada and other parts of the world.

But, Mr. Speaker, ultimately the question comes down to the leadership. And frankly, I think that's where the problem lies. There's no leadership that we can tell on this file at the ministerial level and now at the Premier's level.

Now we have quite an interesting situation this week where one of the more difficult financial reports is going to be coming to the people of Saskatchewan. And what does the Premier do? He goes off to Washington to talk about climate change. Well he wouldn't even tell us in the House yesterday what he's going to do about climate change. And so then he runs off to Washington.

Now I was thinking about this last night and I thought, you know, maybe about 50 or 60 or 70 years from now, they will be having tunnel tours in Washington, DC [District of Columbia]. And anybody who's been to Washington, DC, knows that the tunnels of Washington are a very interesting place to go. Those are the tunnels from the House office building and the Senate office building and some of the other government departmental office buildings that all lead to the Capitol building where many of the decisions are made.

Now, Mr. Speaker, you know, maybe this is not dissimilar to the kinds of tours we have in Moose Jaw for the tunnels there. Because about, oh, 80 years ago there was a fellow, when things got hot in Chicago, he'd hop on the train and he'd go to Moose Jaw and hide out in the tunnels. Well you know, maybe 80 years from now there'll be somebody giving a tour in Washington about well, when things got hot in Saskatchewan their leader, their Premier went down to Washington to hide out in the tunnels.

[16:00]

Now, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, what we're talking about here is the Premier won't tell us what the plan is in the House, but he sends out a press release, says he's going to Washington to talk about our climate change plan. Look, that's what's causing the problem. There's a vacuum here at the level of leadership, both the Premier's level and at the minister's level.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we know at the national level, Mr. Jim Prentice is the federal minister. And I have respect for Mr. Jim Prentice. I've worked with him on a number of files when he had his previous portfolio. And I know that last week, or actually it was just a few days ago on November 15th in the *Calgary Sun*, there was an article that talked about the Copenhagen climate talks being nothing but hot air.

And what they talk about is how Mr. Prentice, as the Minister of Environment for Canada, who is an experienced negotiator, they talk about how he was smart enough and willing enough to get together a team of people who could work on this whole area so that they would actually have a strong presence when they got to the Copenhagen meeting. And so what they did, without lots of fuss, they created a special climate change unit which was outside the normal bureaucratic channels in Ottawa, and it was devoted exclusively to planning one of the biggest

and most complicated negotiations that the Conservative government has faced.

Today, as of the 15th of November, this high-powered federal group includes dozens of senior government officials from different departments and even more key recruits from the private sector. They even brought in Deirdre McMurdy, who's a former business journalist, as their national think tank management or communications manager around this Copenhagen meeting. No effort or expense was spared. And I think that kind of preparation and that kind of work is what we want ministers to do. And I say with a great deal of respect that Mr. Prentice has that kind of skill himself to want to be prepared.

But now what they're saying is that this whole exercise may have been for naught. With only about three weeks to go until the opening in Copenhagen, this "... supposedly historic negotiation to save the planet is already being written off as an 11-day exercise in futility."

Now the federal government is sticking to their perspective that Canada intends to play an active and constructive role with a view to achieving an effective and fair agreement for fighting climate change. But what this reporter says from Calgary is that "even the ordinarily optimistic [Mr.] Prentice now spends his time trying to lower public expectations, clearly convinced that nothing of much substance will come from [this] ... summit." He said, you know, it doesn't look very promising, this conference.

Michael Martin, who is Canada's chief climate change negotiator, he admitted, "We are clearly a long way from a treaty." One senior federal official who obviously didn't want to be quoted, puts it more bluntly. He says the only strategy that's occupying these people in this special unit now is how to get in and out of Copenhagen without being blamed for what's not going to happen.

So none of this should come as a big surprise to this journalist, Mr. Greg Weston, because basically those officials and Mr. Prentice have been meeting with their counterparts and they are in a situation where they can't get an agreement amongst themselves as to what should happen. And this kind of frustration, but also this sense of a lack of a position from Canada or a diminished position over the last few years — going back to my earlier comment about lack of ultimate leadership — has basically diminished Canada's perspective in the world as it relates to these issues.

And I know that practically this also makes it quite amazing in a way that our Saskatchewan minister and some of her senior people who I know, and I know they're capable people, it makes me wonder why they would end up wanting to spend the money to go to something like this if it doesn't appear that anything is going to happen.

So it's a comment from Mr. Prentice just on November 17th, which is yesterday. He says that it may be a few years before Canada tables regulations to cut greenhouse gas emissions. And he basically is saying the world has to first negotiate a new climate change treaty and Canada, the United States must finish their continental agreement on the same issue.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have talked to quite a number of our American colleagues over the last six months on many issues, but this whole issue of climate change, the Americans really do ask us a lot of questions about what we're doing in Canada. And it's whether they're from Missouri or from Kansas or from Idaho or from Washington or from Maine, whatever, people are curious about two things about Canada. One — always number one — is health care, but number two is climate change.

And, Mr. Speaker, one of the frustrations for the people in the United States who are working on this policy is that Canada seems to have gone to mush on having a position. Once again, I'm going back to this leadership vacuum. So rather than Canada coming forward and saying, here's some good ideas that can be put into how we deal with this, they appear to have just sort of stepped back and said, well we're going to wait and see what the rest of the world does and then we'll just take it or we'll complain about it. But there's no question, we'll just take it.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that is a major problem for us here in Saskatchewan. It's a major problem for our country as a whole, but it also begs the question of what our Premier's doing in Washington today and tomorrow and the next day. It begs the question of why some of our people from Saskatchewan would be going to this meeting in Copenhagen. To basically, I think, enjoy Denmark and Copenhagen.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have absolutely nothing against Copenhagen. In fact, I love that city. I've spent many, many days there and in fact, before I got into politics, I used to be the consul for Denmark for Saskatchewan. And I was regularly part of promotion of travel to Denmark, as well as all the other consular activities that you have. And quite clearly, Denmark is the country of happy Danes. I have their latest, you know, *Denmark*. And you go to Copenhagen. It's the liveable, loveable Copenhagen, or as they say in Denmark, *København*. And, Mr. Speaker, this Copenhagen, they call themselves capital of the happiest people in the world.

But why is it that they call themselves that? Well perhaps quoting from this magazine that says:

Perhaps it's the relaxed, easy-going Danish lifestyle, or the social and environmental consciousness that touches every aspect of life in Denmark, or the incredible feeling of *hygge* — a warmth, coziness and security so unique to Denmark that it can only be expressed with a Danish word.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think one of the reasons that the world wanted to go to Copenhagen for this kind of a meeting was because of their environmental record. The kind of thing that, you know, maybe that five or ten years ago they might have said, let's go to Canada. But I don't know if they would do that now with 80 people walking out on our international representatives.

But Copenhagen has tried to deal with the fact that they have, you know, very little resources. Their highest point in the whole country is 100 feet, and they like to take you there. You know, it's hard to tell where it is. But they have taken resources. They have taken and developed wind power. They have basically

created liveable space where people can walk and ride bicycles and live in a way that has as little impact on the earth as possible.

So when I say I'm wondering why some of our Saskatchewan representatives would go to Copenhagen, one of the positive sides may be to actually see some of the good things that Denmark has done and learn and bring some of those things back here.

But on the policy side, they can use some of the motion that we brought forward to amend the empty motion that we got yesterday or the day before, and we can end up in this situation actually having something of substance that they can take with them and maybe help out the national government in Canada.

Now when one deals with these particular issues, it's not only frustrating for politicians or for people that observe politics when there are vacuums in leadership at a national and a provincial level. It also is extremely frustrating for business. And we know that there will be a lot of frustration and . . . well there already is a lot of frustration registered with this government's business record as it relates to the managing of the finances of the province. But there is also a whole issue around management of environmental issues and not having clear rules or clear plans about what you're going to do.

And as a lawyer, as somebody who in previous parts of my career would sit down to advise people as to what to do, I know that right now, lawyers who specialize in environmental law are almost at a loss as to what to advise people as to what are the rules going to be this year versus next year versus three years from now versus 10 years from now. And the economy and business can't operate when there's so much flux or so much mush — I don't know what the right word is — in dealing with what the rules are. And what they are saying in the United States, what they're saying in Canada, is give us the rules that we know what we can do and how we can plan, and we will work with them.

When you look around the world at the economies where they have clear rules on the environment, they — the businesses — are able to sit down, make plans and set up business plans, and actually go ahead and build and develop new industries and new things to do.

Unfortunately in Canada we are in this situation where we don't have leadership at a national level and, unfortunately, at quite a number of the provincial levels because these things are so intertwined that lawyers who are giving advice, people who are trying to invest money in new businesses, in new developments, in new buildings, are saying, what are the rules? Where do we go?

Now we end up wondering if this is a deliberate effort to muddy all this stuff, or if in fact it's just that there's a lack of understanding of the importance of making some of these decisions. Now I know that it's much easier to wait for somebody else to make a decision for you. But I think I respond to some of our American colleagues in saying, what we should be doing as Canadians is sitting down and sharing all of our ideas and all of our plans with the people who are developing policy both at a national level and a state level in the United

States so that they can understand where some of the things that we would want to do would be similar to what they want to do. We may even have — and I think we do probably have — some good ideas that they could use.

[16:15]

But unfortunately the policy at the national level, maybe at the provincial level, in that area is no, we're going to wait and see. And Mr. Jim Prentice said yesterday, well we're going to be a few more years before we decide what to do; we want to wait and see what everybody else is going to do. Also what he said, you know yesterday, is that Canada is pursuing a continental climate change accord with the United States that would include a cap-and-trade system for greenhouse gas emissions. And that must be completed before Canada tables any regulations to dictate how much Canadian companies will need to cut their own emissions. So basically the whole discussion is tied in with what's happening in the States. And that's not a bad thing.

Now I know that the Premier's come out with some fairly definite statements, but he doesn't seem to have a plan to back those up, but he has come out with some fairly definite statements on the whole issue of cap and trade. What we know in Saskatchewan — and I think maybe it's probably true more for the people on this side of the House than over there — what we know about Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan business, Saskatchewan people is that we can trade with and compete with anybody in the world. And we will continue to do that.

If there's a new market that involves trading of carbon credits, well we've already got some experience with many of our farmers being involved, our forests being involved, other places. But tell us what the rules are internationally and we will figure out how to compete and how to trade in whatever the description of the commodity is, because that's how we as Saskatchewan people survive.

I thought it was quite interesting yesterday where the Prime Minister of Canada noted that the trade that was happening with India from Canada, almost half of all the trade that is made with India right now comes from the province of Saskatchewan. Now, you know, we're proud of that. I think it's probably based on statistics from two years ago because they don't have the last two years in place, but what it shows is that Saskatchewan people will be able to compete anywhere.

What's frustrating as we deal with this file, and why we're bringing forward the amendment that we are to the government's motion, is that there doesn't seem to be a plan that's available for Saskatchewan people or Saskatchewan business as we move forward.

Now the other part of our suggestion as to how to fix the government's original motion relates to government Bill 95, which was introduced last year — well I guess earlier this year, but in the last session just a few months ago — and still hasn't shown up here. That Bill, which is called *An Act respecting the Management and Reduction of Greenhouse Gases and Adaptation to Climate Change*, had some, I think some pretty important parts to it. And it had the ability, with the appropriate amendments, with some good advice from those of us on this side, to actually provide a solid basis for the minister and for the

Premier to go out and do some of the work around this issue, and maybe eliminate what I call this leadership vacuum.

And so people wonder, well what was this Bill about and kind of where did it come from? Well basically it comes from work from many people who have been studying this area and working with this area over quite a number of years. And the purpose of the legislation obviously, was to put into words the simple promise that was made in the Sask Party election platform, which was based directly on the plans that were set out in the energy and climate change plan of 2007 of the previous government. And this legislation was to follow on that.

And, Mr. Speaker, it ends up I think falling a little short — and maybe this is why it hasn't been reintroduced yet — because it had a place where you could just insert the words that are part of the election promise of the Sask Party which was a 32 per cent decrease in greenhouse gas emissions. You insert the word there. But what they did in this one, which is probably why we would have spent a long talking about it, is they said, oh we'll let cabinet to set the baseline for this, and we'll also let cabinet set the reduction target. And we'll let them do it as often as they want, change it when they want, just to basically reflect whatever the mood is, I guess, of the Premier and the cabinet.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that's not good enough. It's not good enough for business. It's not good enough for people of Saskatchewan, it's not good enough for the people who are concerned about how our climate is being done. So, you know, kudos to the minister. She withdrew this one for a little more work. Now what we're saying is let's put the numbers in there that you had in your election platform and the numbers that we had. And we'll end up at least then having for our public the guidelines that we intended.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it also in this legislation has a part III which has a good title and basically it's called the “**Responsibilities and Powers of Minister.**” And so it basically says, “The minister is responsible for all matters not by law assigned to any other minister or government agency respecting greenhouse gas emissions, climate change and adaptation to climate change.”

And then it goes and it lists out all the different things that a minister can do to fulfill these responsibilities. But, Mr. Speaker, we should remember what this word is — responsibility. There's somebody who has this job, whose job it would be to be responsible for dealing with the issues.

And so you look and see, well what are the things that are to be done? Well they're supposed to “. . . guide, promote, co-ordinate and implement policies, strategies and programs respecting greenhouse gas emissions, climate change and adaptation to climate change.”

Well that's a very positive thing. It would be nice to have somebody doing that. They're also supposed to “. . . undertake planning, research and investigations and make forecasts respecting greenhouse gas emissions, climate change and adaptation to climate change.”

Another very good thing. The next one is installing, operating, maintaining, “. . . or cause to be installed, operated or maintained, devices to measure greenhouse gases.”

Well that's obviously a very good thing and I mean I know we are doing some of that already, but obviously this is a responsibility.

And minister's responsible for obtaining and collecting "... data respecting greenhouse gas emissions, climate change and adaptation to climate change." That's another important thing.

Next responsibility is, "provide information to the public" obviously based on the data collected from the places that have been set up, and make sure that there are "... programs of education, awareness and demonstration ... [projects around] greenhouse gas emissions, climate change and adaptation to climate change."

Another area for the minister is to do the whole promotion of "... reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and sequestration of greenhouse gases." Well those are good things as well. And further to maintain records so that we can actually see whether we're progressing or not as it relates to these things.

It also says that the minister's responsible for recommending "... targets for reductions of greenhouse gas emissions." And it's also, a job would be to "establish and maintain registries of offsets." Now, Mr. Speaker, all those things are very important as well.

So, Mr. Speaker, it goes on for a few pages about the importance of the minister taking responsibility for doing the various things that are set out in this legislation.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think the proposal that the opposition has made in their amendment to this main motion goes a long ways to giving the minister something to take with her to the beautiful, friendly city of Copenhagen. And also with the appropriate activity, we could even have it in the Premier's hands before some of his meetings tomorrow afternoon down in Washington, as long as he finds his way out of the tunnels.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think that there are a whole number of ways that we can assist the government as it works on this file. They have been quite strange in their response to what should be their responsibilities dealing with this legislation. They weren't really able to tell us yesterday or today what their plan is. So, Mr. Speaker, I suggest that they agree with the amendments that we are proposing, as this will give them a great deal of help as they move forward. So I speak in favour of the amendment to this motion. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm also quite pleased and honoured to enter into the debate in reference to the non-action on the environmental file, in reference to the Sask Party and most recently some of the statements made by the Minister of the Environment in relation to her trip to Copenhagen.

Mr. Speaker, some of the things that we ought to point out right away when we talk about the environmental challenges and the climate change that people of Saskatchewan and the world are currently experiencing, one of the things that I find a bit disheartening is that when I listen to some of the words of the

scientists and I listen to some of the words of the professional people and some of the words of our own civil servants, when they say words like we have to adapt to the climate change. And to me, I think that particular word is a bit disconcerting. Why? Because it almost seems as if we've given up on the fight to combat this whole notion of the greenhouse gas emissions, the warming of the Earth's atmosphere, and the list goes on.

And I don't think we have enough passion. I don't think we have enough action on this whole file when it comes to the environment. And I think what's really important is that we also see a huge vacuum of leadership. And that leadership, Mr. Speaker, is so important for people to hear and for people to listen to and for people to learn from.

And one of the reasons why I'm entering the debate today — and I listened to some of the comments and some of the positions stated — I really want to pay a particular note to the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood when he spoke about his discussions with his young grandchildren and some of the people in and around his community. And, Mr. Speaker, the question that he raises, that are the young kids a lot more aware of the challenges that we face as a society and as humanity? The obvious answer, I think, yes. I think the young people are feeling the effects, and they're feeling much more the pressure that something ought to be done to address this concern.

[16:30]

And one of the things I think is really important is that I served as minister of the Environment for a number of years under the previous administration. And I learned quite a bit from a number of different groups and from a number of different people. And one of the things that I really, really didn't like as a minister of the Environment, I absolutely detested, was the word "balance." And the reason why I didn't like the word "balance," Mr. Speaker, is because to me I think it really highlighted the point that people out there thought we were balancing the economy and the environment in a very equal way. And, Mr. Speaker, the answer is, we're not. We are not balancing the needs of the environment and the economy in any way, shape, or form.

Clearly the balance is in favour of industry. It's in favour of continuing on burning up the atmosphere, continuing on burning up our resources with no action from us as a province, and no action from this particular government. And in particular, this particular minister.

Mr. Speaker, you ought to ask yourself the question on the possibility: as a Saskatchewan people, can we build a green and prosperous economy? That's the big question we have in relation to this particular Bill and some of the things that we brought forward when we were in government. And the answer is, yes we can. Absolutely, yes we can. But it's going to take some vision. It's going to take some innovation. It's going to take some excitement. And above all else, it's going to take leadership, Mr. Speaker.

And one of the things that people ought to know is that we, as a New Democratic opposition party right now, we're telling the people the reason why we're debating this Bill is not to stop progress on the environmental front. We're not trying to stop

the minister from taking her trip to Copenhagen to have a good old time with the climate change conference.

The problem is, Mr. Speaker, is that we need leadership on this file before we go off on a trip to Copenhagen. And that is what the fundamental flaw and the problem is right now here in Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it is going to be at the peril of any government and any party that does not address the climate change problem that we are facing as a province, as a country and as the world. The people of Saskatchewan and the people of this entire world are actually having less and less patience with politicians that are not responding to the critical problem of climate change.

If they continue sitting on their hands and saying, well we have a balance between the economy and the environment, well I say as a former minister of the Environment, ministers of the Environment should not use the word “balance” when they’re talking about the environment and the economy. Why? Because they have an obligation to do, number one, an obligation is to protect the interests of the environment above all else.

And, Mr. Speaker, that minister ought to know that when you sit around a cabinet table and you’re Minister of the Environment, no other minister can come there and say, no you’re not going to do this particular environmental initiative because it’s going to hurt our economy. Above all, ministers of the Environment in cabinet have much more of a say on the environmental issues and cannot be overruled by other ministers for economic reasons. They have to protect the health of our world. They have to protect the water. They have to protect the air, the ground, and all parts of the environment that are critical to sustaining human life and of course other lives as we interact with nature.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday in the city here we had a former minister named Lorne Scott. Lorne Scott of Indian Head, as you know, worked very hard and was finally recognized for some of his work in terms of trying to protect Saskatchewan’s landscapes and to try and protect some of nature’s greatest gifts to us as a people. And I want to point out . . . And I quote from Mr. Scott’s acceptance speech of the Order of Merit, and the quote is:

“It’s a huge honour to be selected to receive this prestigious award,” Scott said. He noted despite his efforts and those of others, more work is needed to preserve natural heritage, something that can be done without hurting the economy. “We have a great natural heritage and we’re losing it on an annual basis. Everybody can do something to help,” he added.

Mr. Speaker, when we as a government set the aggressive target of trying to reduce greenhouse gases by a full third — as a government by a full third, approximately 32 per cent — we thought it was a laudable goal, that it was an achievable goal. The same people that are advising that government now also advised us. So when we as a government and as a party adopted a 32 per cent reduction target, people believed it was a good target. It was achievable. And some people said we should do more, but you obviously have to learn to walk before you run.

Well as soon as the Sask Party came into government they said, well we want to adopt what the NDP have proposed, so therefore we’re going to do that as well. So they promised it to the people of Saskatchewan, and rest assured there’s a lot of groups out there that did indeed listen to some of the comments and some of the commitments in reference to greenhouse gas reductions. There was some hope that these guys, the Saskatchewan Party, would actually pay attention to this file.

And, Mr. Speaker, no longer did they assume office, they turn around and they broke that promise. They said, no, we’re not going to do that. No, we’re not going to do that. We’re going to go down to 20 per cent reduction target, which is a national rate that the Conservatives have adopted.

And, Mr. Speaker, again today we’re still seeing no Bill presented as to what their plans are. So the people out there that are listening to the debate right now, we tell them a number of things. Number one is that we ought to not accept lesser standards when it comes to trying to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from any government. Any government should not be able to get away with it, and this government is trying to do it.

The second thing is, is that ministers of the Environment need to stand up in cabinet, and they need to stand up in many, many other venues and start professing what needs to be done to try and turn the tide against the mounting evidence that greenhouse gas emissions are creating some significant problems throughout the world. Mr. Speaker, if we have to get up on the highest mountain in Saskatchewan, from any podium, from any road, from any community, from any playground, from any, any venue of communication, we ought to be doing that every single day.

And what have we heard from this minister? Absolutely nothing. Absolutely nothing, and, Mr. Speaker, that is a shame. That is a shame because we want to see leadership on this file. We want to see some action. We want to see some movement. And what happens? They first of all adopt our reduction targets. Then they say no, we’re not going to do that, after they got elected. Then they went down to 20 per cent of their plan, which matches the federal plan. Well they’re not going to do that either.

So we say, well where is the Bill? Where is the Bill that shows us the progress that you’re going to make? And, Mr. Speaker, there is no Bill. And that’s the fundamental flaw that I see right now with this whole debate is there’s never, ever commitment.

And I know on many occasions the Minister of Environment was probably overruled in cabinet by simply told no, we’re not going to adopt those targets. I don’t know whether it’s the minister of industry or resources or the Minister of Agriculture. We’re not going to adopt those targets because that’s going to hurt our economy and that’s going to hurt our political chances of being re-elected in a few years. And, Mr. Speaker, when you start really not defending what your primary goal and objective are as an environmental minister, then you ought to simply step aside and let other people that have a better view, and certainly the determination to provide leadership on this particular file and make sure that things are happening.

Right now, Mr. Speaker, there is no action. When you start

seeing in northern Saskatchewan the effects of acid rain, when you start seeing the effects of water quality from some of the activity of oil and gas in Alberta, or you start seeing some of the forest fire situation go unchecked, and you start laying off some of your workers that protect the communities and some of the workers that monitor the health of the ecosystems in the North, you start slashing some of those jobs, you start cutting back some of those programs, well that's not commitment to the environment at all. That is not commitment to the environment at all. And you've got a minister, former ministers like Lorne Scott, receiving recognition for his work saying, we need to do more. We need to do more.

It's more than a trip to Copenhagen. This is a trip that we ought to take as a people to simply tell people out there, far and wide, that you should not use the argument of balance, because there is no balance. And if you think for one minute, for one minute, that we can't afford to do this — the people say you can't afford it; you're going to hurt the jobs — well, Mr. Speaker, the young people will tell you, we cannot afford to ignore this problem any more. You cannot afford to ignore this problem any more.

And we know there are people across the way there, people within cabinet that have this position, an opinion that there is no global warming. There is no global warming. This is a big conspiracy. Well, Mr. Speaker, some of the small minds across the way, I will not take their word one little bit compared to some of the professional people out there, the experts, and the people that tell you, here's your mounting evidence. Here is your mounting evidence that the world is changing because of human activity and the introduction of greenhouse gases.

And yet people are still ignoring the problem. They're still ignoring the problem. They got their head stuck down a hole, hoping all this goes away magically on their own. Why, Mr. Speaker? Because they're looking at a four-year political timeline called elections. And that is sad and that's the part that really detests myself as a member, when I hear that kind of talk and that kind of attitude prevailing over there. And I say to them today that we need, we need leadership more than ever.

Now Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan can provide that leadership. We are one of the largest emitters in Canada. We have to accept that inevitable fact. We are one of the largest emitters in Canada, as a province, of a province of 1 million people. We emit a lot of greenhouse gases and we ought to provide the most leadership if we're doing the most damage.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, that if the minister and the Saskatchewan Party government does not respond to that problem, does not respond to that fact and that truth, then what's going to happen is the people of Saskatchewan are going to say, enough of that; we don't want that kind of weak leadership on the environmental file. We need some good proactive measures and measures that's going to make a difference and make all of us in Saskatchewan sleep a little bit better at night knowing that we have an action plan to address greenhouse gas emissions as a people and as a province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I've read a number of books on this particular file and one of the books I think is very interesting. It's written by a doctor named Helen Caldicott, and the doctor basically does a number of things here. She looks at a number

of the issues and, like a doctor, what she does is she assesses the health of the planet and she says to us, here are some of your health problems as a planet, and as a doctor I want to prescribe to you how you can heal this planet.

And this doctor, while she had some opinions that I don't share, in particular on uranium development, she's got some very good, very good information for people and they ought to read this. And the book is really called *If You Love This Planet* and it's a plan to heal the Earth. And there's some very, very good points that the kind doctor makes in relation to human health and the health of our ecosystems, and the list goes on of some of the things that she talks about.

So I go back to my earlier point, Mr. Speaker, when I talk about inaction, inaction on the part of this particular minister. Because one of the things that's fundamentally wrong with the approach that she has is that you can't set a target, get people to vote for you based on that target, turn around and destroy that target and say we're not going to do it, accept a lesser target, and then not even accept a lesser target later on and not even present a Bill in this House for us as an opposition and for people and for stakeholders to look at.

One of the things that ought to be done is we ought to have a blueprint of action. What is your action? What is the plan? But you can't have all these pompoms. You can't have all these pompoms and these balloons saying, this is our plan. We need real plans. We need smart people to sign on to those real plans.

We need to engage agriculture. We need to engage the Water Corporation. We need to engage the producers, the private sector, the people, the people that are really active with the environment. We need all these people in our tent to try and get something done to address the whole issue of global warming and the introduction of greenhouse gas.

Now many people, as we speak, Mr. Speaker, you can go out to the Assembly here and walk around and by the end of this week, and you can still probably walk around in shorts. Why? Because it's so warm out there today. And this is evidence once again that there is some severe weather pattern changes and it's affecting a lot of people. And many, many people are talking about this. And the one thing that they want is they want leadership. What kind of leadership can we get to ensure that the whole issue of climate change is finally addressed?

And I propose and I say to the people of Saskatchewan that that leadership is not coming from that area in any way, shape, or form — none whatsoever. Not only have they broken their election promise, they have now reduced their emissions target, and now they've completely skirted the whole issue by not even introducing a Bill in the Assembly.

[16:45]

Now, Mr. Speaker, when I go back to the book by the kind Dr. Helen Caldicott, she speaks of some troubling trends. And she does a lot of research, and typically doctors have a . . . pretty sharp people. They know exactly what type of research to look into and really go after the issues and learn from it. And the book talks about a number of things that we ought to watch for. And she appeals to a lot of the young people in this book

because she makes it easy to read. And she provides some very startling evidence.

And the young people of the province of Saskatchewan, they have more awareness, much more awareness of what is typically ailing our environment. They're more in tune to some of the waste, and sometimes they say, you older guys aren't cool when it comes to worrying about the environment. That you don't have a clue what you need to do to change things. You made a mess of the environment and yet you're still skirting the issue. So maybe you ought to get out of the way and let young people come along and start changing the world for the better because the mess that you've left behind is probably a mess that's going to take years to fix.

So when I hear the whole notion of, well we can't change it; we can't reverse the damage; we have to adapt to it, I think that's not a very good, sound strategy to take because it discourages people. And when you hear the word "balance" from the Minister of the Environment, well that's again a discouraging type of language. And when you hear the fact that, well we're not going to accept the lesser ways of getting rid of greenhouse gases by reducing our targets, again it's discouraging. So everywhere you look, discouraging, discouraging, discourage, the same old, same old. There's no action, no innovation, no excitement.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think the whole point that we have to make, and our former premier spoke of this and I was quite pleased that he did, when he spoke of developing a green and prosperous economy, what's wrong with that notion? Why can't we as a people and why can't we as a province, a province that's built on innovation, a province built with some good pioneers in a number of different fields — in particular health care — why can't we now adopt the new health care issue of 2009, and that health care issue is the health of our environment? Why can't we adopt that, Mr. Speaker?

And the reason why we can't adopt it because their mindset has been made across the way, and that there's no leadership whatsoever.

And I point out that northern Saskatchewan is feeling the effects of some of the climate change. We are feeling the effects. Because you look at some of the activity next door in Alberta and you look at some of the acid rain problem and you look at some of the deforestation that's happening, you look at some of the rivers and the streams that are being contaminated, and there's no action on that.

You ask, what's the action plan for northern Saskatchewan? There is zero. Oh, we're monitoring the water flows into Saskatchewan. Well what does that do? Are you monitoring the quality? Are you monitoring the health of our forests? Are you monitoring the water quality in all the rivers that come in from Alberta? None of that is occurring, Mr. Speaker.

And now we're going to go to Copenhagen to try and go there and become leaders. Well maybe, perhaps a good idea is maybe you should start providing leadership in Saskatchewan land as opposed to going out to Copenhagen to pretend to lead the environmental file because, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan, as our leader said, all we're seeing from this

Sask Party government is a bunch of pretenders. And people of Saskatchewan have finally begun to realize what exactly they're about. And one of the biggest failing grades that they have is action on the environment, action to address the greenhouse gas emission problem.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I looked at some of their issues that they raised: carbon capture, sequestering carbon into the ground, and that will get us more oil. And I look at some of the other things that they've done — yes, the representative area network. The monitoring at the . . . They talk about it in terms of the health of the ecosystems. Well, Mr. Speaker, all of that was done under the previous administration.

And I don't want to diminish the argument or importance of that particular work. I'm saying that that work was there. And you should come along as a new government and provide some innovation, provide some excitement, provide some new plans to address the environment. Nothing. Absolutely nothing. All they did was say to the people, we're going to adopt the NDP's goals and some of their strategies.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that was just the first step that we had planned. There's much more and many more steps that people ought to take. And quite frankly, what we're seeing is this particular government has stopped. They have not moved any further.

And for us to stand here and say, yes, we're going to support this notion on climate change; yes you can go to Copenhagen and pretend to have an answer for some of the problems that we have as a province — well we don't buy that and we don't support that notion.

And I'll say it as loud and clear as I can. The people of Saskatchewan will not tolerate a government that does not respond to the environmental problems, the greenhouse gases, and the degradation of nature and of our land and of our people at the rate that we're seeing right now. It's affecting many, many aspects of who we are and what we are as a people because we are refusing to deal with the issue of environmental change to our landscape and to our lands.

So, Mr. Speaker, again I challenge and I'm imploring the current minister and that government to get on the bandwagon. What many young people are saying, it's time for action. Park their speeches, park their pompoms, and park their parades. We need action on the environment and we need it now. We need to put some good resources. We need to find out what other provinces are doing. We need to reach out to other provinces to build a consensus.

But the more important thing is we need to, as a province, put together a plan that we would, as a province, address climate change — because we're one of the largest emitters — by doing this, this, this, and this and by identifying that very clearly, very clearly, and putting into that action plan some resources and some very, very good, sound people to make sure we follow up and follow through.

Mr. Speaker, there is nobody monitoring the water quality throughout Saskatchewan. There is nobody doing that, Mr. Speaker. There is nobody monitoring the health of our forests,

Mr. Speaker. Nobody's doing that as we speak. There's nobody looking at alternative energies to reduce our dependency on coal. Nobody is doing that, Mr. Speaker. The clean coal technology, will that help? I don't know. I don't know, Mr. Speaker, but we need more emphasis on trying to find out those answers.

Mr. Speaker, even on the nuclear issue, is there a better benefit to us environmentally if we looked at that option? Well, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan are not allowed to make that informed choice because the Sask Party politicized that process and tried to ram it down the people of Saskatchewan's throat. And that was a great disservice to that particular industry. But does it find, does it find . . . Is it going to be part of the matrix of solutions for the people of Saskatchewan? I think it may have, it may have had some possibilities.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I go back to my earlier point. Can we develop a green and prosperous economy? You bet we can. The people of Saskatchewan have the courage. They want to see that happen. And, Mr. Speaker, we've proven it in the past that as a province of a million people, we can provide solution.

So my message to the Minister of the Environment is you need to get off those aircrafts to different venues around the world, pretending to know what you need to do when it comes to the environment. The first thing you ought to do is show leadership at home — leadership at home — by stop putting that word “balance” into your vocabulary, and start talking about your primary responsibility which is the protection of the environment when it comes to clean air, clean water, and clean land.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the previous administration looked at a number of different factors when you talk about the energy mix, when you talk about protection of water, protection of land, protection of air quality. The list goes on. And this document is fairly significant. But it has attached to it a number of strategies, and it has attached to it money. It has money.

It talks about things like strength and value. It doesn't talk about balance. It really talks about protecting water at source. It doesn't mention balance. It talks about the healthy ecosystems within the forest. It doesn't mention balance. Their primary focus at the time — and I commend them — it's all about the environment.

So when people across the way use the word “balance” and other people say, oh there's no such thing as a greenhouse gas problem in the world, well I don't know where they're from, Mr. Speaker. Because the vast majority of people in the world, the professional people, the educated people, the young people, the scientists, they're all telling us we're on a collision course with nature. And unless and until we start realizing this and changing our ways, we are going to find ourselves in deeper trouble and very quickly.

And the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood made a very good point when he said, it's not going to affect me as much as it's going to affect my grandchildren. Those were his words and, Mr. Speaker, he's absolutely right. He's absolutely right. Because as we put money away for our grandkids' education or we help our children with their mortgage payment to get them

going or we get them a beaten up old car to help them get around when they're off to school or we pay their rent — whatever we do to help them — we do it because we have compassion and care for our grandchildren and our children.

Now why can't we do the same when it comes to the environment? The air that they breathe, we need to invest in it. The ground that they walk on, we need to invest in that. The water that they drink, we need to invest in that. So what's the use of putting money away in an education fund when you have mass problems when it comes to their health as a result of some of the problems we have in the environment? It doesn't make any sense.

So the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood is absolutely right, is absolutely right. You are just borrowing this land from your grandchildren. You didn't inherit it from your forefathers. You are borrowing it from your grandkids.

And it's time that this minister finally stand up, finally stand up and stop blaming the NDP for all the problems and stop looking for leadership from us and stand on her own two feet and start demanding of her government action on all these files. On every single file that we talk about, she needs to stand up and start demanding action. Because if she doesn't demand action, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan are going to react and they're going to get rid of her and the Saskatchewan Party government.

Because they, quite frankly, are not the champions of the environment as evidence of their reduction of their goals and certainly as evidence of the fact that they never even brought a Bill into this Assembly to address the climate change and the problem we have with the environment. There isn't even a Bill presented to us, and yet they want us to arbitrarily say, yes, trust us; we'll take care of those problems.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we don't trust them one bit. We don't have no confidence in their ability to address the climate change issue that's affecting all of us because half of them don't believe it's going to occur and the other half are not committing to the process.

So, Mr. Speaker, I reiterate what the member said from Last Mountain-Touchwood that we didn't inherit this world or this Earth from our forefathers. We are simply borrowing it from our grandkids and our grandchildren. So if you're prepared to put money away for their education or to help build a house or a home for them or to help them go to school or to ensure their health, shouldn't we look after the environment as well? And that's what the people of Saskatchewan are asking loud and clear.

We need action. We need action on the environment. We need it and we need it now. And people out there are getting sick and tired of waiting for these guys to grow up and stop blaming the NDP for all their problems and provide that leadership. And if you can't provide that leadership, if all your strategy is blame the NDP, then get out of the way and we'll do it. At least, at least you'll have somebody to blame. So maybe you guys ought to grow up. Maybe you ought to grow up and stand on your own two feet and stop blaming the NDP for your lack of leadership and your inability to lead.

So if you guys don't want to provide that leadership, and you don't realize that this is a very, very serious matter — it's a very serious issue — if you don't provide that leadership, then the people of Saskatchewan are going to punt you out of that office. We'll come in there and we'll make a real difference. And we'll show you guys how it's done. We're not just going to protect the wild horses, Mr. Speaker, we're going to protect every source of living creature in the province of Saskatchewan. And we're going to provide solutions that balances a green and prosperous economy for the health of the people of Saskatchewan.

The Speaker: — Being the hour of adjournment, this Assembly is adjourned till tomorrow morning at 10 a.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 17:00.]

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