



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

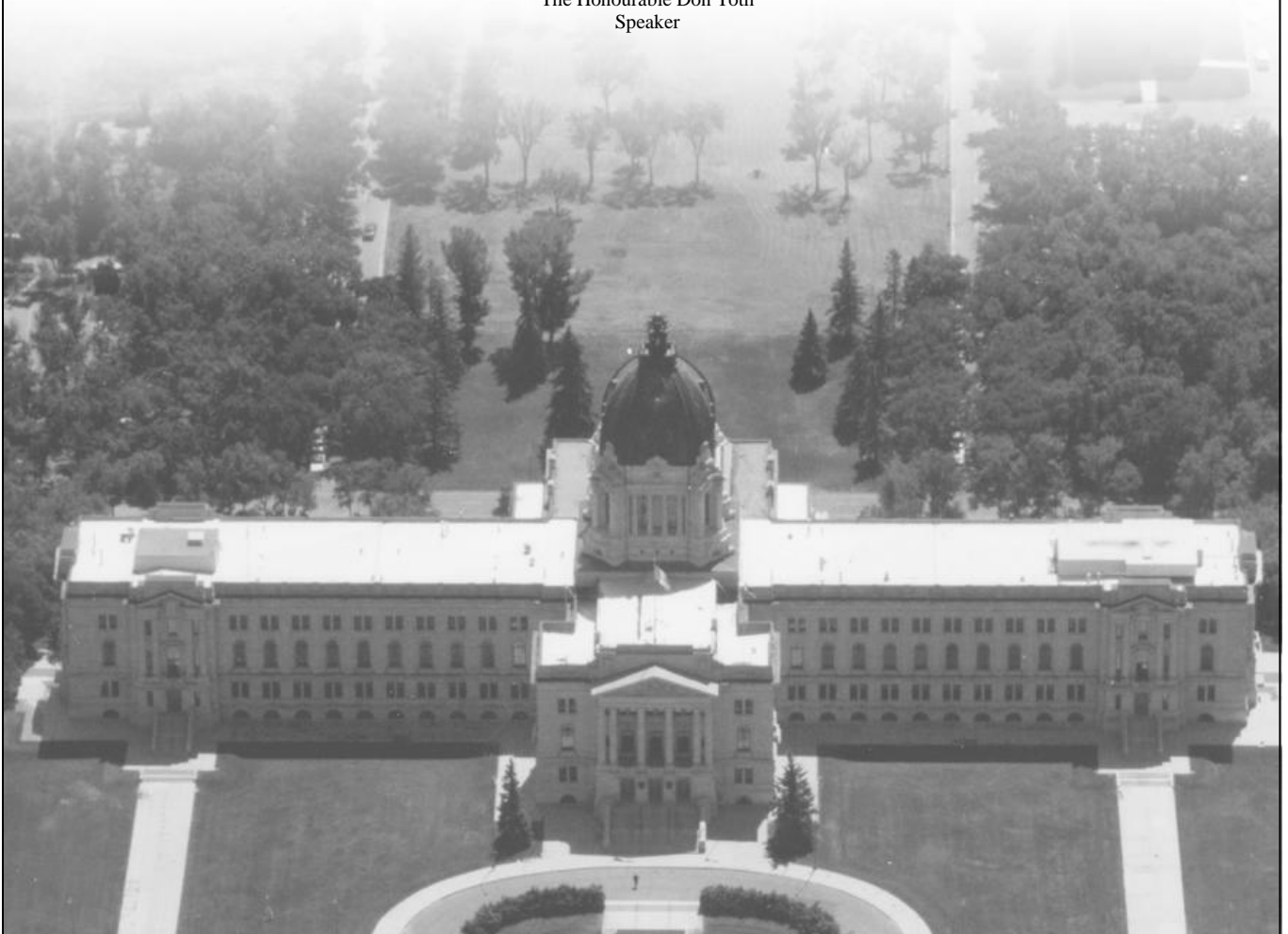
of the

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

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 Premier — Hon. Brad Wall
 Leader of the Opposition — Lorne Calvert

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Wall, Hon. Brad	SP	Swift Current
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Wilson, Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Yates, Kevin	NDP	Regina Dewdney

[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you I'd like to introduce four visitors in the Chamber today, if they could just give a wave. Larry Carlson, Barb Butler, Dr. Robert Capp, and Terry Foulds are all here from the Saskatchewan Brain Injury Association.

We're going to be having a recognition of volunteers later on this day in the Assembly so I'd like all members right now to formally welcome them to their Chamber, and as I said, later on we'll more formally recognize the great work that they do in this province.

Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is my distinct pleasure today to introduce a number of members of the Veterans in United Nations Peacekeeping, North Saskatchewan Chapter, who are in your gallery today, Mr. Speaker. These Saskatchewan peacekeepers, Mr. Speaker, are here today to view proceedings that will take place after question period.

I would like to take a moment to introduce these dedicated and committed individuals, Mr. Speaker, starting with John McKay, his affiliation is army — John. Malcolm MacPherson, affiliation army; Janet Bennett, affiliation air force; Dave Robinson, affiliation army; Kirk Thompson, affiliation army; Ken Lowther, affiliation air force; Mike Titus, affiliation army; William Dubinski, affiliation army; John Bradley, affiliation army artillery; Pat Furlong, affiliation air force; Gene Bennett, affiliation army; Ray Jacob, affiliation army; and Donna Thompson, affiliation air force.

Mr. Speaker, each of these individuals have represented Canada in a peacekeeping role through the United Nations somewhere in the world and, Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to welcome them to their Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Wood River.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join the member from The Battlefords and on behalf of the government again welcome our guests. Some of you I may have served with or been on the same base with in the past, and it's very nice to see you here today. And again, welcome to the Assembly. We'll be talking more later.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly several people who are guests today in the west gallery. These folks are from various arts organizations in our community and are joining us today to observe the introduction of Bill No. 68, *The Arts Professions Act*.

I would like to introduce Mr. Ken Sagal. Ken is the Chair of the board of directors of the Saskatchewan Arts Board. He has been an active member of the board since 2001 and a valued community volunteer for more than 25 years. Jeremy Morgan who has been the executive director of the Saskatchewan Arts Board since 1997. Ruth Smillie who is well known in our city as the CEO [chief executive officer] and artistic director of the Globe Theatre; Andrew North who moved to this great province a few years ago to become the general manager of the Globe Theatre.

Marnie Gladwell, executive director of Saskatchewan Arts Alliance, a member organization that works to promote the growth of the arts and culture industries in Saskatchewan; Terry Fenton, a member on the board of the directors of the Arts Alliance and a writer and artist himself; next to him his wife, Sheila Fenton.

Also from the Saskatchewan Arts Alliance, seated on the floor of the House is Sheila Roberts, a committee member and long-time advocate for Saskatchewan artists. She is accompanied by her husband, Joseph Roberts. And I am very pleased to welcome Jack Semple in the Speaker's gallery. He hardly needs an introduction, Mr. Speaker, as he is renowned throughout Canada and North America as a virtuoso guitarist.

Mr. Speaker, and hon. members, please join me in welcoming these valued citizens to their Assembly. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join the minister in welcoming our fantastic cultural and artistic guests to the Assembly today. It is a distinct pleasure to have them join us here today. It's nice to be able to see all these familiar faces again, as well as Jack sitting up in the other gallery as well. So welcome to the legislature and I hope that you have a successful and ongoing future with the arts that you're involved in.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Crown Corporations, the member from Saskatoon Silver Springs.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you

and through you, I am pleased to rise today to welcome to the Assembly some of Saskatchewan's finest. I am referring to volunteer firefighters and first responders.

With us today in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize — and I'd ask if they would stand as I read their name — Dale Wagner, president of the Saskatchewan Volunteer Firefighters Association. Dale has also been a volunteer firefighter and first responder for 35 years. Larry Zadvorny who is the first vice-president of the association; Ken Dobra who is the executive director of the association; Colin King, deputy fire commissioner, operations; Garth Palmer, president of the fire chiefs association; and last but certainly not least, Duane McKay who is Saskatchewan's fire commissioner.

I had a great conversation with Duane last night and I know he was a colleague of a person on my office staff and so I heard first-hand about some of the great things that he has done as well.

These individuals have been active volunteers, firefighters, first responders, and trainers for many years. They represent, Mr. Speaker, more than 6,000 Saskatchewan residents from all across the province who give of their time to volunteer as firefighters and first responders.

Mr. Speaker, they are here today to join in with the introduction of changes to *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2008*. This Act is administered by SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] and it outlines the law regarding road use in Saskatchewan. One of the amendments to the Act will allow municipalities to designate vehicle owners owned by volunteer firefighters and first responders as emergency vehicles. This change will allow Saskatchewan municipalities to designate their volunteer firefighters and first responders to operate their vehicles as emergency vehicles when responding to emergency situations, Mr. Speaker.

I would ask all members to join me in welcoming these fine individuals.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I wish to join with the minister in welcoming our guests to their Legislative Assembly. I've had the opportunity to work with most of these gentlemen over time and we do very much appreciate the work that you do on behalf of citizens in our province. Without the dedication of the many volunteers who help make our province much safer, our province would be a much less safe place.

So thank you very much for all the work you do year after year on behalf of the people of this province.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Greystone, the Minister Responsible for Advanced Education, Employment and Labour.

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, in your west gallery, I'd like to welcome a grade 7 class from Saskatoon Greystone Heights, as well as their teacher, Michelle Pantel, and chaperones, Brad Ashdown, Heather Groat, Huw Rees, Lisa Hupka, and Tom Plishka.

I'll see the students a little later today. I hope they enjoy their day in the legislature. And I would invite members of the gallery to welcome them to their gallery.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition on behalf of Saskatchewan residents concerning the issue of the overreliance on education funding on our property taxes. And it really speaks to the pleas to the government that they would address this situation when they have such surplus revenues and resources at their disposal. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to stop withholding and to provide significant, sustainable, long-term property tax relief to property owners by 2009 through significantly increasing the provincial portion of education funding.

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

Mr. Speaker, I so present on behalf of the citizens of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition on child care. It is well known the inadequate access to quality, affordable child care is a major roadblock for parents accessing the labour force. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately add at least 1,000 new child care spaces in Saskatchewan.

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

The petitions are signed by the residents of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition in support of affordable housing for

Saskatchewan seniors. This is a major concern for many people in Saskatchewan as this winter approaches. I'll read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to act as quickly as possible to expand affordable housing options for Saskatchewan's senior citizens.

I do so present on behalf of Saskatchewan's senior citizens. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand today to present a petition concerning the high cost of post-secondary education. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to increase funding for post-secondary students and help to alleviate the large financial burden placed on students for pursuing a post-secondary education at a Saskatchewan institution.

Mr. Speaker, this petition was circulated by the Canadian Federation of Students, the University of Regina Students' Union, the University of Saskatchewan Students' Union, and the First Nations University of Canada Student Association. I so present.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Lloydminster.

Universal Children's Day

Mr. McMillan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the father of two beautiful daughters, I am pleased to call attention to Universal Children's Day. In Canada we celebrate this event on November 20 in commemoration of the adoption of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, 1959 and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989.

This day reminds us of the important contribution and role children and youth play in our society, their potential for the future, and their right to be safe. The UN [United Nations] Convention on the Rights of the Child addresses the basic human rights and protection every child and youth under 18 years of age is entitled to.

Our government's taking measures to ensure the safety, health, happiness of our children in Saskatchewan. For example, we have increased annual funding to 1.12 million for integrated Internet child exploitation unit to address sexual exploitation over the Internet. Through the creation of a new active families benefit, we are helping families with the cost of their kids' participation in culture, recreation, and sport.

Mr. Speaker, there is an African proverb that states, "It takes a village to raise a child." On this day, I would like to encourage everyone in this Assembly to take a moment to listen to the words and thoughts of a child or young adult. They have a lot to contribute to our province and they deserve to be heard by all of us. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Holodomor Memorial Day

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, on May 7 of this year, this Legislative Assembly unanimously passed third reading of Bill 40, *The Ukrainian Famine and Genocide (Holodomor) Memorial Day Act*. Mr. Speaker, as in Ukraine, the Bill recognizes the fourth Saturday in November each year as its annual day to commemorate the innocent victims of the 1932-1933 Holodomor.

Mr. Speaker, the Ukrainian Holodomor commemorates the lives of millions of innocent men, women, and children who were eradicated by starvation in the heart of Europe's breadbasket. Mr. Speaker, there are many Ukrainians like myself who have watched documentaries, read, and listened to the stories of the Holodomor. But so much more must be done to understand this period of Ukrainian history. For us in Saskatchewan, Bill 40 is one such very important step.

[10:15]

On November 22 there will be many commemorative services throughout the world, Canada, and here in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, the Ukrainian Canadian Congress has organized two such special commemorative services in Saskatoon and Regina, which will be followed by educational presentations on the Holodomor.

Mr. Speaker, we must continue to educate. We must continue to remember — remember the history, tell the story of the attempts to destroy the national consciousness and the attempts to quash the aspirations of independence through starvation. We do this, Mr. Speaker, not only so that history might not repeat itself, but for the flame of human rights which we all so deeply cherish. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Arts Councils Celebrate 40th Anniversary

Mr. Michelson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In Moose Jaw earlier this month, the Organization of Saskatchewan Arts Councils celebrated 40 years at art. This is a unique Saskatchewan organization working to bring a variety of performing and visual arts to communities across the province, from Hudson Bay to Bengough, from La Ronge to Swift Current and Estevan.

Two hundred and fifty delegates met to celebrate their 40-year anniversary and to plan the 2009-2010 season. They auditioned a variety of 15 different performing artists at the Mae Wilson Theatre and attended a variety of workshops. Thanks to their efforts, dozens of communities enjoy live musical and theatrical performances, visual art exhibitions and workshops, and other special events.

Forty years is indeed a milestone to celebrate. The Saskatchewan Arts Councils have come a long way since their modest beginning in 1968, now with 46 art councils and 97 associated members bringing performing and visual arts to Saskatchewan communities each season.

Congratulations to the Organization of Saskatchewan Arts Councils for 40 years of bringing people and arts together across the province, and for giving artists the opportunity to showcase their talent in Saskatchewan, and for ensuring that arts are an integral part of the lives of Saskatchewan people. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Prince Albert Northcote.

National Child Day Observed in Prince Albert

Mr. Furber: — Mr. Speaker, November 20, a.k.a. [also known as] today, is National Child Day. As it states on their website, it's a day to remember that children need love and respect to grow to their full potential. It's a day to marvel at their uniqueness and all they have to offer. It's a day to celebrate the family and think about how adults affect the development of children close to them.

And, Mr. Speaker, we all know well the importance of early learning as it pertains to childhood development, and we're all aware of the positive effect early learning has on outcomes later in school and in life.

In Prince Albert, National Child Day is celebrated at an event called "Sing and Play With Us." Children from licensed child care centres throughout Prince Albert will gather at city hall from noon till 1 o'clock to share songs and demonstrate the learning activities they participate in daily. The public is invited to watch and encourage our children

And, Mr. Speaker, National Child Day has been celebrated since 1993. This is a day set aside for reflection upon the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child and Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members join with me in congratulating the children of licensed daycare centres of Prince Albert and extending our appreciation to the organizers of this local event. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Qu'Appelle.

Dress For Success

Ms. Ross: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member of Saskatchewan Rivers and I had the pleasure of attending the Dress for Success event earlier in Regina this week. It was a big success. One of the highlights of the event was a donation of \$23,000 worth of shoes from Marler Shoes.

Dress for Success Regina is a relatively new program in the Queen City, having officially opened its doors in February of this year. It's an affiliate of an international non-profit organization, Dress for Success Worldwide founded in New York City in 1996.

The program helps economically disadvantaged women on a referral basis. Referral agencies include a variety of non-profit government agencies such as shelters, job-training programs, and educational institutions.

And how does it work? Dress for Success works on a donation model. The program accepts relatively gently used women's business attire. The clothing is often used to outfit women who are going for job interviews. Dress for Success volunteers also provide encouragement and support that will assist in developing a client's self-esteem and confidence.

According to Winn Spent with SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology] career enhancement program, this has a lasting effect on women. We want to thank Barbara Hildebrandt and her hard-working team of volunteers for making this so successful. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Douglas Park.

Historians Take Note

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, when historians look at the last year in Saskatchewan politics, they will note the current Saskatchewan Party government assumed office in the midst of a tremendous surge of economic activity which had begun under the previous NDP [New Democratic Party] administration. The historians will note that before the 2007 election, the population of Saskatchewan was growing because of in-migration, housing prices were escalating rapidly, and more people were working at higher wages than ever before.

The historians will note the incoming government was flush with cash, with more to come. They will note the financial community had upgraded the province's credit rating to a very high level well before the election. There may even be a curiosity footnote about the new Premier calling the fiscal situation stark before proceeding on a spending spree.

The historians will also note, contrary to their stated position in opposition, the new government embraced a fiscal stabilization fund to help it weather any future economic downturn. The historians may also make note of other policy reversals by the Saskatchewan Party such as lowering the fuel tax.

The Speaker: — Order, members. I recognize the member from Regina Douglas Park.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Historians may also make note of other policy reversals by the Saskatchewan Party such as lowering the fuel tax — great idea in opposition, bad in government; rebate for home heating costs — great idea in opposition, bad in government; 80 per cent cost of living indexation for retired government workers — great idea in opposition, bad in government; support for the livestock industry — great idea in opposition, bad in government. Mr. Speaker, I could go on and on, but I see that my 90 seconds are up.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatchewan Rivers.

Forthcoming Apology

Ms. Wilson: — Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Murdoch Carriere's victims deserve an apology. For far too long the depth of their pain and suffering has been ignored. It is time to take a step in the right direction and do what is right for these nine brave women who decided to break their silence and come forward.

On Monday, Mr. Speaker, this Assembly will apologize to Murdoch Carriere's victims. For years, Mr. Speaker, they were harassed at work by their supervisor, a senior government employee. They were afraid to come to work. Their pleas for help fell on deaf ears.

These women had the right to expect their employer to provide a safe, harassment-free workplace. Their employer, the Government of Saskatchewan, failed them. These women had the right to expect honesty from their employer about Murdoch Carriere's employment status. Their employer, the Government of Saskatchewan, failed them. For that, they are owed an apology.

Mr. Speaker, when these courageous women broke their silence and told their story, they thought they would be able to get closure and move forward. That was not to be, Mr. Speaker.

A great man once said, Mr. Speaker, that the time is always right to do what is right. It is time, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Before I call oral questions, I just want to let our guests know that we really appreciate you coming to your Chamber, but just to remind you that guests are not to participate in any form in the debate on the floor.

QUESTION PERIOD

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Prince Albert Northcote.

Enterprise Saskatchewan

Mr. Furber: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Enterprise and Innovation has finally revealed the membership of his 18 sector teams. When you look at the names, 160 people or so by my count, it makes you wonder about its composition — one

representative of the working men and women in this massive new bureaucracy, and there are 28 women out of the 160 people on the sector teams.

To the minister: how can he build such a massive bureaucracy and at the same time manage to make it so unrepresentative?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Enterprise and Innovation.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all I'd like to point out to the member — and I do appreciate the question finally after all of these weeks — that we haven't created any kind of a bureaucracy. What we've done with the sector teams is engage the people of the province in economic decision making. And I know that that's a foreign concept to the member, who doesn't appear to be listening, but I'd ask him to try and understand this new way of thinking where we actually engage the public in decisions that affect them.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Prince Albert Northcote.

Mr. Furber: — Mr. Speaker, this seems like a pretty big and expensive new bureaucracy. All told it will cost close to \$1 million over a four-year period for these teams to meet, and of course the provincial budget is transferring more than 8 million into this Enterprise Saskatchewan budget, what *The StarPhoenix* once called a "highly nebulous entity."

To the minister: how will Saskatchewan people benefit from all the money being spent on this minister's new bureaucracy?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Enterprise and Innovation.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate the question. And once again, Mr. Speaker, I point out that this is a totally foreign concept to those members opposite — engaging the experts from the public on largely a volunteer basis.

The board members give up their day, probably once a month I'd suspect, over the course of the next year or so. And they get paid the fabulous and extravagant sum of \$110 a day for that, plus a little bit of money at the government rate for travel, whatever's required. The total cost of this, including support, staff support for a year is estimated to be about \$350,000. I think that's a pretty small price to pay to get public input from experts in their field.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Prince Albert Northcote.

Mr. Furber: — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people were told

that Enterprise Saskatchewan would be nimble, quick, and able to respond quickly to economic issues as they arise. Of course we were also told by the Premier that it would take a month to get started, not a year. It seems that people over there aren't either nimble or quick.

In the year we've been waiting for the minister to build this bureaucracy, the crisis in forestry has worsened. Eight mills have now closed. Three have announced layoffs in the last three weeks. In the last year, the only action the minister's managed on this file is to create a forest sector team that's met a grand total of once.

To the minister: if Enterprise Saskatchewan isn't able to address critical economic issues like forestry in a timely fashion, what exactly is its point?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Enterprise and Innovation.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member for this question as well. And I wonder if he really wants to continue along this line. But the sector teams have been announced now for I think, what, a week? The fact that most of them have only met once should not be particularly surprising. He complains about the fact that it may take a month to get actual recommendations from these teams. Those members, Mr. Speaker, were in power for 16 years, and they didn't even ask.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Prince Albert Northcote.

Mr. Furber: — Unbelievable lack of insight there. The minister recently described Enterprise Saskatchewan as the ultimate participation model for private sector involvement and said it has been tasked to develop strategy and recommend action to move Saskatchewan forward on a sustainable growth agenda. You would think the mandate would involve nuclear industry development, but that's been left to the Uranium Development Partnership. Regulatory modernization has been left to a council. It doesn't even speak to clean coal.

If Enterprise Saskatchewan's being left out all of these major decisions, again what is its point? Has it made any recommendations to government yet, and if so, does the government intend to act on those recommendations?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Enterprise and Innovation.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate that question from the member as well. Although I really, I question the member's understanding of what Enterprise Saskatchewan and the UDP [Uranium Development Partnership] are all about. The UDP is specifically put in place to make recommendations on how Saskatchewan can be further

involved in the nuclear cycle. And of course that doesn't preclude Enterprise Saskatchewan from dealing with any matter in the economy. And clearly the member has issues with that, understanding that simple fact or wanting to.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[10:30]

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

Seniors' Drug Plan

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One year ago almost to the day, this government announced that they were cutting the universal seniors' drug plan that our NDP government had created. On November 3 of this year, the government provided information that 2,172 seniors were denied coverage as a result of this government's decision to impose means testing on the seniors' drug plan. On that same day, the government provided information that said the forecasted administrative costs for the 2008-09 for means testing is expected to be \$335,000.

To the minister: how does he justify spending over 300,000 for the sole purpose of denying some seniors coverage under the plan?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, first of all what that member needs to know is that the senior drug plan was not cancelled. She's absolutely false in her first statement. The senior drug plan was not cancelled.

What happened was there was a means test put on the top. Sixty-four thousand income and above no longer receive the drug plan so we could put 14-year-olds and below — thousands of children that may have had trouble, their parents finding the money to put their children on the prescription drug that was needed. That youth were put on at a break-even level. There were some costs in administration, Mr. Speaker, but it was a small cost for the benefit of young children throughout this province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The average cost of covering a senior under the drug plan is \$1,000 a year. In other words, it would cost 2 million a year to cover all seniors. That's the universal part. Actually since you wouldn't need to have the means testing bureaucracy in place, it would only cost about \$1.7 million. This government has \$2.3 billion surplus and another 1.4 billion in their election slush fund. To cover all the seniors in the province would cost this government less than one-third of one per cent of all their surpluses.

To the minister: why is he being so stingy when he's sitting on

a mountain of money?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recap, you know, just some recent history. Just prior to the 2007 election, when the hopes of that former government were fading quickly, all of a sudden a universal drug plan was going to be the saviour. In fact that was the key plank in their platform. They introduced it before, and that was going to save their election promises.

Well, Mr. Speaker, for 28 days we campaigned on the fact that there needed to be a means test so that young people could receive the benefit of inexpensive drugs, Mr. Speaker. We campaigned on it for 28 days during the election, and I think the results are in, Mr. Speaker — 38 members on this side and only 20 on that side.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. All seniors are asking for is for the government to spend one-half of one per cent of the surplus, or less than one-half of what they spent on severances for public servants that they fired without cause. Surely that money would have been better spent on seniors. Why is it okay to spend 2 million on political staff for ministers' offices and not cover every senior under the drug plan?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, I still really haven't heard from that government when, you know, or that opposition when we increased the senior income plan. They never really applauded that, even though it hadn't been touched for 16 years. That's where part of the surplus has gone.

But you know, Mr. Speaker, the infrastructure deficit left in this province by that former government would take every cent of any surplus that was ever left behind, Mr. Speaker. If they start talking about spending money and spending the surplus, how many millions, in fact billions, have they spent just in one week, Mr. Speaker? That's why they're sitting on that side. Prudent spending, looking to the future, Mr. Speaker, dealing with infrastructure problems — that's what this government is doing. Our priorities are straight.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Government's Performance

Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker,

throughout this session the Agriculture critic has been raising almost on a daily basis the plight facing the livestock industry in this province. Mr. Speaker, we have an industry in trouble. We are going to lose an industry without some intervention by provincial and federal governments.

Thus far we've had the response from our Minister of Agriculture that there is going to be nothing from the province. Yesterday in the federal Throne Speech the words cattle or livestock industry were not even included, though we had been assured that the Premier had raised this with the Prime Minister. No mention from the federal government.

Now yesterday we were told that we should be consoled because the Minister of Agriculture was going to speak to the Minister of Agriculture from North Battleford, Saskatchewan to find a solution. So I'm asking today the Minister of Agriculture: how did you make out on the phone call yesterday afternoon?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said yesterday on the public record, it is a disappointment that there was no mention of the cattle sector and the troubles that it has been undergoing now for several years, really since BSE [bovine spongiform encephalopathy]. And so, Mr. Speaker, we have raised this issue with the national government. I can also say that the Minister of Agriculture will now be discussing these issues with the federal Minister of Agriculture later this day.

But I would also say this, Mr. Speaker. Since coming into office, within weeks of being sworn in, we implemented a loan program, a \$90 million loan program for the cattle sector and the hog sector — I think the first province to react. Mr. Speaker, we kept our commitment with respect to property tax in the budget, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Agriculture is under way with improvements to crop insurance that have been long overdue. We've dealt with the drought issue in terms of new water infrastructure programs. We're not finished yet, Mr. Speaker. The assurance is this: that when rural Saskatchewan needs to be heard, they will be heard by this government — unlike their experience was under the NDP.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier now says we ought to stand by. We ought to stand by and wait for some further action. Mr. Speaker, when, when the cattle industry and the livestock industry in this province faced a BSE crisis, the provincial government reacted with a BSE recovery program. Today we have a government that does nothing, does nothing for our cattle industry, and seems not able to influence the federal government to do anything.

The same story is being told in forestry. We've got forest workers in Big River, in Carrot River, in Hudson Bay, in Meadow Lake, in La Ronge, and Prince Albert who are without work today. We don't need to hear from the minister what they

won't do. We need to hear today what this government will do for the forestry workers in this province.

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the minister in charge of forestry: when will they act to support the working families in the forest industry of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well the Leader of the Opposition asks only one question about the cattle issue, Mr. Speaker. Did you notice that? Here's some more facts of the matter in terms of support for rural Saskatchewan and the comparison and contrast between this side and that side.

In the last election a year ago, clearly the cattle industry was under stress in the province. This is not a new development. And so when they came with their property tax promise in the last campaign, Mr. Speaker, how much was there for rural Saskatchewan? Nothing. How much has there been from our government? Forty-six million dollars.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to forestry, there is a member asking a question that was going to risk \$100 million of taxpayers' money, Mr. Speaker, for the Domtar project — money that I think everybody understands would be gone today. What we need is to sit down with the forestry sector, as we have been doing with the minister, and mapping a way forward. The entire industry is in trouble in North America but, Mr. Speaker, the good news is that here in the province of Saskatchewan we are still creating jobs at a record pace. There is still opportunity for people in all sectors of the economy, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, a year ago — the Premier's right — there was difficulty in the forestry sector, and there was a provincial government willing to work with communities, willing to work with workers to make a difference.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Calvert: — That's what we had. We had a cattle industry in trouble, and we had a provincial government that would stand up for that industry and would stand up with real, hard cash and would fight a federal government, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we've got other issues in this province facing Saskatchewan families, particularly around questions of affordability around housing, around the situation where if people can find housing, they now can't afford it. Mr. Speaker, the only sensible things that that Minister Responsible for Social Services and this government has done, the only sensible things they've done it with money left behind by the NDP.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Calvert: — The minister talks, Mr. Speaker, the minister talks about opening housing projects, every one of them

commissioned under the NDP government.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, they will do nothing for the cattle industry. They're doing nothing for the families affected in the forestry sector.

My question is to the Minister of Social Services: what will she do for families facing housing issues in this province? What will she do that's new, that's different, that's new?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is talking about all the things that the NDP did. Let me tell you something, Mr. Speaker. Did the NDP increase at historic rates the Saskatchewan employment supplement when people needed it and when they were sitting on a half billion dollar surplus? No, Mr. Speaker. Did they increase the low-income assistance for seniors when they were sitting on a half billion dollar surplus? The answer is no. Did they take the opportunity to drop 80,000 low-income people from the tax rolls? The answer's no. Did they take the opportunity to increase the low-income tax credit for those who pay no tax but need some relief from their government at this time? The answer is no, Mr. Speaker. The answer is no.

This government is taking action. What we've seen this week from the opposition is a long list of problems they have with their former government, with themselves. They need to get in a time machine, go back and oppose their own government. As for us, we will continue to fix the problems left behind by the NDP.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, when the former New Democratic Party government raised the minimum wage and intended to index it, they voted against it. When we introduced the HomeFirst program, the broadest, the broadest . . .

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

Mr. Calvert: — I mean, Mr. Speaker, the revisionist history that comes from the government benches today tells me they haven't caught on. They are now the government, Mr. Speaker. They are now the government and it is their responsibility to deal with issues facing Saskatchewan people.

Well we all know one thing they did do almost immediately upon their election, and that was to rob the money from the inner city of Saskatoon that was dedicated to the creation of Station 20 West. We know they did that, Mr. Speaker. Now we know, now we know through some access to information that \$250,000 had already been spent — in terms of architectural fees, in terms of legal fees — in the preparation for the building

of Station 20.

My question I guess is to the Minister of Social Services and the Minister of Health: have they reconsidered that ill-advised decision, that ill-advised decision particularly in light of the health disparities report that we now have from Saskatoon?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, what we've heard from the NDP over the last little while is all of the things they intended to do but they just couldn't get around to it, Mr. Speaker. There's a big, long list of these things.

And even though they were sitting on their own mountain of money, about a half billion dollars at any given particular time . . . All the things they intended to do. You know, we were just going to get to increasing the rental allowances but we didn't get to it, but we were intending to. We were going to increase the seniors' income assistance program, but we didn't get around to it for 16 years, Mr. Speaker. We intended to build St. Mary's School in that member's riding because it's what's needed in that riding, but we didn't get around to it, Mr. Speaker.

Maybe what happened a year ago is the people of the province intended to vote for the NDP, but chose something better instead.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, am I mistaken? Am I mistaken? I do not believe that I heard . . .

The Speaker: — Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I may be mistaken, but I do not believe that I heard this Premier mention the words Station 20 West in his response. It's a very direct question. Has this government — given, given the resources they have, given that \$250,000 already expended on the building of Station 20 — have they today reconsidered their ill-advised decision to cancel Station 20?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the shorter answer is no. We stand by that decision, Mr. Speaker, and I want to point something else out additionally. What we have done is reconsidered the actions of the previous government when it comes to that particular neighbourhood, when it comes to that member's constituency. For a very long time, for a very long time it was pretty clear that that neighbourhood, that constituency, those parents involved in that neighbourhood needed a new school at St. Mary's, Mr. Speaker.

I'll tell you what we did reconsider. We reconsidered their

decision to year after year deny that project. We have funded that project. It's moving forward and well received right in that member's riding, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[10:45]

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

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday we saw a federal Throne Speech that now threatens federal funding to social programs in this country, that had no mention of the cattle industry, only a vague reference to the forestry industry — which would be particularly of interest in Saskatchewan — but it had a very specific, a very specific commitment, Mr. Speaker. And that was the commitment of the Harper government to create a North American cap and trade program for emissions.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of the Environment because in July of this year, in July of this year the Minister of the Environment said, and I quote:

There are two proposed initiatives: the federal Liberals' "Green Shift" plan and the cap & trade system proposed by several other provinces.

Note these words, Mr. Speaker:

Both would cost Saskatchewan hundreds of millions of dollars without substantially reducing GHG emissions, if at all.

Is it the fact, according to the Minister of the Environment, that this new federal Conservative plan is going to cost quote ". . . Saskatchewan hundreds of millions of dollars . . .?"

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, let me just say this. I think here the hon. member and I agree. I am very concerned about what was referenced in the Speech from the Throne yesterday, what is contemplated by a continental cap and trade system.

However I would say this, Mr. Speaker. Our government for some time, since our government was formed, has been working with the national government on an equivalency agreement, on an equivalency agreement to ensure that any levies generated from caps stays in the province so that we can actually focus on the answers — carbon capture, carbon sequestration, and not simply shifting the emissions around.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue to make that case to the federal government. And I know the hon. member has some more questions about this issue. I look forward to answering them because this is an important debate for the province.

I will say this. This government will stand up for the interests of the economy of Saskatchewan. We will not, Mr. Speaker, be supporting initiatives, fiscal measures that are about moving

emissions around, not about sound environmental policy, and threaten the strongest economy in the Dominion of Canada.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Calvert: — So, Mr. Speaker, the Premier says that he is going to stand up for the interests of Saskatchewan in Ottawa. Well he said he was going to do something about the cattle industry. Nothing in the federal Throne Speech.

He said that this province opposes cap and trade and that we need an assurance that any cap and trade funding would stay right here in the province. Nothing in the Throne Speech — in fact just the opposite. He recognizes we've got a problem in the forestry in this province. Nothing in the federal Throne Speech. He surely recognizes that we have some housing crisis issues in this province. Nothing in the federal Throne Speech.

My question, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier is, I guess to the Premier: how is this new relationship with Ottawa working so far?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, very, very quickly: \$10 million more for the synchrotron the NDP couldn't get; a quarter billion dollars more for a clean coal project in our province the NDP couldn't get; \$31 million for early childhood intervention and child care that they apparently forgot to ask for, Mr. Speaker; and millions more in infrastructure, more work to be done.

But I will say this: when I left for question period here this morning . . .

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — The markets may have changed, but before I left the office for question period today our dollar was down 2 cents, oil was down \$3, and the market was off 400 this morning. Mr. Speaker, the point of the Government of Saskatchewan to the feds and to anyone else that's listening is this: until an economist can look us in the eye and say cap and trade — and however it's being proposed, in whatever manifestations they're talking about — until they can tell us it will not add more trouble for an already troubled North American economy, we don't support it.

We will continue to move forward in terms of carbon capture sequestration, actually doing something about CO₂, Mr. Speaker. But the position of the province of Saskatchewan is this is not what is needed right now in the North American economy. What is needed is more stable policy, the likes of which we're working hard to bring forward right here in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I call members to order. Government

members will come to order. The Minister of Highways will come to order. And if I have to, I'll go down the row.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 67 — *The Education Amendment Act, 2008* (No. 2)/Loi n° 2 de 2008 modifiant la Loi de 1995 sur l'éducation

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 67, *The Education Amendment Act, 2008* (No. 2) be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Education has moved that Bill No. 67, *The Education Amendment Act, 2008* be now read the first time. 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 read a second time?

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 68 — *The Arts Professions Act/ Loi sur les professions artistiques*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 68 be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — The Minister Responsible for Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport has moved that Bill No. 68, *The Arts Professions Act* be now read the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — When shall the Bill be read a second time?

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 69 — *The Enforcement of Maintenance Orders Amendment Act, 2008/Loi de 2008 modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur l'exécution des ordonnances alimentaires*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 69, *The Enforcement of Maintenance Orders Amendment Act, 2008* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Justice has moved that Bill No. 69, *The Enforcement of Maintenance Orders Amendment Act, 2008* be now read the first time. 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?

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 72 — *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2008*

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

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 72, *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2008* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — The Minister Responsible for Crown Corporations has moved that Bill No. 72, *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2008* be now read the first time. 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?

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 602 — *The National Peacekeepers Recognition Day Act*

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

Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 602, *The National Peacekeepers Recognition Day Act* be now introduced and read a first time.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The member from The Battlefords has moved that Bill No. 602, *The National Peacekeepers Recognition Day Act* be now read the first time. 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 read a second time?

Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Speaker, by leave, immediately.

The Speaker: — The member from The Battlefords has asked for leave. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave is granted. The member from The Battlefords.

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 602 — *The National Peacekeepers Recognition Day Act*

Mr. Taylor: — It's a real pleasure to bring forward Bill 602, *The National Peacekeepers Recognition Day Act*, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today I had the pleasure to introduce a number of United Nations peacekeepers who have joined us in the Assembly today, Mr. Speaker. At this time before my formal remarks, I want to pay tribute to one of those in the gallery, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Jack McKay of Dundurn.

Mr. McKay was in The Battlefords on August 9, earlier this year. The Battlefords hosted one of two UN peacekeeper recognition days held this year in the province of Saskatchewan. This day, a ceremony of remembrance dedicated to all peacekeepers who serve their nation, especially those who paid the ultimate price, Mr. Speaker, took place on Main Street at the cenotaph in the city of North Battleford. During that ceremony, Mr. McKay made it very clear to me that although there were ceremonies in the province, there was at that time no official recognition of the role peacekeepers have played in our history. And I volunteered, Mr. Speaker, to check things out and to correct this if at all possible.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we are here today because Mr. McKay was correct, and the Saskatchewan legislature was and is in a position to correct this oversight. The Bill in front of us today allows Saskatchewan to join our national government and governments in other provinces in honouring and respecting the role that United Nations peacekeepers have played, are playing, and will play in the future. And we thank Mr. McKay for his commitment and for speaking so forthrightly about the need for Saskatchewan to do this.

I also want to thank my colleagues on both sides of the Legislative Assembly who have agreed to allow this legislation to proceed through all three stages and pass today, ensuring that what we want to achieve, Mr. Speaker, we will indeed achieve.

And next year on August 9, United Nations peacekeepers and their families throughout Saskatchewan will have this very special day to call their own. So to my colleagues in the Chamber, especially members of the government, I say thank you for making this happen.

Very simply put, Mr. Speaker, Bill 602 recognizes the contributions and sacrifices of United Nations peacekeepers now living in Saskatchewan. It is important to honour those who served us in direct conflict and equally important to honour those who served us in the pursuit of peace, to honour those who selflessly contribute to international peace and security. And this is especially important here in Canada because the UN peacekeeping force is a Canadian innovation for which former prime minister Lester B. Pearson won a Nobel Peace Prize.

I was pleased to work with UN peacekeepers in Saskatchewan to establish specific legislative recognition for those who have kept and still keep the peace on our behalf. There will always be a role for peacekeeping in the world, Mr. Speaker, and Saskatchewan people need to be acknowledged for the courage, commitment, and compassion that it takes to play that role.

I also want to acknowledge that Canada's federal members of parliament have already passed similar legislation, also through private members' legislation, Mr. Speaker, establishing August 9 as a day of national recognition for UN peacekeepers.

To do proper justice to the circumstances we find ourselves in today, let me quote from a couple of these members of parliament who spoke eloquently in favour of the national day. For example, Brent St. Denis of Ontario, an Ontario Member of Parliament, said August 9:

... would be a heritage day which would allow for Canadians who do reflect upon those things to remember the tremendous work Canadian peacekeepers have done in the past and to remember those in the present who are still involved in that traditional role they continue to play on our behalf, a role they conduct with great bravery, with tremendous intelligence, with tremendous ability, and at ... times, with tremendous restraint.

He added, and I concur completely, Mr. Speaker, "If ultimately the objective of all our work as parliamentarians all around the world is indeed to have a more peaceful world, then there will always be a role for peacekeeping." Another Ontario Member of Parliament, Mr. Bryon Wilfert, said:

The United Nations under the Security Council gives the power and the responsibility to take collective action when it comes to peace and security around the world. For this reason, the international community looks at these type of operations where Canadians and others have played such an important role in the past. I mentioned [he went on to say] that over the last 43 years we have seen Canadians participate in many theatres and also assist other countries in the art and the role of peacekeeping. When Canadians wear their blue berets or their blue helmets, people know that peacekeepers are there to improve the quality of life for individuals in very difficult situations. They are there to assist in the peace process.

And finally, Mr. speaker, let me quote from Betty Hinton, the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs who said:

For more than 50 years our peacekeepers have gone to the far corners of the world to help preserve peace. Their courage has given Canada a well deserved reputation for standing up for the values of freedom, tolerance, respect, dignity, and the rule of law. We can only imagine the gratitude of those whose lives have been saved by the intervention of Canadian peacekeepers.

[11:00]

Finally, Mr. Speaker, some may ask why August 9 was chosen as this special day of recognition. Again quite simply, Mr. Speaker, it is August 9 that resonates for us as a day of recognition because it was on August 9, 1974, that nine Canadian peacekeepers serving with the United Nations Emergency Force in Egypt and Israel were in a Canadian Forces Buffalo transport aircraft that was shot down as it prepared to land at Damascus on a regular resupply mission. On that day, Mr. Speaker, there were no survivors. This represents the greatest loss of Canadian lives in a single day on a peacekeeping mission.

So, Mr. Speaker, today we set in place provincial legislation to honour these wonderful men and women who, if they weren't born and raised in Saskatchewan, they now make Saskatchewan their home or whose families continue to make Saskatchewan their home. Today we set in place legislation that will ensure that every August 9 from this point forward will give Saskatchewan people reason to take pause and think about the role that peacekeepers have and continue to play in our world.

Today we celebrate an idea that had its genesis in 1956 in a conflict in the Suez that ultimately led to the creation of the UN peacekeeping force and that to this day serves the interest of peace throughout the world. And for those who are watching current events today, the largest UN peacekeeping force in the world today is on mission in war-torn lands of Congo in Africa.

Today we thank our peacekeepers. I am pleased I could play a small role in this regard and wish success and safe return to all of those who are working through the United Nations in a peacekeeping capacity. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The member from The Battlefords has moved that Bill No. 602, *The National Peacekeepers Recognition Day Act* be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Wood River.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to speak to this Bill and thank the member from The Battlefords for bringing this Bill forward.

Peacekeeping has a long history, Mr. Speaker. The member from Battleford talked about peacekeeping from '56. That's when it became officially designated as peacekeeping. But actually from the UN, United Nations, it was established in May 1948, and over the years the peacekeeping has evolved to

meet the demands of different conflicts and changing political landscapes. It has proved itself to be an efficient and cost-effective international instrument to restore peace in post-conflict situations.

Canada's involvement as peacekeeping actually goes back into the late 1940s, although back in the later '40s, in the earlier days of peacekeeping, it was called observer status or missions. We were involved back, post-Second World War. In 1950 to '53, Canada joined other UN nations to resist aggression during the Korean War. And we had a number of our Canadians that actually took place in the Korean War, and possibly some of our guests today were involved with the Korean conflict.

But during the Suez crisis also is when, as my colleague from Battlefords mentioned, that a proposal was put forward by Lester B. Pearson that a multinational UN peacekeeping force be sent to the Suez to separate the warring parties. And that is when official status of peacekeeping was announced in Canada.

And Canada is one of a handful of nations to which the United Nations can regularly turn to obtain peacekeeping advice and expert peacekeepers. Canada has participated in the overwhelming majority of peacekeeping operations mandated by the United Nations Security Council. Tens of thousands of Canadians have served in more than 40 separate peacekeeping missions, but Canada's contribution to peacekeeping is not without risk. More than 100 Canadians have died in peacekeeping operations and hundreds more have been wounded. Canada has been at the forefront of peacekeeping operations around the world. Police and civilians have all played prominent roles in separating warring factions.

I'd like to just talk about some of the conflicts that Canada troops have been involved with — troops, police, and civilians. And I'd like to talk just briefly about a few of them that we are familiar with.

Cyprus from 1970 — it was the early '70s, I guess — the Cyprus conflict between the Greeks and the Turk Cypriots, and here Canada sent troops in to be the buffer between these two warring factions. And it's a very tense situation for our troops in there, Mr. Speaker, because both the Greeks and the Turks are members of NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] and yet we had another NATO country sitting in between of them separating two warring factions.

And one of the issues in peacekeeping — and I'm sure my colleagues would recognize this — is the rules of engagement. And this was one of the things that I had to deal with in my past life is how some of our peacekeepers were involved with such stringent rules of engagement.

We have to look to places like Somalia, what happened in Somalia. We hear the press talk about what happened and none of us condone what happened to the young lad and how it happened. But we really have to take stock about our rules of engagement. We put our men and women in positions where you can be shot and killed and we don't . . . I mean, we don't appreciate that, but how do you defend yourself? And that's always been a problem, whether it's in the high seas, in places like Somalia, or in the air. And I've operated in a couple of those theatres, Mr. Speaker, and I know it's extremely,

extremely difficult and extremely hard on our troops.

We look at places like Rwanda and we know in hindsight now what happened in Rwanda. It was actually genocide. There was 800,000 people in Rwanda killed. We lost a number of peacekeepers in Rwanda. But again, what were the rules of engagement? I know General Dallaire had said there should be military action taken place, and in fact the UN disagreed. And now we know that all of these people were killed and it was genocide. So when I talk about rules of engagement, I know our people had a very, very tough time because of the rules of engagement.

And we go to other theatres of operation. Like we had a number of people sent to Vietnam. In fact, I was ready to board the plane to go to Vietnam in a peacekeeping role. But you put yourself into that environment, and how do you operate under such stringent rules of engagement? So that, Mr. Speaker, I understand and appreciate what our people have gone through. I totally support the Bill. I totally support our peacekeepers.

And putting it back into Saskatchewan, I know we've had a number of Saskatchewan people that have been involved in peacekeeping. I know we've had a number of people from Saskatchewan that have died in peacekeeping operations. So, Mr. Speaker, I would just stand and applaud all of our members that are here today to witness this Bill. And I fully support Bill 602. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the member for The Battlefords that Bill No. 602, *The National Peacekeepers Recognition Day Act* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried.

Clerk: — Second reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — To which committee shall this Bill be referred? I recognize the member from The Battlefords.

Mr. Taylor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I designate that Bill 602, *The National Peacekeepers Recognition Day Act* is referred to the Committee of the Whole and request leave for the said Bill to be considered in the Committee of the Whole immediately.

The Speaker: — Said Bill stands referred to the Committee of the Whole. And the member has requested leave for Bill No. 602, *The National Peacekeepers Recognition Day Act* to be considered in Committee of the Whole immediately. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted.

Clerk: — Committee of the Whole.

The Speaker: — I do now leave the Chair of the House for the House to go into Committee of the Whole.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE ASSEMBLY

Bill No. 602 — *The National Peacekeepers Recognition Day Act*

The Chair: — I call this committee to order. The first item of business is Bill No. 602, *An Act to recognize National Peacekeepers Day in Saskatchewan*. Clause 1, short title, *The National Peacekeepers Recognition Day Act*. Is clause 1 agreed to?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

[Clause 1 agreed to.]

[Clauses 2 and 3 agreed to.]

[Preamble agreed to.]

The Chair: — Therefore Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan enacts as follows: *An Act to recognize National Peacekeepers Day in Saskatchewan*. Is that agreed to?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. I recognize the member from The Battlefords.

Mr. Taylor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would move that the committee report the Bill without amendment.

The Chair: — It has been moved that the committee report Bill No. 602, *An Act to recognize National Peacekeepers Day in Saskatchewan* without amendment. Is that agreed to?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Mr. Taylor: — Thanks, Mr. Chair. I move that the committee rise, report progress, and ask for leave to sit again.

The Chair: — It is moved by the member from The Battlefords that the committee rise, report progress, and ask for leave to sit again. Is that carried?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Committee of the Whole.

Mr. Brkich: — Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the committee to report Bill No. 602, *The National Peacekeepers Recognition Day Act* without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall the Bill be read a third time? I recognize the member from The Battlefords.

Mr. Taylor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. By leave, I move this Bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — The member from The Battlefords has requested leave for Bill No. 602, *The National Peacekeepers Recognition Day Act* be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. I recognize the member from The Battlefords.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 602 — *The National Peacekeepers Recognition Day Act*

Mr. Taylor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Therefore I move that Bill No. 602 be now read a third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for The Battlefords that Bill No. 602, *The National Peacekeepers Recognition Day Act* be now read the third time and passed under its title.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

[11:15]

Clerk Assistant: — Third reading of this Bill.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — When shall the committee sit again?

An Hon. Member: — Next sitting of the House.

The Speaker: — At the next sitting of the House. Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Weekes: — Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the answers to question 109 through 124.

The Speaker: — Questions 109 through 124 tabled.

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Coronation Park.

Viability of Saskatchewan Crown Corporations

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be moving a motion that, just to get it on the Table, I want to say what it is. The motion is:

That this Assembly urge the government not to impose ideologically driven restrictions on Saskatchewan's Crown corporations and allow them to operate in a manner that will best ensure their long-term strength, viability, and ability to deliver the best possible, lowest cost service to Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, I will be moving that at the end of my remarks.

What we are living through in Saskatchewan is the beginning of the end of Saskatchewan's Crown corporations. The Sask Party government claim that they are the keepers of the Crown corporations, and they claim to be with Saskatchewan people. They claim that their goal is to provide gas, power, insurance, and telephony services at the lowest possible cost.

What the Sask Party does not get, what they don't get is that Saskatchewan's Crown corporations have evolved and continue to refine their operations so that they can deliver those services for the best long-term good of all Saskatchewan people. That is, that's what they were doing until the sell-off started with the election of the Sask Party government, Mr. Speaker.

Our Crowns have survived through interesting times, to put it mildly. SaskPower, for example, has operated through times of drought, and these are challenging years when the revenue stream from hydro was diminished, and it drove the cost of coal and fuel up as the higher cost replacement was used.

SaskTel has operated through arguably the biggest fundamental changes possible. SaskTel of as little as 15 or 20 years ago would not . . . You'd hardly recognize it as the same corporation. In those days, SaskTel relied hugely on long-distance revenues and every year that continues to plummet, but now we see SaskTel operating a vastly expanded list of services. In addition to the land phone, they have cell phones, internet services, home security, TV and movies and entertainment, and much, much more.

SaskEnergy, Mr. Speaker, has developed infrastructure like gas lines and storage caverns. They deliver gas over a system that has more kilometres of pipeline than anywhere in the world, and they do a better job than any company in the world — full stop, period.

SGI has operated through adversity. The very nature of insurance is you have adversity, but that's their business, Mr. Speaker, and they know that they have to spread the risk, if you like, as far as they can. And that's how they protect individual Saskatchewan policyholders.

While the New Democrats were in government, these Crown

corporations were seeking opportunities to earn dollars and experiences for employees outside of the borders of Saskatchewan. We were providing job growth experience far and wide through venues like, Mr. Speaker, venues like SaskPower has an investment in MRM [Muskeg River mine] cogen just 75 kilometres north of Fort McMurray. It's a very good 172-megawatt cogeneration project that . . . A little note before I get to the money of it. A little note, Mr. Speaker, that 84 per cent of the available energy is captured and used in the form of electricity and steam for the extraction of oil up in the Fort McMurray area. The normal for a gas electrical generation plant is, you'll realize, a 33 per cent value of return of the available energy. So it's 84 per cent return versus a more normal 33 per cent.

Just also ATCO [ATCO Power] is the partner with SaskPower on this project. And ATCO speaks very, very glowingly about that, and yet this government wants to sell it off. This is an operation, Mr. Speaker, that's returning close to a million dollars a month to SaskPower, and it's something that can help cushion SaskPower's drop in income on years where we might have a drought, that sort of thing. So every dollar or every million dollars that we can earn out of Saskatchewan is a million dollars we don't have to earn out of the pockets of SaskPower customers.

SaskTel has technology literally worldwide. They've got involvement in a great many things. Some of the investments that the now government moan about are investments that were investments in switching operations that gave SaskTel customers access to Asia at a much more reasonable cost than what we would otherwise have if we were simply paying for services elsewhere.

In energy, I've already mounted the case of Heritage Gas in Nova Scotia and how that is bringing money into the coffers for SaskEnergy and providing opportunities for Saskatchewan people in the management of Heritage Gas in Nova Scotia. They have other operations in Chile, and those are also doing very, very well, Mr. Speaker.

SGI, just in its last report, SGI was quite proud that \$9 million earned out of province — in insurance, out of province — \$9 million returned directly to the bottom line of SGI. And that's \$9 million that cushioned the earnings, if you like, and it took the pressure off of SGI to raise the rates for Saskatchewan consumers of insurance.

And these are good things, Mr. Speaker, when we can have job growth experiences out of province and bring revenue into Saskatchewan from out of province. This is a wonderful, wonderful thing. That's what we believe in as New Democrats, and it's what clearly the now government, the governing Saskatchewan Party, don't believe in.

They also have a fundamental change. And I want to just refer to May 7 of this year when the Minister Responsible for CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan] said that the build, own, and operate model of electrical generation that SaskPower has had for decades now is not something that this government — meaning the Sask Party government — is interested in. No more, they say.

Another quote from that same minister, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on October 28. The quote is, "We're not boxing them into a narrow window, we're boxing them into Saskatchewan."

And of course he was referring to the Crown corporations.

But what is the reality, Mr. Deputy Speaker? The reality is the Sask Party, one of the first things they did is commissioned a report from KPMG, a \$250,000 report, or \$25,000 a page, which wouldn't even be half bad if they'd listen and, you know, read the report and follow it. But of course they don't.

In this KPMG report, Mr. Speaker . . . And I urge people to read the entire report, to get it. It's not that huge a report. It's reasonably well done. I have no quarrel with KPMG in what they've done. But KPMG showed that of the total investments that have been bought, operated, and sold, of those total investments that were completed, the return on investment to the people of Saskatchewan, to the Crown corporations, through the Crown corporations, a return of investment — 41.6 per cent. Those words never crossed the lips of government members. I haven't heard it once from government ministers or members of the government, Mr. Speaker. A 41.6 per cent return on investments of the investments that we saw from start to finish while New Democrats were in office.

The Sask Party are saying, well there's going to be a negative return. And they pull out some numbers that are based on if you take some valuation of the company today as opposed to Heritage Gas that is growing in value. If you were to sell it at fire sale depressed rates, you could show a loss, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You could show a loss. And that's what they're determined to do because they're philosophically hide-bent on destroying Saskatchewan's Crown corporations.

Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that in the KPMG report one of the things that they say is that quote:

Based upon our scope of review we concluded that strategic objectives were substantially or partially achieved in over eighty percent of the Investments.

Over 80 per cent of the investments. That's a pretty darn good record to have the goals substantially achieved in over 80 per cent of the investments. And that's according to the commissioned study that the Sask Party had commissioned.

Mr. Speaker, clearly our Crown corporations have a great potential, and they have served Saskatchewan incredibly well. These investments that have been made out of province should not be simply thrown away. It would be like throwing the baby away with the bath water, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is not something that should be done lightly. And I submit that by selling off at fire sale prices these assets that the Crown Corporations have developed out of province, that it's going to harm the long-term viability of our Saskatchewan Crown Corporations and the government will then sell them.

I want to use a few quotes here. I'm going to quote from Paul Martin who's the editor of *SaskBusiness* magazine, and the quote is fairly short but, quote:

Historically, the Crowns have had success when they

invested abroad. They've lost some money from time to time but the plus and minus weighs heavily in favor of external investment. SaskTel's foray into the British cable and phone business alone netted more than has been lost in all the outside ventures.

That's from Paul Martin, a very respected *SaskBusiness* magazine editor. The *Leader-Post* has an editorial saying, and I quote:

Forcing the Crowns to put all their eggs in the tiny Saskatchewan basket could threaten their economic viability. We trust the government will proceed cautiously on this file.

Mr. Speaker, from the KPMG report, let me . . . This is pretty important. And this is part of why I urge people to read the entire report, because it does paint a picture way different than what the Minister Responsible for CIC would have us believe. The quote from KPMG report is, quote:

KPMG believes that its analyses must be considered as a whole and that selecting portions of the analyses or the factors considered by it, without considering all facts and analyses together, could create a misleading view of the process underlying our findings.

In other words, look at the entire report. I've already pointed out one part that the government has never mentioned, the 41.6 per cent rate of return on investments that were concluded while New Democrats were in government, Mr. Speaker.

The Sask Party claimed to be on the side of the people. This government claims to be on the side of the people. And yet one of the first things they did is walked away from the lowest cost utility bundle, a promise that had been delivered to Saskatchewan people and had been kept for four years. And the plan was to continue it indefinitely. First thing they did, cancelled the lowest cost utility bundle. Now they've replaced it with words like, oh well, we'll deliver the lowest reasonable cost that we possibly might be able to, depending on . . . well we'll see how it goes.

Well there's small comfort in that. We've already seen home heating costs rise. We know that the minister has said that SaskPower is going to be raising its rates before very long. We know there is upward pressure. Because of their actions, there's upward pressure on our Crowns.

[11:30]

Mr. Speaker, there is much more that I want to say about our Crown corporations, but this is a timed debate, therefore I have to make my motion so it's on the floor. And I move:

That this Assembly urge the government not to impose ideologically driven restrictions on Saskatchewan's Crown corporations and allow them to operate in a manner that will best ensure their long-term strength, viability, and ability to deliver the best possible, lowest cost service to Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, I so move that, and I'm very much looking

forward to my colleagues on this side in their thoughtful notions, thoughtful speeches on this very important motion. It will be interesting to hear how the government can possibly defend the sell-off at fire sale prices of the Crown corporations. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I so move this motion.

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by the member from Regina Coronation Park:

That this Assembly urge the government not to impose ideologically driven restrictions on Saskatchewan's Crown corporations and allow them to operate in a manner that will best ensure their long-term strength, viability, and the ability to deliver the best possible, lowest cost service to Saskatchewan people.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy.

Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to have the opportunity to rise in the Assembly and take part in this debate. I think we're going to have a spirited debate this afternoon — this morning I guess it is — and, Mr. Speaker, I won't go through the motion. The member just read it out so I'll get into the content of my remarks.

Mr. Speaker, I have to say that I'm a little surprised at this motion. Quite frankly I can't follow the members opposite's rationale for this sort of motion. To try to defend a policy that . . . and without pre-empting what members on this side are going to say about it, Mr. Speaker, because I don't want to steal part of their speech, but just a hint. The record was bad, Mr. Speaker. And I know members are going to speak on that.

But, Mr. Speaker, I want to look at this motion in two parts. Let's look at the first part. The first part talks about urging the government not to impose ideologically driven restrictions on the Crowns. Now, Mr. Speaker, let's look at what the member's referring to. I believe from his comments he's referring to the Minister for Crown Corporations, the Saskatchewan-first policy that was announced a few weeks ago, I think it was at the end of this last month, and look at what policies are in place in this new framework. It's investing, our Crowns investing within Saskatchewan. That's the first major plank. And also to stop out-of-province investments, Mr. Speaker.

That's kind of the crux of what we're discussing right now. And obviously the member, you know, he's taken a position on what he thinks that will do to the Crowns. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, how did members opposite respond when this policy was first announced? Well the October 23 *Leader-Post*, and I quote, "Opposition Leader Lorne Calvert said that as premier in 2003 he had already directed the Crowns to focus first on investing in Saskatchewan . . ."

Mr. Speaker, now I guess this is the ideological driven position to restrict the Crown. Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition, the former premier, had already directed the Crowns to do this. And, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite, my hon. colleague opposite who moved this motion, what did he say in this Chamber in response to this policy, Mr. Speaker? I will refer members to page 1409. This is from October 28 in response to a ministerial statement. He said, and I quote, "Mr.

Deputy Speaker, today's reannouncement of a now five-year-old policy, the Sask-first policy, is just that — it's five years old."

Now, Mr. Speaker, which is it? Is the Sask-first policy an ideologically driven restriction on the Crowns that they claim is intended to weaken it? Or is it the same policy they adopted five years ago as government, Mr. Speaker? Which is it? You can't have it both ways.

You know, Mr. Speaker, it kind of reminds me, kind of reminds me of John Kerry. You know, he voted for the war before he voted against it. It's very similar. This party opposite, they voted in favour of this policy and now they're against this policy. You know I'm not sure, I'm not really sure what members opposite even, if they even know what this motion speaks to. I mean if this actually came to a vote today, Mr. Speaker, I think we might have members over there voting in favour of it and members over there voting against it. Some might just even stand up and vote present, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure if they even know what the policy is talking about.

Now let's look at the second part of the motion, Mr. Speaker. It talks about allowing, urging this government to allow the Crowns to ". . . operate in a manner that will best ensure their long-term strength, viability, and ability to deliver the best possible, lowest cost service to Saskatchewan people."

Now, Mr. Speaker, members behind me are saying that that speaks to I think what our platform is saying, Mr. Speaker. So obviously we're in favour of this. But I think it's important to look at the record, Mr. Speaker, of the opposition opposite. Now how much credibility do they really have when we're talking about long-term strength, viability, and ability to deliver service to Saskatchewan people?

Well we know the record. It's a record of, by and large, failures and losses outside of the province. We have almost a half a billion dollars that was spent outside of the province with a target return of 22 per cent that actually had an overall rate of return of negative 15 per cent, Mr. Speaker.

And we're looking at investments made by Power — Intel across Canada, in Australia, Chile, Mexico; Retx.com in Atlanta, Georgia. That's one that members . . . Nashville. And I think other members are going to want to speak more to that.

So, Mr. Speaker, what actually was happening to the people of Saskatchewan when the members opposite were losing millions around the world, Mr. Speaker? How does a negative 15 per cent return outside of this province lead to long-term strength? How does it lead to long-term viability? How does it lead to the ability of the Crowns to deliver service at the lowest cost, Mr. Speaker?

It doesn't. Because, Mr. Speaker, at the same time that members opposite were involved in a government that was losing money outside of the province . . . I look here from 1994 to '96, NST Network Services building fibre optics. And by 1997 all had been lost, Mr. Speaker. But in 1997 SaskEnergy was raising rates here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

From 2001 to 2005 we had Navigata, and I know members on

both sides of the House know the history of that, and, you know, losing money year after year. And yet we have within our province our utilities raising rates. Now, Mr. Speaker, how did providing services to the people of Halifax, how does that help people in Halbrite? How did losing money in Georgia help provide services for people in Goodwater, Saskatchewan? How did losing millions in Chile help my constituents in Coronach, Mr. Speaker?

I only have a couple of minutes left here, Mr. Speaker, but I've gone through the two main points that I want to make. One is this: in the last probably three weeks, this party opposite has taken all sorts of positions on this policy. First they took credit: well this is a five-year-old policy; we did this five years ago. What's the big deal? Now they're saying it's, you know, just the worst thing. Actually, Mr. Speaker, it is the beginning of the end. I mean let's not inflate the rhetoric, but this policy, according to the member opposite, is the beginning of the end even though they adopted it five years ago, Mr. Speaker. I'm a little bit confused.

And then looking at the record of what happened in this province when rates were going up while members opposite were losing millions upon millions out of province and out of country, now, Mr. Speaker, why would they be opposed to investing in Saskatchewan? Do they not have confidence in the economy of this province, in the people of this province?

I mean I know members opposite — largely from Regina and Saskatoon — they get good cell service here. You know, they get good . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And well one from Prince Albert, but he's got about three years left, Mr. Speaker. But, you know, but maybe they should consult their rural members. Maybe they should talk to their rural caucus, Mr. Speaker. Well I guess they don't. And I know members opposite were in my constituency this summer. Did they ask how the cell service was near Trossachs? I don't think so, Mr. Speaker.

So one thing that this motion really speaks to is a lack of confidence that the members opposite have in this province, in this economy. And the other thing, Mr. Speaker, they have no contrition for losing millions and millions of dollars out of province and out of country while people in this province have been asking for years for better service, for a bus route to service northern Saskatchewan which we finally got, thanks to our minister on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker. Now that we're getting increased cell service, Mr. Speaker, no contrition absolutely from members opposite. Not surprising though, not surprising.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm certainly pleased to be able to put my comments on the record. I look forward to the question-and-answer period, look forward to asking some questions and perhaps getting some answers from members opposite. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Northeast.

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to

join into this debate and say what a pleasure it is to do so on behalf of the good folks in Regina Northeast. I want to enter into this debate in support of the motion so eloquently moved by my colleague from Coronation Park.

This is an interesting debate, Mr. Speaker. It is a debate on the Crown corporations who have provided us great service, top-notch service to the people of Saskatchewan at competitive prices over many, many years. I think we should take a moment to take a look at the history of the Crowns and to wonder why it is that Crown corporations have done so well in this province, have served this province so well and continue to do so.

Perhaps it's because of the experiences of our forefathers and pioneers who settled and developed this great province of ours. When they moved here, they faced great adversities — extreme climates, conditions from extremely sub-zero weather in January to extremely hot Julys to the isolation of the province being a landlocked province having distances to ports to trade for goods. I think they soon found out that if they were going to survive and prosper in those kinds of conditions, in many cases they could only do so if they worked together — if they worked together for the common goal. And they did so, and this is why with this province grew.

But this is also why the Crown corporations were established here, because it was soon identified that we could prosper in this province but could only do so if we worked together in a co-operative atmosphere in a way that ensured that we were able to have the strengths to compete in a competitive basis with international forces.

And, Mr. Speaker, there was just an announcement made yesterday by the Minister Responsible for STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company], which I applauded. It was an announcement of the expansion of the services of STC, an expansion of the services of a Crown corporation. And this would not have been done, this service would not have been provided to the four communities in northern Saskatchewan, had it not been a Crown corporation willing to provide those services. Because Crown corporations have as their calling card, I guess you would say, their first mandate is to provide services to the people of Saskatchewan. And often they do so in some cases with cross-subsidization.

And I applaud the minister's announcement yesterday — the expansion of STC, the expansion of those services to those four northern communities. I think that was a great job, Mr. Speaker. But it's done so because of a Crown corporation.

[11:45]

The Crown corporations can only survive if they continue to stay strong, and they can only stay strong through expansion. In the world of business today it's common knowledge that companies and corporations who survive do so by growing, do so by expanding, and they have to do that in profitable areas. They don't expand into areas which are non-profitable. They have to expand into profitable markets. And the Crown corporations are no different. And we've seen that happen, we've seen that happen in the past, Mr. Speaker.

Probably the best example of that that comes to mind is the

recent experience with Saskatchewan Government Insurance. I believe it was last year's report that indicated that Saskatchewan Government Insurance, a profit of about \$35 million of which \$9 million came from outside of Saskatchewan, came from their investments outside of Saskatchewan. That was \$9 million that was not provincial dollars. That was \$9 million came from outside of Saskatchewan, came to this province to cushion the costs on Saskatchewan people.

It came at an advantageous time, a time when we had experienced some tremendous summer storms which had put a lot of pressure on SGI, but this cushioned it. Nearly one-third of the profit of SGI came from outside of Saskatchewan. And I think that's wise investments. It's wise investments to help the people of Saskatchewan cushion those costs.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting, it's interesting to see some of the language that's being used by the members opposite. It's interesting because I think the language that they use reflects their intentions, reflects their ideas, and perhaps maybe even reflects what we may see coming from that government over there in the very near future.

For example, on health care the Sask Party is now referring to patients in our health care system as customers — not as patients, as customers. Mr. Speaker, this Alberta-style language certainly leads one to believe that Saskatchewan people could soon be paying for health care services here in the future.

Mr. Speaker, we have seen the Minister Responsible for Education looking at entering into discussions with the private sector on P3 [public-private partnership] constructions of our schools. The P3 system has not worked in any other jurisdiction for the students, nor has it worked for the education boards. It's only worked for the private investor.

Mr. Speaker, we see this government has, I suppose as a prelude to their intentions of privatization of the Crowns, trying to find some justification to move in that direction, so they commission a report — a report which cost \$25,000 a page, by the way. But it's interesting. That very same report — the report that they asked for and the report that they paid for — that report says that of the four Crowns that are currently investing out of the province, three of them are right now showing a profit. Two of them are actually outperforming the investment targets.

And when you look at the information contained in that report, Mr. Speaker, it's quite eye-opening. You look at the section on page 7 of that report. It indicates that the targeted return on investments by the Crown corporations was 27 per cent, but the actual return on investment was 41.6. Mr. Speaker, it's outperforming, outperforming the targets, and yet this government over here wants to get rid of the Crowns.

That's a question, Mr. Speaker, that I just can't fathom, why they would do so. The Crowns have a track record of benefiting the people of Saskatchewan, working for the people of Saskatchewan, providing services for the people of Saskatchewan that would not be affordable otherwise, but yet this government here wants to get rid of the Crowns. And this is just the first step into that process.

We're seeing that happen. Now they're setting the stage, they're setting the stage, Mr. Speaker. And I'm not saying they're going to sell the Crowns. No, no. I don't think they're going to take an ad out in the *Toronto Globe and Mail* and say the Crowns are for sale. I don't believe that's going to be the case. I think what they want to do is, they want to strangle off the revenue streams to these Crowns. They want to strangle those revenue streams off so they weaken the Crowns to the point where they can no longer compete, can no longer provide service to the people of Saskatchewan at a competitive price or even less than a competitive price, Mr. Speaker, and that's their long-term plan.

I believe that they want to strangle this off. And yet there's no evidence that the Crowns are in any difficulty. The Crowns are not doing anything but good for the people of this province. Most recent article in the *Saskatchewan Business* magazine, by . . . Paul Martin's the editor. Historically, and I'll quote:

Historically, the Crowns have had success when they invested abroad. They've lost money from time to time but the plus and the minus weighs heavily in favor of external investment. SaskTel's foray into the British cable and phone business alone netted more than has been lost in all the [other outside investments] . . .

Mr. Speaker, that's just one indication of the strengths of the Crown corporations. It's one indication of the positive good that they do on behalf of Saskatchewan people. Bringing money into this province from out of this province simply lessens the burden of taxation, lessens the burden of responsibilities of Saskatchewan citizens. And yet for whatever reason, for whatever reason this group over here, men and women over here who are the Government of Saskatchewan today, want to strangle that off. They want to strangle that off.

Mr. Speaker, even the KPMG report believes that you need to look at the entire report and take into consideration the entire investment package of the Crown corporations to fully understand that they are the best vehicle Saskatchewan has going, to ensure that we continue to have quality services, quality services at affordable prices for the good people of this province.

And that, Mr. Speaker, is what Saskatchewan people deserve, and that, Mr. Speaker, I would hope would continue in this province, but I am fearful. I am fearful of the hidden agenda of that minister, fearful of the hidden agenda of that government over there who wants to strip away the Crown corporations. Wants to strip away the ability of the Crown corporations to continue to serve Saskatchewan people in the fantastic and profitable way they have in the past.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Lloydminster.

Mr. McMillan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to speak on the motion put forward today. I find that the Crowns and the issues around it have been

fairly polarized, and there has been a lot of misinformation that has been put out there for a long time. And I think having an open and responsible debate on this issue is the right thing to do, and this is the right Chamber to have that debate in.

The member that put forward the motion started his speech off with saying, it's the beginning of the end, and, Mr. Speaker, I challenge that member. I think that is some misinformation. Let's turn that around and say, maybe it's just the end of the beginning and there are greener days ahead, Mr. Speaker. I am certain that there is.

Now, Mr. Speaker, of particular interest in the motion was the line "ideologically driven." Now, Mr. Speaker, again that's some pretty charged-up language. Some might call it rhetoric. Now what brings it back for me is the old line that hope beats fear, and I think in this case, hope in this province is trumpeting over fear every time. And I would like to tell you a few ways in which we see that on the ground here today.

Mr. Speaker, in Lloydminster, my home riding, not three years ago, the lady that now works as my CA [constituency assistant] started a petition. And in Lloydminster, because we live on the border, some of our gas is delivered through ATCO Gas to residents who live in Saskatchewan, and there were some concerns over rebates and how Alberta does stuff and how Saskatchewan does stuff and the people were caught in the middle.

Now this lady went around with a petition, and she got people in Lloydminster to sign their names, to come out to meetings, and our Crown corporations said, you know, we can do this; we can supply the gas to the people in Lloydminster who live on Saskatchewan side. Now, Mr. Speaker, the willingness to work with our Alberta partners, ideologically that is something that this government has said very clearly we will do, and we will do into the future.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would also like to point out that, you know, the people of Lloydminster very much access the uses of our Crown corporations through SGI. Now over the past few years it's been very common that people of higher incomes would migrate to the Alberta side to take advantage of their lower income tax, but younger families would stay on the Saskatchewan side because if their kids were coming up to the driving age, it would be advantageous for them to have their kids start driving in Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, our government — and hope beats fear — our government said, you know, we understand, but we think it's not fair that you have to leave Saskatchewan to get lower income tax. So we said, why don't we just be responsible and lower our income tax across the entire province so that people don't have to leave? So those young families can raise their children, they can earn a living, and when their kids start driving, become 15, 16 years old, they can access a Crown corporation, Saskatchewan Government Insurance, and those families will stay in Saskatchewan.

After their kids leave home, the mother and father, the model is they would then go to Alberta. Now they won't. They will stay in Lloydminster on the Saskatchewan side. And I'm very pleased that our government stands to that.

Mr. Speaker, ideologically driven decisions . . . You know, our government has been very vocal that generating power, our Crown corporations have relied very heavily on coal — and pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. Where in the past there hasn't been a willingness, for ideological reasons, to look at nuclear or any other options, our government said, you know, ideologically let's not get weighted down with that. Let's take an honest-to-goodness look at the options.

Now the CIC has funded a group of people that have expertise in this area through the whole value chain of nuclear, uranium mining, enrichment. You know, no decisions have been made, but we haven't been stuck by ideological points of view to the point that we won't look at the options.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to point out a couple other initiatives that I think are just terrific. One is the STC has announced that they have partnered with a private sector individual. They've partnered with a private sector individual to provide service to communities in northern Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there hasn't been a new bus route by STC in over 30 years. You know, hope beats fear that we can partner and get the benefits of the private operator. And these people in these four towns — Ile-a-la-Crosse, Buffalo Narrows, La Loche, and Beauval — are going to start getting bus service. Now, Mr. Speaker, that gives me great pride to stand on this side of House and say, my government was not ideologically opposed to a solution that saw these people benefit. Now, Mr. Speaker, I think that's very, very positive.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk a little bit about the focus our government has said that we would like to see the Crowns on Saskatchewan. Now ideologically let's not get weighted down with that. The world is looking at Saskatchewan as the best opportunities. Now we on this side of the House say, they're right; Saskatchewan is the best place in the world to be looking to invest money, to be building infrastructure, to be reaping the rewards when we see that our neighbours to the south, our fellow provinces to the east are not doing particularly well today. They're all looking at Saskatchewan as a leader, as somewhere where we want to invest our money. Now I think that is positive. I don't care what ideological bend you have. I am proud to live in Saskatchewan, and I am proud that we are going to invest our money here in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. McMillan: — Now, Mr. Speaker, I had mentioned a little bit about the fact that 50 per cent of our power generation is on coal, and it's the lignite coal. It is a very high emitter of greenhouse gases, and that's a reality. Our province is rich in coal. And we have utilized those resources in the past, and we will continue to utilize those resources going into the future.

Now, Mr. Speaker, a responsible government looking at that, and with the realization that the world is changing and maybe we should be looking at a little greener solutions, one of those solutions — and just one, Mr. Speaker; there are many — but one is clean coal. Now we have built positive relationships with our federal colleagues and we have said, we would like to have a demonstration plant here in Saskatchewan. You know, do something positive, you know.

And that government in Ottawa — who we are respectful with and they are respectful with us — they said, we think that that is a good idea. We are willing to put \$240 million into this project to help your government, your Crown corporations move forward with this. Our government said, that is terrific. We think we should also partner with the private sector because everybody is involved in Saskatchewan. We think if they can bring something to the table which offers benefit, which helps this project move ahead, we are not going to just outright say no because of our ideological bend, Mr. Speaker. Now this project is something that is one — one — of the many things that we can move forward with, but it is something that we are looking at today.

[12:00]

And, Mr. Speaker, I would also like to say, as I was doing the research for this 10-minute speech that I'm allowed to give here, that going through and seeing some of the projects that under our government's tenure have been accomplished by our Crown corporations, I would just like to point out that in my riding, and what are important to me . . . And there's a list of 24 new areas which got cell coverage since we took government, one being Turtle Lake — not in my riding, but utilized by many of the people in my constituency. As I say, there's 24 spread all over the province for the good of the people of Saskatchewan. Our Crown corporations are doing a heck of a job, Mr. Speaker — a heck of a job.

Mr. Speaker, wireless Internet service, we have put it into 18 more communities in the last year. Again in my riding, the community of Onion Lake, Mr. Speaker, it's just a short half hour north of Lloydminster, and those folks are very pleased that our Crown corporations are looking out for their needs. And that is great.

Maidstone — again not in my riding, but very close — now has high-speed Internet. And Silver Lake, not far from my very home, Mr. Speaker, now has high-speed Internet service. And I think that is something I'm going to be very proud of, and I will be bringing forward and bringing up as often as I can in my local community.

Mr. Speaker, to wrap up, I would just like to highlight a couple of the points I've already made. Most importantly is, let's get above ideological bends. Let's get above it. Let's do what is right for this province . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. McMillan: — Let's not make decisions based on, you know, you lean left; you lean right. Let's do what the people of Saskatchewan want us to do, and let's recognize this province's strengths. Let's invest in the future, and the future is here, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to be in the government right now, and I'm proud that we are investing here. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Douglas Park.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I don't think there's much doubt, Mr. Speaker, that we would be debating the issue of Crowns, and the health of Crowns, the future of Crown corporations in Saskatchewan following the election of the Sask Party government. I think there would be very few surprises on the part of people who are watching the proceedings today, no matter what end of the political spectrum they're on, that we would in fact be debating this issue.

Historically we know that Crowns have done well in Saskatchewan because of a lack of interest by the private sector in investing in providing utility services in Saskatchewan. Although there may well have been private companies that were interested in providing services to Regina, Saskatoon, or the major centres, private companies were not interested in providing those services to rural areas of the province. Similarly with SaskTel, no interest on the part of major telephone companies to assume service anywhere but in Regina and Saskatoon or the major centres where they could make a return on their investment.

No opportunity for any retention of the funds that people put into buying automobile insurance, or home insurance for that matter, for those funds to stay in Saskatchewan and to work for the interests of people of Saskatchewan. None of that. And that's one of the reasons — because Saskatchewan was such a large agrarian area — that we've tended to rely on collective action through Crowns, probably more so than other jurisdictions, and continue to do so. In fact Saskatchewan farmers continue to show leadership in that area. Whether it's collective action to promote the use of ethanol or biodiesel, whether it's collective action through grain marketing, Saskatchewan farmers continue to work together to do the things that private industries will not do effectively on their behalf, Mr. Speaker.

So none of this should come as any surprise, Mr. Speaker, that in Saskatchewan now we have Crowns delivering very good services at very low rates, in fact very good services at the lowest rate in Canada. Mr. Speaker, not only do we have good services at lower rates, we also in Saskatchewan have been able to extend the reach of those services to parts of Saskatchewan that private sector would never have done.

We have a high-speed Internet reach in Saskatchewan that is greater than any comparable jurisdiction in the world, greater than any comparable jurisdiction in the world. If I might, just a brief anecdote. A few years ago, in New York City, explaining to people in New York City that Saskatchewan, you know, has a 85 per cent reach in terms of Internet, that we're providing high-speed Internet to small towns, and they said, we're not even getting that services in certain areas of New York City.

So there you can see this is the influence of the Crowns: to enable us to extend the reach of services not enjoyed, not enjoyed by our neighbours to the South that also have agrarian areas, Mr. Speaker, but we're able to do it in Saskatchewan because of the influence of the Crowns.

Cellphone service similarly, Mr. Speaker, a very high reach for cellphone service in Saskatchewan, not something that's been done in other jurisdictions. And of course we have some head office jobs in Saskatchewan that we otherwise would not have.

And most people in Saskatchewan agree with this assessment, but the right wing does not agree. The right wing has never agreed. They have a much different vision of Saskatchewan.

They have seen, historically they have seen Crowns as a drag on the economy. They take the position that if we had competition in the electrical sector or the telephone sector or the natural gas sector or the insurance sector, that we would be creating more jobs in Saskatchewan. It would be adding to growth in Saskatchewan. That's the position that they historically have taken.

They don't explain why it is that this competition might actually result in higher costs for people, that people might be paying more for electrical or for telephone. They do in other jurisdictions, but they do take the position that that extra money coming out of people's pockets, out of their jeans, going to private companies would create more jobs in Saskatchewan. They also don't explain why it is that that kind of competitiveness has meant that people in Alberta are now paying much higher rates than historically they did, Mr. Speaker.

If people had any doubts about that that's the direction and that's the belief of the members opposite, I would refer them . . . If the Premier's office hasn't already provided them all with a copy of his speech from March 25, 2002. That was in fact the Premier's seminal speech about future development and possibilities for future development in Saskatchewan. If any of the public want to see it, I would refer them to legassembly.sk.ca and to go to *Hansard* for March 25, 2002, pages 266 to 273. So that's www.legassembly.sk.ca, *Hansard*, March 25, 2002.

And there you'll see an analysis by the Premier where he essentially takes the point of view that things have not gone right in Saskatchewan, that we've had 60 years of government that have continued to invest in Crowns, as opposed to a contrary vision that he had. And because we've had this approach of relying on Crowns, we've seen our population reduced. We don't have the private sector investment. We don't have the small, private entrepreneurs that we have in other provinces. Never mind the fact that, you know, within a few years, because somebody had a steady hand on the tiller, Saskatchewan's economy improved tremendously, that there was population growth, that we did see increases in private sector investment. Never mind.

At that point, his analysis was things are bad in Saskatchewan because we had 60 years of Crown investment. And again I encourage people to read the now Premier's remarks. He was the member for Swift Current. That was his conclusion — things were so bad and the Crowns were to blame.

If I just might quickly quote:

And it's little wonder, for what our private sector have had to endure, what our small-business men and women have had to endure in terms of high taxes on productivity and in terms of the ever-intrusive family of Crown corporations often competing with those small businesses with their own tax dollars.

Those are the words of the Premier.

He goes on:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the barriers I spoke of earlier in terms of what the, what the governments of Saskatchewan have put in the way of venture capital and entrepreneurs, one of the barriers is Crown corporations.

So we don't have to go very far in our history to get a sense of what it is that the Sask Party and their leadership thinks and believes with respect to Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker. And then of course, he goes on in his remarks to qualify that and talk about what they wouldn't do, you know, and all that kind of stuff — it's the management of the Crowns and not the Crowns themselves.

The members opposite might ask themselves like why is it they lost the 2003 election which revolved on the issue of Crowns. Was it because one of their members was so insistent on ramping up the issue of the Crowns in the years preceding that? And was he in fact deep-sixing the ambitions of Elwin Hermanson to become the premier of Saskatchewan by elevating that issue the way that he did?

Of course by the next election you had shifted gears saying, we would never privatize the Crowns. Well no, you know, on paper he might never privatize the Crowns, but there is never any doubt — never any doubt — in the minds of the people of Saskatchewan, never any doubt in my mind that they would take actions to get at the Crowns.

In this case, they're getting at it through the back door. They're doing it through a Trojan Horse called Saskatchewan first. They're going through a Trojan Horse of great intentions — nothing that they hadn't forecast or nothing that we couldn't forecast, because again the Premier had taken that point of view, Mr. Speaker.

But there was never any doubt in our minds, never any doubt in the minds of the people of Saskatchewan that the only real question was how. The only real question was not if you're going to take a run at the Crowns, as they're doing. The only question was how. And what we have here, again as I indicated, is a Trojan Horse, a Trojan Horse called Saskatchewan first, a Trojan Horse that masks the real intentions — in this case, an innocuous phrase called Saskatchewan first.

Well I mean, who couldn't agree with Saskatchewan first? But you have to drill down as to what this policy's all about. And I have a simple question, Mr. Speaker. If you really put Saskatchewan first, why would you highball it? Why would you sell off profitable investments by Crowns in other jurisdictions? What is the sense of that when those investments continue to support Crowns and Saskatchewan jobs right here in Saskatchewan? Why would you do that? The wolf is back, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Biggar.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a

pleasure to take part in a 75-minute debate. Just for the record I have to read the motion:

That this Assembly urge the government not to impose ideologically driven restrictions on Saskatchewan's Crown corporations and allow them to operate in a manner that will best ensure their long-term strength, viability, and ability to deliver the best possible, lowest cost service to Saskatchewan people.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we agree with that. Mr. Speaker, you know normally — normally, Mr. Deputy Speaker — when you think about what to put in a 75-minute debate, you try to look for a wedge issue that you know shows some differences.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I thought this actually was a 75-minute debate motion that came from our side. It just fits perfectly with the strengths of the Saskatchewan Party government. The Crown sector is a strength of the Saskatchewan Party government and of Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think when we look at the . . . my colleague spoke to this before. But you know not to impose ideologically driven restrictions certainly speaks to the failure of the NDP Party and the failure of their forerunners, the CCF [Co-operative Commonwealth Federation] Party when you speak about Crown corporations and Crown investments.

My colleague from Lloydminster and Weyburn-Big Muddy are both a little bit younger than I am, and I just noticed I was born just year or two earlier than they were. But when they talk about the Crown sector, they seem to refer to, you know, things that happened in the '80s and '90s. I can remember a little bit about what happened in the 1970s and the Blakeney government.

Under the Blakeney government they nationalized, they — the NDP government — nationalized the potash sector in Saskatchewan. Now you want to talk about an ideological bent, I mean that's an example that really set the province back for, quite frankly, generations. After that happened, the business sector was fearful to come into Saskatchewan and invest in the province.

You can go even further back — and I don't remember this; I wasn't born in those days — but under the Douglas government when they actually kicked out the oil and gas industry out of Saskatchewan. That set us back 50 years, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and it set . . . Certainly now, only now we are starting to recover and build a new Saskatchewan after the destructive policies of the CCF and the NDP government.

[12:15]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what I think of when I look at the NDP government, they do not have confidence in Saskatchewan people. They don't have confidence in the future of the Saskatchewan economy, they don't have confidence in the future of Saskatchewan, and their policy with the Crown corporation I think laid that out very carefully.

We in the Saskatchewan Party have decided that we have confidence in the future of the Saskatchewan economy and the future of the Saskatchewan people, and that speaks to the

Saskatchewan-first policy that was laid out by my hon. friend and colleague, the Minister of Crowns.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the NDP, they couldn't understand how the province of Saskatchewan could grow. I think one of their members on the other side said it was statistically impossible to grow this province more than at 1 per cent a year. And we have seen that it is possible. And with the new thinking of the government, a government that has confidence in the future of Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan people and confidence in the business sector in Saskatchewan, we see that that can happen, and we've proved that in the last year.

Now our Saskatchewan-first policy, Mr. Deputy Speaker, certainly speaks to that thinking. When we look at Saskatchewan, you only have to go back to look at our individual constituents and constituencies. In my constituency, what were people saying to me all through the last eight years when we were in opposition? Well they wanted some basic services provided to their homes and their region — cellphone coverage, high-speed Internet. And this isn't technology that was just being developed and just appearing in the world; this is technology that's been around for many, many years. And under the NDP government, they refused to accept looking at Saskatchewan first.

Myself and many other colleagues raised this in committee with the minister and his officials in the NDP, and they kept saying, well you have to have a business case to put a cell tower in Blaine Lake, Saskatchewan, or have proper cell coverage in Springwater or Cando or 10 miles from Rosetown, between Rosetown and Biggar. And our argument always was, and it is today, that there is a business case. There's a business case for putting in cell towers. There is a business case for supplying high-speed Internet to rural Saskatchewan.

Number one, it's just not people in the community that travels through those areas. There's businesses. There's the oil industry. There's the farming, agriculture industry. There's people that are travelling that rely on cell coverage and the Internet as they travel across Saskatchewan. But in our own communities, naturally in the farming industry and the oil industry, it's very important to have that type of service provided. We as a government decided that we're going to put Saskatchewan first.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what have we seen from the NDP's policy in the past? Well the former government invested almost a half a billion dollars out of the province, with a target return of 22 per cent. But what actually happened? The actual overall rate of return on these investments to date was a negative 15 per cent — incredible losses to the taxpayers of this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Now I notice that the member from Regina Coronation Park said, you know, if there's money made in the Crown sector, that's a dollar in the pockets of the Saskatchewan people. Well I'd like to point out, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that a half a billion dollars in losses is also money taken out of the taxpayers of this province, and it's money that we can ill afford to throw away on ventures around the world, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I'd like to refer to, not only to the out-of-province investments

that the NDP made that were really disastrous, but look at some of the investments that they made in the province. And they made these . . . And I'm referring to SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company]. We all know what happened with SPUDCO, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The NDP wanted to compete with business in this province.

And I'd like to quote from the Saskatoon *StarPhoenix*, October 16, 2004, and I quote, on SPUDCO:

To be sure, the scale of this affair — the mismanagement, lies, years of coverups, and failure of governing politicians to take full responsibility — cry out for answers and accountability.

Well I think that says it all about the attitude of the former NDP government and what they think about the business sector in Saskatchewan.

And unfortunately my time is running out. I have so much more to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But I look forward to the question-and-answer period and really, really find out what the NDP actually think. And it amazes me that they would bring in this motion, a motion that I think the Saskatchewan people would agree that is really a Sask Party government strongpoint of our platform, of the election campaign, and the result of the election campaign which makes Saskatchewan stronger. We believe in making the Crown sector stronger, have confidence in building the Crown sector in Saskatchewan with partnerships with the private sector or on our own. Infrastructure is where it's at, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we intend to have the Crown sector very active in Saskatchewan to help build this province. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — Time for 10-minute question period. I recognize the member from Regina Qu'Appelle.

Ms. Ross: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. My question is for the member opposite from Regina Coronation Park. Our priority is to have the Crowns invest in-province and enhance services for all people of Saskatchewan. Part of that commitment is to operate the Crowns with an eye to providing benefits for the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the question is: how ideologically driven was the NDP strategy of losing hundreds of millions of taxpayers' dollars in out-of-province investments?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Coronation Park.

Mr. Trew: — Well, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting that members on that side would even have the audacity to speak of Crowns as though they're somehow protecting them. Everyone in this province, everyone to a soul, knows that New Democrats are the ones that believed in Crown corporations to our hearts.

We ran Crown corporations to provide the lowest cost utility bundle to all of Saskatchewan people, full stop, period. It was to the benefit of everyone — their constituents, my constituents. Every person in Saskatchewan benefited through our Saskatchewan Crown corporations. It's interesting that we made . . . I mean we have the solid ground. No one believes

Sask Party members that they're going to somehow run the Crown corporations to the benefit of Saskatchewan people or to the benefit of our Crown corporations.

In fact the people of Saskatchewan know that they're about selling them off. They're about emasculating the Crowns, gutting the Crowns. We're about protecting, building, and providing the Crown corporations for the future of the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, while I'm on my feet, if I could ask a question.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Coronation Park.

Mr. Trew: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. My question's for the member from Big Muddy, Lloydminster. I apologize — it's Weyburn-Big Muddy, not Lloydminster. So to the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have a situation where SGI made \$9 million in out-of-province earnings last year. MRM cogen plant was returning \$1 million a month. Heritage Gas is profitable and more. In fact three out of four out-of-province investments are profitable; two of them are outperforming. How can selling off our revenue stream producing assets, how can that protect the people of Saskatchewan from rising utility rates? How is this sell-off at fire sale prices going to help Saskatchewan consumers?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy.

Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I want to thank the hon. member for his question. Mr. Speaker, I think my constituents would appreciate if that money was reinvested in this province, Mr. Speaker . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Duncan: — . . . in the services that my constituents and the constituents of all members of this House should be able to come to expect from their government-owned utilities.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it is baffling how that member can talk about protecting people of this province from rising utility rates when they were losing hundreds of millions of dollars over the last 16 years, Mr. Speaker. How did that protect the people of this province from rising utility rates? Losing millions of dollars is supposed to protect people of this province? Unbelievable, Mr. Speaker. And I'd like to ask a question while I'm on my feet if that's all right, Mr. . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Northeast.

Mr. Harper: — Mr. Speaker, the track record of the Crown corporations in this province of providing services to the good people of Saskatchewan is phenomenal. They have done so at a rate that has been very competitive and, in many cases, less than competitive. They provide those services.

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the member from

Lloydminster. Will he guarantee that our Crown corporations will continue to return to the people of Saskatchewan profits through dividends to the GRF [General Revenue Fund]?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Lloydminster.

Mr. McMillan: — Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. I think somewhat misguided in his math if he thinks you can lose hundreds of millions of dollars and that somehow a dividend back into the GRF fund . . . He is sorely mistaken. However I can assure him if that is what he's looking for that the people of Saskatchewan will most certainly see the benefits of strong Crowns under a Sask Party government, and moving forward our government will make that commitment to the people of Saskatchewan within Saskatchewan because it's the best place in Canada to invest money today. So thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy.

Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the question to the hon. colleague from Regina Coronation Park. Mr. Speaker, in the last three weeks that member has called the Saskatchewan-first policy a five-year-old policy. And then earlier in this House, he called it the beginning of the end and his seatmate called it a Trojan Horse. Now, Mr. Speaker, if the Sask-first policy is the beginning of the end and a Trojan Horse, then why according to his own words did he support the policy five years ago?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Coronation Park.

Mr. Trew: — I thank the member for the question. Sask first is a good idea, but under the Sask Party, Sask first is a Trojan Horse. They're about emasculating the Crowns. They're about selling off Heritage Gas, MRM. They're about selling off the money-earning portions of our Crown corporations. They're about taking away job opportunities from our Crown corporation employees. Employees that get to expand their knowledge and their experiences worldwide. They're about taking that all away, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and that's a shame.

The people of Saskatchewan know it, and certainly the people who worked day in and day out providing exemplary service in our Crown corporations, they know who's their friend and who's their enemy. And they know that the Sask Party cannot be trusted with respect to Crown corporations at all.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Douglas Park.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. A few moments ago the member for Biggar in his remarks used the word generations. And I would like to ask the member a question about another type of generation, that is electrical generation.

We know that, people in Saskatchewan know, that the Government of Alberta under the leadership of Ralph Klein made a major transformation in terms of electrical generation

and distribution in the province of Alberta providing for competition in the generation sector, providing for competition in the transmission sector. They believed that this would help reduce prices in Alberta. In fact the opposite has happened. Alberta people, Alberta industries pay more for their power and other unintended consequences. What guarantee can the member provide the people of Saskatchewan that you are not going to follow the same approach in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Biggar.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Thank you for the question. I'd like to just respond to the member's question about generation of electricity in this province. We believe in all sorts of areas where we can generate electricity, from hydro to wind and solar and also clean coal. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have committed to the pilot project that was announced. The federal government will be investing \$240 million into the clean coal project into Saskatchewan. We are going to develop clean coal in this province because we have ample supply of clean coal in this province. And we are going to be a world leader in the production of energy through clean coal source of fuel, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but not at the expense of other types of options in generating electricity.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[12:30]

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for Meadow Lake.

Mr. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We've heard some talk in the Chamber here today about SPUDCO, and I'm going to give the member for Regina Coronation Park, who was around at that time in this House, to maybe enlighten us about what happened in that case. The people of Saskatchewan deserve answers. And to quote *The StarPhoenix*, Mr. Speaker, from October 16 of this year, quote:

To be sure, the scale of this affair — the mismanagement, lies, years of coverups and failure of governing politicians to take full responsibility — cry out for answers and accountability.

We have quotes as well from the former CIC minister, Maynard Sonntag, who says he thinks that despite the \$28 million loss, SPUDCO has quote "been largely successful." Speaking to the losses on Crown investments, Sonntag said, ". . . I bet — and I'll put my job on the line — . . . that we will lose money in the future . . ."

Mr. Speaker, if SPUDCO was a success to this government, what's a failure?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Coronation Park.

Mr. Trew: — Well, Mr. Speaker, they're a cut-and-paste crew on the opposite side there. We want to check all of these quotes because they have not got a great record.

Why is it the member for Biggar refused to answer the question on, are we following Alberta? Why is it . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Time for the 75-minute debate has elapsed.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for Meadow Lake.

Motion No. 1 — Saskatchewan's Uranium Industry

Mr. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a real pleasure to enter into debate on the issue of nuclear and uranium. I think I'll first move the motion and then speak to it, Mr. Speaker. The motion reads:

That the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan supports the consideration of further value-added development of Saskatchewan's uranium industry, including nuclear power generation, and recognizes the potential benefits to the growth and prosperity of the people of our province.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we can talk for literally days about the benefits of the uranium cycle and even nuclear power. Saskatchewan's home to some of the richest energy deposits in the world, and uranium makes up a large portion of that. However rather than fully utilizing this potential, we just dig it up and ship it off.

We can do better than that, Mr. Speaker. Not under the NDP though; the NDP thought differently. We think the people of this province deserve an honest look at this issue. There's an entire industry of potential out there, from refining to enrichment to power generation. At a time when Saskatchewan is prospering from a resource, well why not look at adding value to our uranium? Mr. Speaker, it's a truism but the next pound of uranium we add value to in this province will be the very first. And I think that is a real tragedy.

Just last week, Mr. Speaker, I was in China leading a delegation from this province to that country. We had a number of meetings with senior Chinese officials from both the generation side of the nuclear industry and also from at the more senior level of their government and talked about the plans that China has for nuclear, going forward. What we found out was that China is planning to increase the number of nuclear reactors in the country by approximately 50 by 2020 — a very significant building program that will increase the nuclear power generation as a percentage of the Chinese total nuclear generation from 1.5 to about 5 per cent. So a very significant increase in the generation of nuclear power in that country, which of course is going to necessitate the use of large amounts of uranium on a yearly basis.

Of course our policy is that uranium from northern Saskatchewan would only ever be used in a civilian facility. We need to have safeguards. We need to be able to obviously trace how that uranium is used. Nobody wants to see uranium from northern Saskatchewan end up in nuclear weapons of any country, and that's obviously a big part of what we're talking about.

So we toured the Chinese CANDU reactors actually. There's CANDU reactors in China, very impressive facilities. At the particular facility we were at, there were four reactors under construction in addition to five that were in operation.

Other countries have seen the potential of nuclear power generation. As an example as well, I think France has nearly the entire needs of the country generated by nuclear power. I think it's well over 80 per cent of the power in France is generated by nuclear. In Germany it's a very significant portion as well. America of course has nuclear plants that are a significant portion of the generation, of course a major facility at Pickering in Ontario, a reactor in New Brunswick as well.

We think that this is something Saskatchewan should be looking at, considering the massive amount of uranium that we have in this province. Nearly a quarter of the world's energy or uranium needs are supplied from northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker — nearly a quarter. And we have no value added to that other than taking it out of the ground. We think that that needs to . . . We have to look at changing that, Mr. Speaker, and having some of those value-added opportunities right here in Saskatchewan.

But you know, let's talk about nuclear power generation. For generations, countries around the world have utilized this clean energy source including Canada. But renewable sources such as wind power have their place. One only needs to look at leaders such as Denmark to see that wind power did not lead to the closing of a single coal-fuelled power plant. And I mean baseload is an issue here, Mr. Speaker. You need to have that reliable generation of electricity. You need to be able to have that as a part of your grid. And obviously, nuclear would be a baseload production of power.

If we're to reduce our dependence on coal, we need to use a reliable and abundant energy source, Mr. Speaker. Only nuclear power generation offers that opportunity as we reach the end of the lifespans of these old coal-fired plants. And Ontario is looking at that option right now, Mr. Speaker, as well. But it doesn't have to end there.

Nuclear science and medicine benefits people around the world, and with our new innovation-minded government, Saskatchewan could become a world leader in 21st century nuclear technology. With our groundbreaking work in biotechnology, carbon capture, and other fields, it seems a natural fit for our province to consider nurturing another knowledge industry.

What could this mean for the province? Bruce Power recently said that a nuclear power plant in Saskatchewan would cost 8 to \$10 billion to build, and generate 20,000 direct jobs during its construction. Think about that. We could give a job to nearly every person who left Saskatchewan under the NDP. Not only

that, a fully operational plant would create 1,000 full-time, highly trained, and well paid jobs. This would also bring with it 900 indirect jobs, and they would be here for the next 60 years, contributing nearly \$240 million annually to our provincial economy.

The needs for specialized graduates would likely drive new programs at our universities and attract new students. This would pump billions of dollars into our economy through construction, taxes from new jobs, and possibly even power exports.

Already our uranium industry is an important one to the economy of our province. In 2007 we produced nearly 9000 tonnes of uranium, generating \$54 million in royalties and taxes for the province. This provided over 4,400 jobs directly or through spinoffs.

Not only that — those are mostly northern jobs that provide a great income and training to Aboriginal communities. And I think this is something that's very important to note, Mr. Speaker, that these are areas that have traditionally had economic challenges in front of them, that have traditionally had unemployment rates that are quite high in comparison with the rest of the province, that have had opportunities pass them by time and again.

These communities, the Aboriginal community, the Métis communities, First Nations communities, there are many of the individuals from those communities that are working in the uranium industry in northern Saskatchewan who have benefited from training, from experience, and bring that back to their own communities and pass along that knowledge. So there's a great deal of benefit that has accrued to northern Saskatchewan because of the uranium industry there, and we would love to see further value-added bring even more opportunity to those communities in our North.

This isn't just a matter of the bottom line. This industry does help our communities by employing people in good, honest work for a fair wage. Life is tough in the North, and having a rich resource base allows us to make things better up there if we have the will to nurture that industry.

Our uranium also isn't just your average ore, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan's ore can be up to 100 times richer than the world average. Traditionally, high-quality ore body has been seen in other countries to be at 1 per cent U_3O_8 [triuranium octoxide]. In the ore that comes out in Saskatchewan at McArthur River or Cigar Lake, you're dealing with 20-plus per cent pure U_3O_8 deposits, which is astonishingly high, Mr. Speaker, and offers a great competitive advantage for operations in the North.

The quality of Saskatchewan shines through to even our mineral exports. That means when our Premier goes to places like Washington to make the case for this province, it makes his job even easier.

What are we doing now, Mr. Speaker, is a question. Well for starters we affirmed our government's commitment to solid reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, and I expect that the Minister for the Environment will have more to say on that in

the future.

We've taken firm action on clean coal, including securing federal money for the project, a very significant amount of money that was unique to this province. We've also supported the carbon capture research being done right here in Regina. We unearthed all those NDP reports on nuclear power generation and made them public because our government believes in transparency and letting the public know how their money is being spent.

We were also approached by Bruce Power, a leader in the Canadian nuclear industry, about conducting a study on the feasibility of nuclear power in Saskatchewan. That study is currently under way. SaskPower is looking at adding more wind turbines and other renewable energy sources to help reduce their need for coal. Not bad for just one year, and we're only getting started.

It seems that certain political parties can do nothing for the better part of two decades and still get a free ride when it comes to environmental issues, but our government wants to make sure that real action is taken now. Is nuclear power the total solution for carbon emissions? No, but it can sure be a big step in the right direction, and after years of inaction it's a step that Saskatchewan may need to take in order to make serious reductions.

Certain members of the NDP, including one who may be making a return to the province someday soon, have supported the idea of nuclear power and value-added uranium in the past. Then again they also supported oil sands development before and seem to have flip-flopped on that issue since the election. So support for a uranium industry may not be there now as well. Will the NDP stand up and support these developments in Saskatchewan's economy or have they changed their minds? Will they change them again after their leadership coronation next year?

Our party has always been committed to environmentally responsible development of our uranium industry, and that will not change under our government. But there is a real question, Mr. Speaker, as to where the NDP stands on this issue. We've heard from a Calgary big oil lobbyist who's aspiring to lead that party of his support for the industry. I could read a quote here actually from the Canadian Press, January 27, 2008, and I quote:

Some, like former NDP deputy premier Dwain Lingenfelter, say Saskatchewan's wide open spaces make it ideal for every step of the cycle, including power generation and waste storage. While conventional reactors are widely seen as producing too much power for the province's needs, Lingenfelter argues Saskatchewan could become a power hub and supply energy to the rest of Canada and the United States.

So we have the individual, a Calgary big oil lobbyist who is aspiring to lead that party, in favour of storage as well as other parts of the nuclear cycle. We know that there's members of that party sitting over there right now who are very uncomfortable with the idea of generation, who are publicly opposed to it. Who, I would imagine, if they're opposed to

generation, they would be opposed to storage as well.

[12:45]

So it's going to be very interesting, Mr. Speaker, to see how those members vote on this particular motion. And they will be voting on this motion. I would suspect that there's going to be a little dissension in the ranks over there.

As I said, we know that their Calgary big oil lobbyist is a very strong proponent. And we know that there's those in that party who probably even supported the NDP's position in the '80s, which was that they were in favour of phasing out uranium mining. They weren't even in favour of mining, Mr. Speaker. And I think the Leader of the Opposition may have been a part of that particular movement. We, on the other hand, see mining and value-added as being potentially very advantageous for the economic future of this province, and think that the position that uranium mining should be shut down is extreme and unreasonable. We obviously have members opposite that would disagree.

But speaking of support, here's what the founder of Greenpeace, Patrick Moore, had to say about nuclear energy, and I quote:

When I helped found Greenpeace in Vancouver in the 1970s, my colleagues and I were firmly opposed to nuclear energy. But times have changed.

Unfortunately, environmental activists had become so influenced by their own misinformation that they failed to consider the enormous and clear benefits of harnessing nuclear energy to meet Canada's goals for clean air and reduced greenhouse-gas emissions.

So the founder of Greenpeace can find his way clear to recognizing the mistakes and the misinformation that some in the environmental movement put forward to undermine the credibility of the uranium industry and potentially nuclear power generation. It's unfortunate that the NDP can't find their way to the same position, Mr. Speaker, because we believe that there really are tremendous potential benefits for Saskatchewan in this field. And it really is unfortunate that we have the NDP trying to hold us back, looking to the past — typical behaviour, Mr. Speaker, for the NDP, but I think still unfortunate.

And we've actually seen this manifested, this attitude, in other files as well with respect to resource development.

An Hon. Member: — Think we were always a wee province?

Mr. Harrison: — That's right. We heard the former leader of the opposition talk about Saskatchewan as the wee, w-e-e, province. We've had a situation where the NDP even to this day are doom and gloom. Things are terrible, Mr. Speaker. They're awful. You listen to some of their speeches during the Throne Speech debate, and you would think that you were living in one of the worst places in the world. Negativity, constantly bashing the positive things that are happening in this province. It really I think speaks to the mindset of those members opposite — a bitter and resentful mindset. We have groups of members over there that when we have announced new initiatives that benefit

the people of Saskatchewan, what's their response, Mr. Speaker? We were going to get to that. We were going to get to it. We were working on it. We had . . .

An Hon. Member: — Around to it.

Mr. Harrison: — That's right. They were going to get to it. We had the Leader of the Opposition today said that he intended to do something in the context of one of his questions. They were going to get to it, Mr. Speaker. That's seems to be their response to pretty much everything. All of the good news that this government has been announcing and all of the positive initiatives that we have put forward, they were going to get to it. But other than that, Mr. Speaker, things are terrible. And that's their general position, so I think it's unfortunate.

Today there are 440 commercial nuclear power reactors operating in 31 countries around the world. With over 364,000 megawatts of total capacity, this supplies 16 per cent of the world's electricity as baseload power, and their efficiency continues to improve. Even more countries operate research reactors. Two hundred and eighty-four reactors are operating in 56 countries, including one at the University of Saskatchewan, which I think that is a fact that many individuals in the province aren't aware of, but there actually is a nuclear reactor in Saskatchewan, a research reactor, at the University of Saskatchewan.

What does the future look like for nuclear energy? Right now there are plans for over 100 new reactors around the world, and the developing world's appetite for energy is just beginning. And as I had mentioned earlier in my remarks, Mr. Speaker, China alone is considering or actively building 60 reactors in that country alone. There's going to be a tremendous increase in the world's need for uranium, for U₃O₈, in order to power these facilities. And we think that Saskatchewan, being the world leader in the production of uranium, should be a world leader in the value-added parts of uranium as well, including nuclear power generation.

With all that growth, shouldn't the world's largest supplier of uranium be able to get a bigger piece of the value-added pie, and obviously we think that we should. Why is the world going nuclear? Well climate change is a growing concern. While nuclear power has no significant carbon emissions, nuclear is competitively priced with alternatives such as wind turbines, and uranium has a remarkably stable supply chain, including our sizeable reserves in this province's North.

In Saskatchewan's case we don't have the option of large-scale hydro projects which have their own environmental concerns. We have had to rely quite heavily on coal-powered thermal generation. We're now faced with plants that need to be replaced at some point in the future, and that leaves us with a choice of whether to go nuclear or to continue to utilize our coal resources.

What is Saskatchewan's energy outlook? Nearly two-thirds of our power is from coal and gas currently, while our fast-growing economy means that demand for power will grow from 800 to 2,000 megawatts over the next decade, which is a very significant amount of power. And we think it's a very positive thing that power requirements are growing in this

province. It's a reflection of the fact that the province is growing, that things are happening, that industry is expanding, which results in great opportunities for the people of this province.

And for the nearly 20,000 people who have returned back home in the last year, Mr. Speaker, who have saw fit to and have realized that there's now a government in place that wants them back, that wants to see people succeed, that wants to see entrepreneurial activities increase. And people have realized that, and they have come home or have come here for the first time to take advantage of these new opportunities in our great province.

So over that time we've always committed to reducing our greenhouse gases usage by one-third, and that's over the next decade.

We've recently taken the step of forming the uranium development partnership with funding from our Crowns. This 12-person partnership will look at the further development of Saskatchewan's uranium resources, which as mentioned already supplies one-third of the world's need for the precious element.

Around the world, nations are looking towards nuclear power as a source of clean and reliable power, several of which will hopefully be powered by uranium from Saskatchewan. The uranium development partnership will identify, evaluate, and recommend how we can best take advantage of this new wave of nuclear interest right here in Saskatchewan.

The final report due at the end of this fiscal year, next March, will help our government develop an energy plan for the future of our province, looking primarily at four sources — wind, hydro, coal, and nuclear. Also we will make this report public because our government is ultimately accountable to the taxpayers of Saskatchewan, and we will not forget that fact.

The establishment of the uranium development partnership will begin to effectively address the growing public call for government to articulate a clear plan for our nuclear industry, especially since the recent interest in building a power plant in Saskatchewan. That's why it's so important that our partnership has representation from all across the areas that could be affected. Representatives from the nuclear industry, our universities, labour, First Nations, Métis, and the environmental community will help shape the future of Saskatchewan's nuclear industry.

What will that future look like? I can't say for sure, but it's definitely looking brighter now that the people of Saskatchewan are finally seeing action to develop this industry. Uranium's been a key element in the world for 60 years, and yet we have never seen a detailed plan or direction from the government of the day. And that's about to change.

It goes without saying that adding value to our vast uranium resources cannot come at the expense of the safety of the people of Saskatchewan nor the quality of our environment. As stewards of our environment, it's paramount that we never lose sight of the long-term health of our environment and its residents for short-term gain.

We will not lose sight of that, Mr. Speaker, and we will work towards strengthening our environment while pursuing sustainable and responsible growth. Our Premier's taken the lead on this file, and here's what he had to say on John Gormley's radio show back in April. Quote:

You know the federal government signalled in their budget — and this wasn't widely reported because its budget documents are obviously large in scope and scale — but there was important language in there where the federal government signalled their desire to pursue the next generation of Canadian reactor technology. Our government believes Saskatchewan should be on the vanguard of that effort. We should be leading.

We have the companies here, the uranium companies in Areva and Cameco who have, by the way, experience in hands-on involvement in the value chain in other jurisdictions where they operate. So we have all of this natural advantage for us to lead in this regard, to make sure we're sustainably and responsibly pursuing the next reactor technology that Canada can pursue.

So obviously our vision as a new government is we would look at that value chain, that refining, that enrichment, and potentially the power side of it, Mr. Speaker, and very positive.

Polls show that Saskatchewan residents want us to pursue value-added uranium opportunities and even nuclear power. And why not? It doesn't make much economic sense for Saskatchewan to only be involved in the mining of uranium and then ship it away to allow someone else to make the value-added dollars from our resource. The people of Saskatchewan deserve to receive the most from their resources. And that means that our government is open to hearing from the private sector.

We've said that the taxpayers of this province will not be expected to put their tax dollars to build a nuclear power plant for SaskPower. Instead we extended an offer for private nuclear developers to make their case, and it didn't take long for interest to be shown. If a private developer can provide Saskatchewan with clean, reliable, and affordable power without risking taxpayers' dollars, then I think we owe it to the province to hear them out.

That's what our government does, Mr. Speaker, we listen to those who want to help build our province. Of course that doesn't mean that crews are already clearing the land. If a developer wants to go forward with such a plan, we have a rigorous and stringent environmental analysis for it to go through before a licence can even be issued by the federal government.

Residents can be assured that consultation will happen along the way during the process of considering any new form of power generation, and it will be open and transparent. Our government takes the duty to consult very seriously and understands that we do not run this province for ourselves, but rather on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan.

The people of Saskatchewan deserve to earn as much money as possible for their uranium resources. They deserve a clean,

reliable source of power. They deserve high-paying jobs, whether in the mines of our North or the office towers of Saskatoon. They deserve to have the opportunity to pursue value-added ventures that our neighbours to the South have access to. They deserve for Saskatchewan to have the opportunity to be a centre of excellence for the uranium industry with the benefits that would last for generations.

They deserve this and more, Mr. Speaker. And we will continue to work hard so that families can look back on today and see the continued diversification of Saskatchewan's economy. A world-class people deserve a world-class economy, Mr. Speaker.

To conclude, we see there being tremendous opportunity in this field, in this sector. We believe that we owe it to the people of Saskatchewan to look at this, to examine this, to listen to those that are interested in making things happen on this file, Mr. Speaker. And with that I will conclude and table the motion.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — Motion by the member from Meadow Lake that be resolved:

That the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan supports the consideration of further value-added development of Saskatchewan's uranium industry including nuclear power generation and recognizes the potential benefits to the growth and prosperity of the people of our province.

Ready for the question? I believe that the time has expired of adjournment for the day. So this House now stands adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow afternoon . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Monday, Monday afternoon.

[The Assembly adjourned at 13:00.]

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GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN CABINET MINISTERS

Hon. Brad Wall
Premier

Hon. Bob Bjornerud
Minister of Agriculture
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Crop Insurance Corporation

Hon. Bill Boyd
Minister of Energy and Resources
Minister Responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff
Minister of Crown Corporations

Hon. Dan D'Autremont
Minister of Government Services
Minister Responsible for the Saskatchewan Liquor and
Gaming Authority
Minister Responsible for the Information
Technology Office

Hon. June Draude
Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations
Minister Responsible for Northern Affairs

Hon. Wayne Elhard
Minister of Highways and Infrastructure
Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission
Provincial Secretary

Hon. Rod Gantfoer
Minister of Finance

Hon. Donna Harpauer
Minister of Social Services

Hon. Nancy Heppner
Minister of Environment

Hon. Darryl Hickie
Minister of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing

Hon. Bill Hutchinson
Minister of Municipal Affairs
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Gaming Corporation

Hon. Ken Krawetz
Deputy Premier
Minister of Education

Hon. Don McMorris
Minister of Health

Hon. Don Morgan
Minister of Justice
Attorney General

Hon. Rob Norris
Minister of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour
Minister Responsible for Immigration
Minister Responsible for the Workers'
Compensation Board

Hon. Lyle Stewart
Minister of Enterprise and Innovation

Hon. Christine Tell
Minister of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport
Minister Responsible for Capital City Commission