



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

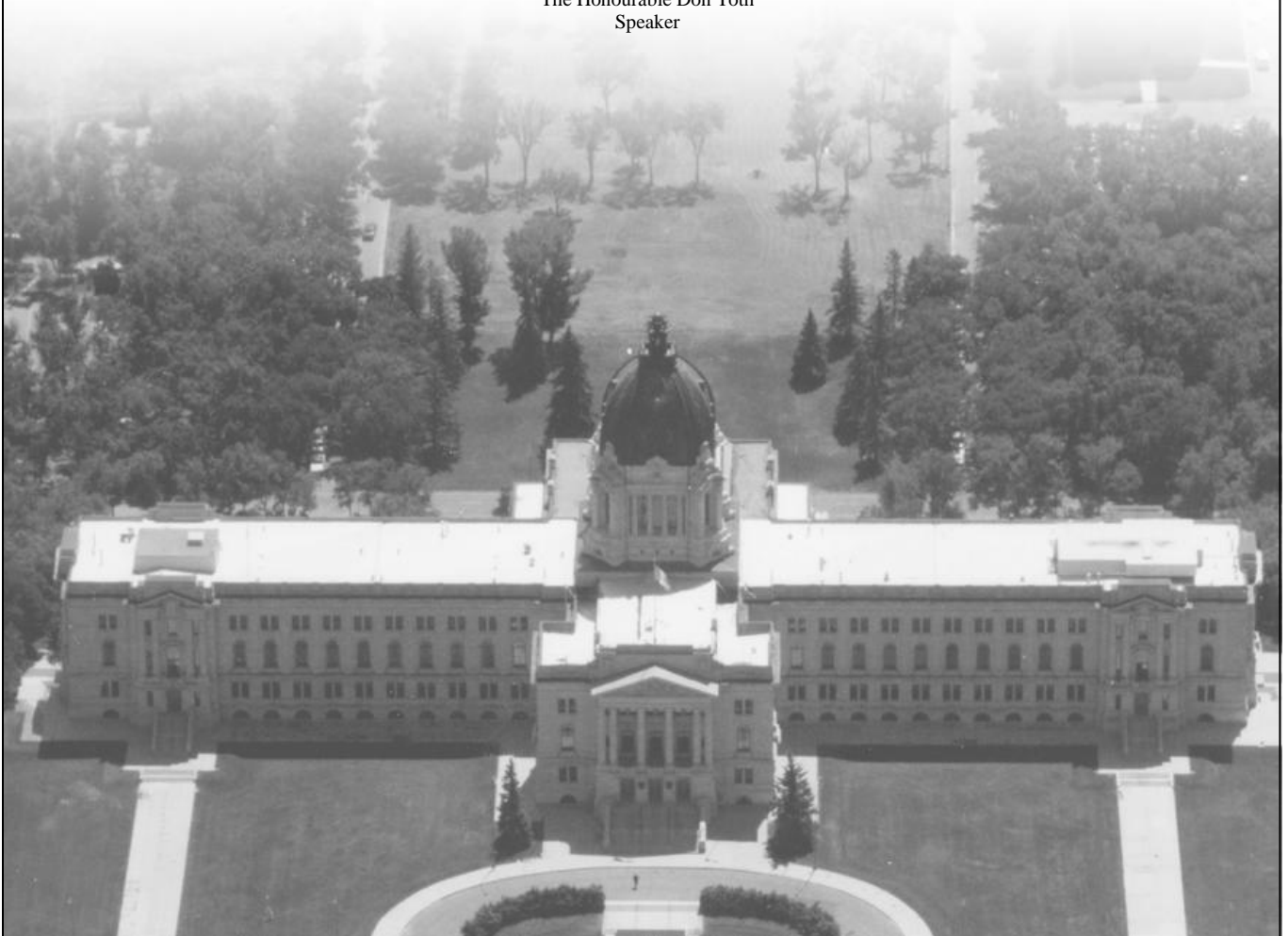
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Don Toth
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
Allchurch, Denis	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Atkinson, Pat	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Belanger, Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Hon. Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Boyd, Hon. Bill	SP	Kindersley
Bradshaw, Fred	SP	Carrot River Valley
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Brotten, Cam	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Chartier, Danielle	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
Chisholm, Michael	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
D'Autremont, Dan	SP	Cannington
Draude, Hon. June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Duncan, Hon. Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
Furber, Darcy	NDP	Prince Albert Northcote
Gantfoer, Hon. Rod	SP	Melfort
Harpauer, Hon. Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harper, Ron	NDP	Regina Northeast
Harrison, Hon. Jeremy	SP	Meadow Lake
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Hon. Nancy	SP	Martensville
Hickie, Darryl	SP	Prince Albert Carlton
Higgins, Deb	NDP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Hutchinson, Hon. Bill	SP	Regina South
Huyghebaert, Hon. D.F. (Yogi)	SP	Wood River
Iwanchuk, Andy	NDP	Saskatoon Fairview
Junor, Judy	NDP	Saskatoon Eastview
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Krawetz, Hon. Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
LeClerc, Serge	SP	Saskatoon Northwest
Lingenfelter, Dwain	NDP	Regina Douglas Park
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMillan, Tim	SP	Lloydminster
McMorris, Hon. Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Michelson, Warren	SP	Moose Jaw North
Morgan, Hon. Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Morin, Sandra	NDP	Regina Walsh Acres
Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Norris, Hon. Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
Ottenbreit, Greg	SP	Yorkton
Quennell, Frank	NDP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Reiter, Hon. Jim	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Ross, Laura	SP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
Schriemer, Joceline	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Stewart, Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Taylor, Len	NDP	The Battlefords
Tell, Hon. Christine	SP	Regina Wascana Plains
Toth, Hon. Don	SP	Moosomin
Trew, Kim	NDP	Regina Coronation Park
Vermette, Doyle	NDP	Cumberland
Wall, Hon. Brad	SP	Swift Current
Weekes, Randy	SP	Biggar
Wilson, Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Yates, Kevin	NDP	Regina Dewdney

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to introduce a group that are sitting in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, and it's an honour to introduce them. The introduction I'm going to try to keep brief, but it's a large group and they do a very, very big job for all of us in the province of Saskatchewan.

Joining us earlier in the building was board members, volunteers, and personnel who operate CBOs [community-based organization] across this province, many of whom are directly involved with providing, frankly, a better quality of life with people who have intellectual disabilities and others who need help the most, who are most vulnerable among us.

And I probably can't single out all of them, Mr. Speaker, and introduce them to this Assembly. But I would like to highlight a few that are here — and apologize to those that I've missed — that did attend the luncheon and gave us as a province the chance to thank them for what they're doing to help eliminate the wait-list of over 440 people with intellectual disabilities who are waiting for either a residence or day programming or respite care.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to announce we made a lot of progress. We have 60 per cent of that wait-list dealt with already, in part because of the resources of the government and the minister, but mostly because of this group of CBOs.

So joining us today, especially I'd like to highlight, Judy Anderson, Cheshire Homes in Saskatoon, and she spoke briefly at the luncheon as well, Mr. Speaker, about the passion she's had as a volunteer for 10 years in that capacity and for 20 other years working in various areas — and really put into perspective what it is these CBOs are doing on a daily basis.

Also joining us in the Assembly today — and again I apologize for those I may miss, Mr. Speaker — is Suzanne Setaz and Marilynn Garnier, the Redvers Activity Centre. Delaine Barber and Bernice Erickson. Maybe they could give us a wave or stand up. That would be even better. Delaine Barber and Bernice Erickson of the Weyburn Group Homes; John Soyka and Chris Turner of the Langenburg and District Activity Centre; John Denysek of the Yorkton branch of the Saskatchewan Abilities Council; Sonja Reviczky of YAIL [Yorkton Adult Independent Living] Harbor in Yorkton — I did see Sonja there; Carol Cundall of Estevan Diversified Services, Mr. Speaker.

And I may have missed a few others, and it would be their chance now to give us a wave and the opportunity for us to welcome them. There's some folks from some of the other

CBOs that are there. A chance for us in this Assembly to say thank you and welcome them to their Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to, on behalf of the opposition, join with the Premier in welcoming the guests that were here today at lunch for special recognition for the leadership they have shown in working with those less fortunate, the vulnerable in our communities. And so we too would like to join them.

I know I had a chance to hear Judy Anderson say a few words, and that was very important. And she made some very astute remarks about the progress that's gone on but the work that still needs to be done. And so we appreciate that opportunity to hear that.

So on behalf of the opposition, we would like to join the Premier and everyone in the House in welcoming them to our House today. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture, the member from Melville-Saltcoats.

Hon. Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to, to you and through you to all members of the legislature, introduce 18 really good-looking students from the city of Melville, Melville Comprehensive School, grade 10 social studies class. And I think many members in the legislature will also recognize their teacher, Mr. Perry Ostapowich. This is the 10th class that I've had the opportunity to meet, that he has brought in here because of his interests and the interest for them to understand how the legislature works.

I also want to welcome Bob Simpson as one of their chaperones today, and just once again thank Mr. Ostapowich for his faithful continuance of bringing classes to the legislature and his interest in the politics in this building.

I'll ask all members to welcome them here today.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition in support of wage equity for CBO workers. And we know those workers who work in the community-based organizations care for and provide valuable services to some of the most vulnerable members of our society, such as persons living with mental and intellectual disabilities, women and children in crisis, low-income, at-risk individuals, young children, youth, Aboriginal, immigrant, and visible minority persons.

I'd like to read the prayer today, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your

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

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

And, Mr. Speaker, the signers, the petitioners today come from North Battleford, Star City, and Regina. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

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

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

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

It is signed by the good people of La Ronge and area. I so present.

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

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the individuals who signed this petitions are from the city of Saskatoon. I so present.

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

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present yet another petition on behalf of rural residents of Saskatchewan who question why the Sask Party government is leaving them behind with respect to providing safe and affordable water, and who have yet not had any commitment of assistance. The prayer reads as follows:

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

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

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition in support of maintaining quality health care services. Mr. Speaker, we all hope that the Government of Saskatchewan realizes that in order to address issues of retention and recruitment and to ensure safe staffing levels, that they have to commit to adequate funding and the installation of good faith in the collective bargaining process. And the prayer reads as follows:

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

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

And the petitions are signed by people from Kindersley, Flaxcombe, Brock, Gravelbourg, Dalmeny, Bruno, and Saskatoon. I so present.

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

Mr. Taylor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased today to rise and present a petition in support of affordable rents and housing for The Battlefords. The petition notes that residents of some Battlefords area apartments have been given notice of rent increases of about 40 per cent, which most feel are outrageous. The prayer reads as follows:

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

Mr. Speaker, the petition is signed by residents of The Battlefords and Cut Knife, Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the Sask Party government to start managing our

provincial finances responsibly and prudently to ensure that it does not continue its trend of massive budgetary shortfalls, runaway and unsustainable spending, equity stripping from our Crowns, and irresponsible revenue setting.

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

These petitions are signed by concerned residents of Regina. I so present. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Induction of Prince Albert Mayor and Council

Mr. Furber: — Mr. Speaker, November 9th at city hall, Prince Albert's new mayor and council were installed at an induction ceremony. They were piped into the council chambers with an honour guard made up of Prince Albert city police and firefighters. Once inside, the mayor and council swore their oath of office.

Mr. Speaker, the new council consists of some new members and some familiar faces. Jim Scarrow was re-elected as mayor. In ward 1, new councillor Charlene Miller was elected. Ward 2 saw Greg Dionne re-elected, and Lee Atkinson was acclaimed and returned as councillor in ward 3. New councillor Jayne Remenda was acclaimed in ward 4, and Cheryl Ring is the newly elected councillor in ward 5. Ward 6, Martin Ring was returned to office by acclamation. Darren Whitehead won the election to ward 7 to become their new councillor and in ward 8, Councillor Ted Zurakowski was returned by acclamation.

Mr. Speaker, I believe it's noteworthy that Prince Albert has three women on its council — as many as we've had at any point in our history. Mr. Speaker, the electorate of Prince Albert has shown their faith in the vision of this mayor and council and have placed their trust in their leadership. I know that trust is well placed.

Mr. Speaker, I would also wish to acknowledge the work and dedication of outgoing councillors Matheson, Swystun, Gervais, and Williams, and express my appreciation to all those who let their names stand as candidates both for mayor and council.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members join with me in congratulating Prince Albert's mayor and council as they begin their important work on behalf of the citizens of Prince Albert. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Yorkton.

Government Funds New Group Homes

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government puts Saskatchewan families first, which is why we are committed to eliminating the wait-lists for programs and services for people with intellectual disabilities.

Earlier today our Premier announced funding for 21 new group

homes across Saskatchewan. These new homes will be an important part of the support network for families who have loved ones with intellectual disabilities.

Mr. Speaker, this funding is part of our government's four-year, \$76.9 million commitment to eliminating the wait-list of 440 people with intellectual disabilities who require residential, day, and specialized programs. The funding announced today will go to community-based organizations in 12 different Saskatchewan communities. Additional initiatives to further reduce wait-lists for people with intellectual disabilities are in the later stages of development in many other Saskatchewan communities.

By the end of this fiscal year, projects will be under way to serve 264 Saskatchewan people with intellectual disabilities. That's a 60 per cent reduction of the wait-list. More than half the families waiting — many for far too long — have peace of mind that their loved ones will receive the support they need and deserve.

Mr. Speaker, as a result of our government's historic funding commitment, combined with our many enhanced partnerships with CBOs across Saskatchewan, our government is on pace to eliminate the wait-list by 2013. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Lest We Forget

Mr. Taylor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. November 11th for the past 90 years in Canada has been, and I hope always will be, a time of remembrance. The words we heard last week repeated in communities right across Saskatchewan, "lest we forget," must remain meaningful.

But members of the Royal Canadian Legion have always told us, in words and in deeds, that we as individuals and as a society need to do more than just remember. We need to understand, we need to teach, and we need to learn.

Although armed conflict is closer to today's young people than it has been at any time since the Second World War, there are still far too many young people who admit that they don't know what to think about during the two-minute silence on November 11th. This year, at Remembrance Day services across Canada, the Legion has challenged provincial and territorial educators and governments to put an increased emphasis on Canadian history and to include Canada's military history in our classrooms.

At a time when Canada's young people are participating in Canada's military in a much more dramatic way than ever before, maybe it's time that we here in Saskatchewan took up the Legion's challenge to help more people in a more formal way to understand and to learn so that we have more to remember in a more meaningful way. Lest we forget, Mr. Speaker, lest we forget.

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

[13:45]

Torch of Life Raises Awareness of Organ and Tissue Donation

Mr. Hickie: — Mr. Speaker, it was a great privilege to take part in the Torch of Life event held on the steps of the legislature earlier this morning. Together with the Premier, members of cabinet, fellow MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly], students from Miller, Riffel, O'Neill, and LeBoldus High School, the Torch of Life was passed to the Premier before it went on to the next leg of the relay.

The Torch of Life relay works to raise awareness about organ and tissue donation. Currently 4,000 Canadians await organ and tissue donations, but unfortunately many will not have what they need.

George Marcello, CEO [chief executive officer] and lead organizer of SOS The Americas and the Torch of Life, was a recipient of an organ donation. This donation saved his life and because of that he is able to help others by raising awareness for organ and tissue donations.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank George Marcello, SOS The Americas, the Torch of Life, and the students from Miller, Riffel, O'Neill, and LeBoldus High School for bringing the important issue of organ and tissue donation to the attention of the people of Saskatchewan.

Personally I've taken the steps to ensure that my family knows that I wish to be an organ donor when my time comes. I would hope that because of the awareness raised here today that those of you, my colleagues on both sides of the House who have not done so, please speak to your families about your wishes to donate so as many people who are less fortunate than us who wait to be saved by such a selfless act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Cheshire Homes Addition in Saskatoon

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's timely today that Judy Anderson is in the gallery, from Cheshire Homes, because my member statement is about Cheshire Homes.

On September 29th, the sod was turned for the fourth house in the Cheshire Homes complex in Saskatoon Eastview. Mr. Speaker, Cheshire Homes Saskatoon has provided a co-operative living environment for young adults with physical disabilities since 1983. The mission of Cheshire Homes is to provide accessible, comfortable homes with personal services for those young adults. The new addition will provide a life lease opportunity for young adults to own their own home, be independent, but still have support services on site.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the board of Cheshire Homes for their commitment and vision. Of particular worthy mention is Dr. John Owen, who has been front and centre from the beginning, bringing the Cheshire Home model to Saskatoon. Mr. Speaker, thanks also to the many volunteers at Cheshire Homes, and congratulations to all the young, new homeowners who will reside at the new Cheshire Homes addition. Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Meadow Lake.

Honouring Saskatchewan's First Nations Veterans

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Mr. Speaker, last night in North Battleford my colleague, the Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations, had the opportunity to attend the sixth annual fundraising gala for Aboriginal war veterans sponsored by the Saskatchewan First Nations Veterans' Association.

Over 7,000 First Nations soldiers served in the First and Second World Wars and Korea. They were all volunteers and enlisted despite their country not allowing them to vote, and during a time when they needed special permission just to leave the reserve without losing their status. Despite all that, they still chose to defend Canada, fighting bravely and expertly on all fronts.

Some, such as Sergeant Tommy Prince, would be decorated with the highest awards for bravery. Prince served with great distinction with the First Special Service Force, better known as the Devil's Brigade, and was personally awarded the Military Medal and Silver Star by King George VI.

On the return to Canada these veterans were treated very poorly by the Canadian government. They were refused access to the benefits and programs that other veterans received.

For decades the Government of Canada refused to acknowledge the injustice done to these brave individuals. That changed in 2005 when it was my honour to introduce a private member's motion in the House of Commons that finally officially recognized the courage and sacrifice of Aboriginal veterans, and acknowledged and apologized for the mistreatment the veterans suffered upon their return from war.

On behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan, I wish to pay tribute to these veterans and thank them for their heroic service.

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

Leaving Town

Ms. Atkinson: — Well, well, well, well. I see according to today's news release that our Premier is off to Washington Wednesday to visit with some senators about climate change. And, Mr. Speaker, he's there for three days.

Now no doubt our Finance minister will miss him as he announces the Sask Party government has spent more money so far this year than they've taken in — we think maybe \$1 billion more. And we call that a deficit.

Now why would the Premier leave town? Some would think that he's trying to get out of Dodge when the Finance minister is busy delivering his bad news mid-year report. Others might say he wants the Finance minister to have his day in the spotlight all by himself. And still others might say that this is one parade that the Premier doesn't want to be in front of.

Now yesterday the member from Saskatoon Northwest sang. Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to say a little poem:

Bad news travels fast and far,
It doesn't matter where you are.

You can run, but you can't hide.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Energy Alternatives and the Environment

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier. Like the public finances of the province, this government has totally mismanaged the climate change file. And in their campaign promises in 2007, those promises now have been broken. The \$320 million that the previous administration, the NDP [New Democratic Party] government, had set for climate change has been stripped away to deal with the fiscal irresponsibility of this government. And really climate change has now become a series of photo ops.

And speaking of photo ops, last year the Premier signed, at the Council of the Federation in Quebec, an agreement committing Saskatchewan to achieve 20 per cent increase in energy efficiency by the year 2020.

Mr. Speaker, can the Premier tell us why he didn't inform SaskPower of that commitment?

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

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Opposition Leader's sudden interest in environmental concerns; it's the first question they've asked this sitting so far. And, Mr. Speaker, our position has always been that we need to find a balance between environmental protection and economic sustainability of our province. And on one hand the opposition is concerned about the finances of our province, and the other hand they now claim to want higher targets, Mr. Speaker. And we're looking to have a balance between the two.

And the NDP were once in favour of this as well, Mr. Speaker. They said in a 2002 position paper, and I quote:

Saskatchewan is committed to taking action on climate change. But we are not willing to have our residents and industries pay an unfair price. Nor are we willing to accept a plan that penalizes our economy but fails to effectively address climate change.

Mr. Speaker, we agreed with what they said then. They apparently don't agree with themselves now.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — My question is to the Premier because, Mr. Speaker, there was an agreement signed in Quebec City in 2008. In the agreement the Premier committed, didn't suggest or talk about, he committed in a signed agreement that he would in fact achieve a 20 per cent increase in energy efficiency by the year 2020. That's his commitment. And what I'm saying is, has the government informed SaskPower of this commitment?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with respect to the hon. member's question, I think it's pretty clear that SaskPower and the rest of government understood the message that came from the Council of the Federation because SaskPower, under this government, under the minister, has undertaken a number of steps with respect to conservation, Mr. Speaker.

With respect to renewable energy, Mr. Speaker, we've actually exceeded the promises made by that party, in a recent announcement on wind, for another 200 megawatts for the province, Mr. Speaker.

I think it's a widely held view that the province of Saskatchewan is leading on the issue of carbon capture technology and sequestration, Mr. Speaker. It's a positive message that we have for the rest of the country and for North America, as we witness very recently from the first-ever Senate delegation to the province of Saskatchewan. They wanted to find out about what Saskatchewan was doing on the issue of the energy and the environment, and I'll be happy to talk about that if the hon. member has a few more questions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier I'm sure, while he is in Washington, will talk about the NDP's commitment to carbon sequestration which was done under the Romanow and Calvert government. I hope he informs those that he's speaking to that he didn't do that because he hasn't done that in the past. He pretends that he is responsible for carbon sequestration. I'm not sure that he would even know what it means.

My question to the Premier, my question to the Premier, in regards to the commitment by SaskPower, there's a committee of the legislature meeting dealing with the issue of energy future options. And in the committee hearings, the question was asked about the commitment to energy efficiency. And SaskPower said the following: by 2017, we see our energy efficiency program will be able to deliver 100 megawatts of saving, but we're not stopping there. We're actually setting a long-term goal of 3000 megawatts of energy saving. End quote.

Mr. Speaker, that's an achievement somewhere between 3 and 9 per cent energy efficiency. My question is, how can we believe what the Premier says when he can't even get SaskPower to deliver on the commitments he's made?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has a problem. The hon. member's problem is getting Saskatchewan people to believe what he and his party are saying about any particular issue, whether it's nuclear power or whether it's carbon capture.

Because that hon. member just stood up and took credit for . . . And by the way, just for the record, I think almost at every single opportunity, including with international audiences, I do mention that the Romanow administration, together with

EnCana, yes, and Apache and the US [United States] Department of Energy, are responsible for what happened in Weyburn. And we are building on that success. The member should check the record. The member should check the record.

But you know, Mr. Speaker, they do not have a consistent position on carbon capture and sequestration. Because now the member says he's all for it. He's the author and the perfecter of it down in Weyburn.

But his Environment critic, the Environment critic that he reappointed to the position after he got the job as leader — a decision that that party may or may not be regretting — said this. The critic said they committed to the expensive and untried technology of carbon capture. That's one of her many pronouncements on carbon capture, that it ought not to be a top priority for the province.

Well it is. We'll build on the success from the previous Romanow administration. We'll build on it in an international-leading way, with or without the Leader of the Opposition.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — A question to the Premier, who may not know because he was busy at the time doing other things in the building while we did the agreement with North Dakota. Because I was the minister, along with Eldon Lautermilch, who signed the agreement with Alberta Energy, a Crown corporation owned by the Government of Alberta, to do carbon sequestration. I'm not sure what he was doing at that time, but he may not have noticed when we signed that agreement. I happen to have been there while he was busy doing other projects in the building.

My question to the Premier is this: before the election, he pretended to set targets for emissions. And he broke those promises. And in Quebec City, he pretended that he would have energy efficiency of 20 per cent. And now he comes home, and he can't achieve that. Some people are calling this Premier the great pretender.

My question is to the Premier: why are you sending one of your ministers off to Copenhagen when in fact you haven't met any of your commitments? And won't it be an embarrassment to the province and to the people of this province when your minister goes there and argues, not to meet commitments, rather than raise the commitments and the bar for the climate change process?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — You know, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the issue of the energy and the environment, carbon capture technology, or nuclear power, when it comes to those issues, the hon. member has more positions than the Kama Sutra.

Here's what his opposition critic said about federal targets. He said, she said . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. Order. I think not only members, but I know the gallery will be having a difficult time hearing the Premier's response. So I'd ask members to allow the Premier the same opportunity — order — to respond in the manner that the member was offered the opportunity to ask the question. I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — With respect to the issue of carbon capture and sequestration, the hon. member's Environment critic, the critic that he appointed, has said this: “. . . they [meaning us] committed to the expensive and untried technology of carbon capture . . .” Apparently, she hadn't got the memo that that hon. member personally had perfected that technology, though it's true the Romanow government had actually implemented it.

What else have they said with respect to this issue of targets? Mr. Speaker, the hon. member, the critic for the Environment, said this. They don't want to hear this, Mr. Speaker. Here's what she said, “I would say the federal targets are something that they should clearly be adopting.” They being us. Mr. Speaker, we have adopted those targets.

We have laid out a climate change plan for the province that would ensure any levies collected from high emitters stay here in the province of Saskatchewan, are not transferred to Ontario or Quebec or other regions of the country in a wealth transfer.

That member and all those members over there will have a chance to vote in favour of that plan, to vote in favour of Saskatchewan leading in this regard, to vote in favour of Saskatchewan retaining those benefits. He'll have a chance to stand up and vote in favour of that later this day. I hope he'll take it, Mr. Speaker.

[14:00]

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

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, last spring in the eleventh hour before session ended, the government introduced Bill 95, *The Management and Reduction of Greenhouse Gases Act*. But that legislation died on the order paper without receiving second reading and has not been reintroduced.

In the Speech from the Throne, the government said it would be participating in the Copenhagen Conference on Climate Change. That conference begins in less than three weeks. Today the government wants us to endorse its so-called plan in the absence of legislation. To the minister: how can this government make promises to reduce greenhouse gases in Copenhagen when Saskatchewan has not yet passed climate change legislation?

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

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our greenhouse gas reduction bill will be reintroduced in the fall. And if the member opposite is so concerned about us having legislation passed in this House, I would ask them to let it pass

at all three stages so that we can have it passed before I go to Copenhagen.

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

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, the government says it wants to showcase its “unique and practical plan” in Copenhagen. But it hasn’t shared its final plan with Saskatchewan people. The only legislation ever made public contained no actual reduction targets and no baseline year against which reductions could be measured. And answers to written questions on the government’s consultation since last spring show a lot of consultation with industry, but virtually none with environmental groups.

To the minister: will the plan the government unveils in Copenhagen include a legislated commitment to specific science-based targets, or did its one-sided consultations persuade the government to continue making empty promises?

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

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, on May 11th of this year, we introduced legislation in this House. We also said that we were adopting the federal targets which are a 20 per cent reduction by 2020 from 2006 levels. And, Mr. Speaker, those are the targets that this government will be presenting at Copenhagen when we go. But, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to targets, the NDP Environment critic has asked us to adopt the federal targets which we have.

And for them to have any credibility on this file, or claim to have any credibility on this file, Mr. Speaker, is incredibly surprising. They contradict themselves constantly, including their complete abdication of clean coal or carbon capture and storage for our province, Mr. Speaker. So if they expect us to reach any targets, why are they not on side with any of the made-in-Saskatchewan technologies that will actually help us achieve this?

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

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, the minister seems to forget that they adopted our climate change reduction targets in their election platform, and then they decided to break that campaign promise. That’s what they’ve decided to do. The Obama administration has not backed down in its threat to regulate greenhouse gases as a pollutant. Britain, France, Germany, Sweden, and Greece have already met their Kyoto targets, and it appears most European countries will do so by 2012.

Canada and Saskatchewan risk being left behind on the world economy unless we take decisive action of our own. This government has been hanging its hat on equivalency agreement with Ottawa for months, and an agreement the government was forced to admit, in answers to written questions, that has not yet been signed.

To the minister: will the government sign a final equivalency agreement with Ottawa before Copenhagen?

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

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, it would appear to me that the opposition is now not only walking away from the federal targets which they asked us to adopt, they’re walking away from their original targets and somehow want us now to adopt Kyoto targets.

But, Mr. Speaker, as far as an equivalency agreement goes, we have signed an agreement in principle to work with the federal government. And I think that the members opposite don’t actually understand what an equivalency agreement is. It’s based on regulations and, Mr. Speaker, as we move forward with our legislation, the regulations we put in place. And there has to be an examination between the federal regulations and the provincial regulations to make sure that we’re all on the same place for this, so that we can actually regulate in-province, Mr. Speaker, and keep our money in Saskatchewan. In a Saskatchewan technology fund, so we can reinvest in Saskatchewan.

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

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, the value of an equivalency agreement is dubious anyway, since the federal environment commissioner said last May that the federal government has no actual plan to measure greenhouse gas emission reductions. The government keeps predicting economic disaster if we move decisively on climate change, but an analysis prepared for the government last January revealed that there would be little if any difference in residential electricity rates by moving to a higher target. And the Pembina Institute says we could create 50,000 new jobs.

Once again independent experts tell this government one thing while it does the opposite. To the minister: why does this government always assume it knows better than independent experts?

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

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite stated, we did do an examination of the impacts on our economy from different targets that we may or may not have adopted.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would point out again that the NDP had clearly stated in 2002 that they were not willing for Saskatchewan to pay an unfair price, nor were they willing to have a plan in place that would penalize their economy. And, Mr. Speaker, there was a difference between the NDP targets and the targets that we have adopted. But, Mr. Speaker, the opposition critic has clearly stated that a discussion about the economy . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. It’s becoming somewhat difficult for even myself to exactly hear the minister’s response. So I ask members to allow the minister to respond to the

question. I recognize the Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, the Opposition critic doesn't think that a discussion about our economy has any place in the environmental discussion around greenhouse gas emissions. She said, and I quote, "I would say that that is a red herring, an economic discussion. I would say that's also irresponsible." And Mr. Speaker, I think that's a very irresponsible position . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Are the members interested in actually getting a response? Or are they not interested?

An Hon. Member: — Yes.

The Speaker: — Well then allow the minister to respond. The minister may complete her answer.

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, we do have to have a discussion about the economy when it comes to greenhouse gas emission reductions in this province. That is a position that our government has taken, and we believe that we have found a balance between the two.

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

Management of Provincial Economy

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just a few months ago Crown Investments Corporation, CIC, had well over \$1 billion cash on hand in its holding. This represented important equity for our Crown corporations to enable our Crowns to grow and to renew their provincial-wide networks while keeping rates low for Saskatchewan people and business.

Straight question to the Minister of Finance. After stripping \$480 million and any other commitments as well, prior to any measures that are going to be included in this year's budget update, simple question: what's the current balance of CIC dollars?

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased that the members opposite are now realizing the importance of the Crown Investments Corporation to our province, and the fact that the opposition, when they were sitting over here, never understood the importance of actually spending money on infrastructure.

The NDP annual capital spend on SaskPower was \$280 million. Last year our government spent 420 million. This year we're going to spend \$900 million. You know what we're doing right now, Mr. Speaker? We're spending money on infrastructure in our Crowns because the members opposite didn't spend enough.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member responsible for Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the minister completely avoided the question. The question was how much money's on hand. We know that that government has a burn rate on capital, such as Crowns, like no tomorrow. And it's a major concern. Mr. Speaker, you can understand why people of Saskatchewan no longer accept this incompetent Finance minister at his word. His assurances don't cut it after presenting the most irresponsible budget in this province's history.

Mr. Speaker, a straightforward question to the minister. Saskatchewan people expect a straightforward answer. How much money does he plan to strip from the Crown corporations in this budget year? And would he admit that this unjustified cash grab is really just a backdoor tax increase?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that the province has a challenge in reconciling the revenue loss that has happened as a result of the potash industry's shortfall. There is no doubt that that is a challenge. And this government is going to meet that challenge within a balanced budget.

Mr. Speaker, but there's another story in Saskatchewan that also needs to be told, a much more positive story of economic development and growth and opportunity. Mr. Speaker, Sébastien Levoie, Laurentian Bank economist says, and I quote, "Saskatchewan and Manitoba are breezing through the economic and financial crisis with an ease that . . . [would] make other regions envious."

Mr. Speaker, the Dominion Bond Rating agency has said, when they gave Saskatchewan a credit upgrade, they cite debt reduction, fiscal prudence, and sound economic fundamentals. The Conference Board predicts strong economic growth going forward into the new year. And certainly the Crowns are very much a part of that fiscal stability in this province.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — It'll be interesting, Mr. Speaker, to hear about what some of the analysts are saying about this financial escapade here this year. When equity that could have been used as an injection into our Crown corporations to allow growth and renewal is diverted and is stripped to cover off the mistakes of this government, this certainly has an adverse effect on the utility rates Saskatchewan people and Saskatchewan businesses pay. Rates are forced to increase.

The people and businesses of Saskatchewan will partially pay for the gross mismanagement of this government's budget through increases to utility bills for many years into the future. Mr. Speaker, how can the Finance minister in good faith characterize his equity stripping as anything other than what it is, a backdoor tax increase?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, the money that is being used in the Crowns is cash that's available for the use of government for important government priorities. And important government priorities include the important things

that we've been doing.

The important government priorities include the things that we've been doing for families and seniors and children and the most vulnerable in our economy. We had \$58 million for early learning and child care spaces. We have a strategy to make . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, we've provided for \$18 million for the active families benefit. We've provided \$16.5 million for enhancements to the seniors' income plan and \$12.5 million to increase shelter rates for people. These are important initiatives of the government and the people of Saskatchewan. And CIC equity dollars are also dollars that can be used from the sales of the Saferco proceeds to help with those very important priorities.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, we have important questions to the Finance minister. We haven't got a single answer — not how much money's on hand right now, not how much will be on later this week, and certainly not at the end of this budget year. But it's not just the Crown equity that this minister is draining.

Mr. Speaker, in 2008, the Throne Speech of this government committed to maintain a significant cash balance in its rainy day fund. In fact the Throne Speech said, and I quote:

My government is currently forecasting this balance to be almost \$2 billion at the end of the current fiscal year.

This will be the rock on which we secure Saskatchewan's future.

Mr. Speaker, today the rainy day fund is not \$2 billion, but \$840 million. And it's just starting to rain. My question to the minister: after he raids the rainy day fund once again, this week after the mid-year budget update, what will be left in that fund at the end of this budget year?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, an important initiative of this government was to reduce the long outstanding General Revenue Fund debt of the province. And when the members opposite ask, well what we did with some of the money, we absolutely paid down 40 per cent of the General Revenue Fund debt.

Mr. Speaker, that initiative was a very important initiative because it improves the fiscal capacity of the province. Mr. Speaker, it also results in lower interest payments for the people of Saskatchewan, so those dollars can be used for other important initiatives of the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, there's two stories in this province. There certainly is the story of the challenge as a result of the potash

industry shortfall. But there's a story of growth and optimism, a story of ensuring that we're looking after the most vulnerable of our citizens. And this government will continue to be noted for those stories.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the minister speaks about debt reduction. Debt reduction. At the same time, it's cranking up debt in the Crown corporations like never before and draining resources in our Crowns and draining resources in our rainy day fund at a burn rate that's unsustainable.

Mr. Speaker, the 2008 Throne Speech had this to say about the global economic recession. And I quote:

We expect our economy to flourish and prosperity to continue, even in these unstable times . . .

But, Saskatchewan people should feel secure in the knowledge that they have a \$2 billion fiscal insurance policy to ensure we are prepared to weather any possible impact on the provinces revenues.

Can't you just see those pompoms waving, Mr. Speaker. To the minister: what's left of our \$2 billion fiscal insurance policy, our rock? What's left in that fund today? And what will be left in that fund at the end of this budget year?

[14:15]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, the members opposite noise and heckling in the House has obviously prevented the member from hearing my previous answer.

Mr. Speaker, we have used the resources of the province to pay back \$2.6 billion of the provincial debt — 40 per cent. Some of that money has come from the Growth and Financial Security Fund, and we feel that that was a very important decision to make a major initiative against the long-term debt of the province.

Mr. Speaker, the Crowns need to borrow funds to build the infrastructure that this province has neglected for 16 years under that administration. We need to build transmission lines, transmission capacity, and wind generation power.

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. There's a handful of members, and in this case some on the side of the opposition benches, who continually continue to holler from their seats and interfere with the opportunity for the minister to respond. I ask the members to allow the minister to complete his response.

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you.

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. I must advise members in the gallery that they're not to participate in debate on the floor. And so we ask you to respect the rules of the Chamber.

Thank you. Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would close by saying this. The Dominion Bond Rating agency has given this province a current and improved credit rating.

The members opposite, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite always took great pride and pleasure when there was an upgrading of the fiscal situation of the province in the past. It means that there's good fiscal management of the economy, in spite of the economic pressures there are. And it means a good thing for the province of Saskatchewan. And they cite debt reduction, fiscal prudence, and sound economic fundamentals as the reasons behind the upgrade, Mr. Speaker.

The people of the province understand that. The 20 members opposite don't.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

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

Plan for Climate Change

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Following my remarks, I'll be moving a motion asking that this Assembly support Saskatchewan's climate change position going into Copenhagen.

And, Mr. Speaker, we are now only a few weeks away from the COP 15 [Conference of the Parties] meeting in Copenhagen, the United Nations meeting that will set the global path forward from the Kyoto agreement which was signed a decade ago. Kyoto expires in 2012, and the world is looking for a new agreement to address the issue of climate change and greenhouse gas emission reductions.

There has been much talk over the course of the past year on which countries are doing what. Are we doing enough globally? What happens if countries such as India, China, and the United States do not do their fair share? And these are all very important questions. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to represent Saskatchewan in our unique position at the meetings in Copenhagen and to tell our story to a global audience.

Mr. Speaker, in the course of this debate in the House today, I'm sure that the opposition will simply point out what they see as deficiencies in our plan and decry the fact that we didn't do exactly what they would have done. And, Mr. Speaker, while we do not agree on everything, and I will point out some of those differences, I will also be taking this opportunity to point out the similarities of our positions. And as we head into the talks in Copenhagen, I believe our province is better served by having a unified voice and a plan that will actually make a difference.

Our government has been consistent in our position that we need to find a balance between economic growth and environmental protection. And we believe that we have done that. One of the things that we did on this file was to have an

analysis of targets and their impact on our province and our people. We saw that the NDP targets would cost our economy and our families.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP stand in this House and say they want the lowest possible SaskPower rates, but at the same time call for higher targets. They cannot have it both ways. Higher targets mean higher SaskPower rates.

It is a well-known fact that reducing our greenhouse gas emissions will cost money. It is not free. It will cost our province money. It will cost SaskPower ratepayers money. That is a simple fact. What we are doing as a government is attempting to make this cost as reasonable as possible.

I would point out that on this point the NDP once agreed with us. In 2002 they released a discussion paper on climate change. The premise of it was to address the ratification of the Kyoto agreement, but I believe that the NDP's basic concerns are still applicable today.

There are many interesting things in the report, Mr. Speaker, comments that they contradict every day. And I quote from page 6 of that report: "Unacceptable costs will erode public support . . . and will force governments to reverse their commitment to reduce emissions."

Mr. Speaker, we agree. What good is a plan that is not economically viable? I suppose the easiest way to reduce our emissions is to drive out or shut down industry in Saskatchewan, but I hardly see how our province will benefit from that approach.

Mr. Speaker, we have said all along that Saskatchewan is not immune to the current economic difficulties facing our nation. The issues that we have seen with potash sales this year have also caused concern, yet we are doing relatively well. And in the face of uncertain economic times, it remains important to find a balance on this issue that will not further exacerbate our economic position.

We will not adopt a position that will put our industries and exporters at risk. Adopting targets that are substantially higher than what our trading partners are willing to do will hurt our industry and it will hurt our province.

The NDP once agreed with this position. And I quote from their own climate change paper:

. . . Saskatchewan companies may be placed at a competitive disadvantage compared to U.S. companies that may not have to reduce their emissions. Saskatchewan companies can easily . . . [shift] to the U.S. or manufacturing activity can easily shift from Saskatchewan to U.S. plants as relative costs change. As well, many other countries . . . may enjoy a competitive advantage in serving the U.S. or Canadian markets.

Mr. Speaker, we will soon be receiving the mid-term financial update of our province. Our Finance minister has already indicated that, due to the lowest potash sales in almost 40 years, we will have to be making wise economic decisions.

The NDP were also once concerned about the impact of their own provincial targets if we adopted too harsh a target. Mr. Speaker, from page 10 of their own paper, I quote:

. . . Saskatchewan currently has a small budget surplus . . . It is difficult for budget-constrained provinces to provide the large amounts of funding required to undertake climate change initiatives. Any increased provincial expenditures on climate change will need to be funded by diverting expenditures away from priority areas such as health, agriculture, highways or education.

Mr. Speaker, they go on to quote — this is the NDP — “Alternatively, taxes would need to increase, or funds would have to be borrowed and provincial debt would increase.”

Mr. Speaker, we are not interested, and I would say that the people of this province are not interested, in either increasing our debt or increasing taxes to pay for climate change initiatives. I would hope that the NDP are not interested in that approach either.

And as I’ve stated earlier, it is our position that we find a balance, and I believe that we have. We have done extensive consultations with industry and environmental NGOs [non-governmental organization] on this issue. We need to ensure that our province remains competitive, not just with other jurisdictions within Canada, but with our export partners as well.

The federal Environment minister, Jim Prentice, said recently, and I quote:

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

Mr. Speaker, we have to find the balance between that and doing our fair share.

Mr. Speaker, the US and China account for almost 50 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions. Canada accounts for 2 per cent of global emissions, and Saskatchewan 10 per cent of that 2 per cent. Mr. Speaker, we are a mere fraction of 1 per cent of global emissions.

We have promoted the idea that jurisdictions within Canada face their own unique challenges and opportunities. The federal government has recognized this as well. Saskatchewan is home to amazing natural resources. They are the basis of our economy. To implement a plan that is detrimental to that resource base hurts us all. Whether it’s reserves in the Bakken play, uranium mining in our North, or potash mining, our resources offer jobs and security for the people of our province.

We also face challenges due to our weather. We live in a cold climate and face a greater need for energy and electricity than many jurisdictions. And again, Mr. Speaker, the NDP were once aware of this situation.

In 2002, the NDP understood the need to protect these

industries and to face the realities of the challenges that we face. On page 2 of their position paper, it says, and I quote:

Saskatchewan is a high per capita emitter of greenhouse gases because we have a relatively small population spread over a large geographical area. Saskatchewan has a large rural population. We also have an extreme climate that requires energy for heating in winter and cooling in summer.

It goes on to say, Mr. Speaker:

Saskatchewan has an energy-intensive, resource-based economy, and many of our products are exported to other countries instead of being consumed within the province. Much of Saskatchewan’s economic growth is linked to the development of our oil, natural gas and coal resources. Curtailing the growth of these industries would have significant economic implications for Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, so there is a balance that we must achieve to do our fair share in reducing emissions while keeping our industries on a level playing field and our economy strong. And these are not easy decisions to make. Our government did not take the situation lightly. And while the NDP would like to engage in yelling and rhetoric in this House, we have made decisions that we believe will be in the best interests of our province.

Mr. Speaker, I know that the NDP will take this opportunity to rail against our plan. But I have one thing to say about that — at least we have a plan. The NDP Environment critic has said that a glossy brochure does not constitute a plan. I couldn’t agree more. The difference is, Mr. Speaker, a glossy brochure is all the NDP ever had.

In 2002, a paper that they wrote, they said that an advisory committee was set up in 1998. Well that’s great. But it took almost a decade before the NDP released their next glossy brochure. In that time, they could’ve introduced legislation and regulations to do something but they failed, Mr. Speaker.

And I would note, Mr. Speaker, that we have not issued glossy brochures on climate change, or our plans, and you won’t find one. I had told the Ministry of Environment that we are not interested in simply undertaking PR [public relations] initiatives, Mr. Speaker. I asked for legislation and that’s exactly what we have delivered.

And so, Mr. Speaker, while the NDP dragged their feet for a decade, our government in just 18 months tabled legislation. And if the NDP Environment critic is concerned about having legislation passed before I go to Copenhagen, I will reiterate my offer to them: that when I reintroduce that legislation to the House this fall, Mr. Speaker, that they pass it at all stages and I will have passed legislation going to Copenhagen. And that is a challenge that I give to the NDP.

Mr. Speaker, we have also signed an agreement in principle with the federal government to work towards an equivalency agreement. And again, after question period today, it’s clear that the NDP don’t understand what that constitutes. Mr. Speaker, an equivalency agreement is based on equivalent outcomes and

we have to make sure that our regulations are in sync so that we can have the equivalency agreement, Mr. Speaker, and that will take some time. But it is the path that we are going down with the federal government.

That agreement will allow Saskatchewan to be the regulator. It will also allow us to have our own Saskatchewan Technology Fund for investment in low carbon solutions for reducing emissions in our province.

And as I stated at the beginning of my remarks, I am pleased to be part of the delegation representing Canada and Saskatchewan going into Copenhagen next month. I believe that Saskatchewan has an amazing story to tell and we should be promoting our position and the action that we are taking. We are currently working with the folks at the University of Regina to have an additional event while I am there. I have been asked to be one of the presenters so that I can tell Saskatchewan's story, Mr. Speaker, on what we are doing and the work that is being done right here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, in carbon capture and storage.

I will also be pointing out the benefits of our Saskatchewan Technology Fund. It is my hope that other jurisdictions see our tech fund as an equivalent action to buying and trading credits. I believe it is a better answer than transferring wealth from one jurisdiction to another. Many would like to simply see the trading of credits — something that doesn't necessarily result in actual reduction of emissions.

The NDP were once concerned about this as well. Mr. Speaker, on page 3 of their 2002 discussion paper they said, and I quote, "The federal . . . [government] should avoid undue reliance on the purchase of international emission credits that provide no net environmental benefits."

Mr. Speaker, in their 2007 brochure, the NDP promoted the idea of having money invested in technology. They were planning to, and I quote:

Establish a Technology Fund to receive voluntary payments from Saskatchewan industry as a method of complying with industry's mandatory emissions reduction obligations under the federal climate change plan.

Mr. Speaker, we agree — not with obligations that are the federal climate change plan because we'd rather have a made-in-Saskatchewan plan, but on the tech fund, Mr. Speaker, we agree. We believe that Saskatchewan can offer real answers and real solutions. We are already leaders in CCS [carbon capture and storage] technology.

To give credit where credit is due, and I know that the Opposition Leader says that we don't do that at all, and, Mr. Speaker, I would say that that's an erroneous assumption because the Premier gives credit to the previous NDP government in every speech that I've heard on their advances on CCS technology. It was a good thing that they did, and for some reason the NDP Environment critic now no longer thinks it's a good thing. But, Mr. Speaker, to give credit where credit is due, the NDP were initial partners with PTRC [Petroleum Technology Research Centre], the University of Regina, and helped fund research into CCS.

And as I said, Mr. Speaker, for some reason — which is still unclear to me — in recent years the NDP seem to have turned their back on that amazing technology. The NDP Environment critic is on record as saying, and I quote, "They committed to the expensive and untried technology of carbon capture . . ." Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure why that is, when any NDP brochure — glossy or otherwise — has clearly stated that this technology and clean coal is being supported by the NDP, but they have now turned their backs on that.

[14:30]

Mr. Speaker, again from their 2002 discussion paper on page 3, and I quote:

Investment in . . . clean coal technology will reduce emissions, generate real environmental gains and provide Canada with significant economic development and employment benefits.

Mr. Speaker, it goes on to say, and I quote:

Enhanced investment in research related to clean coal technology, carbon dioxide separation techniques and geological sequestration of carbon dioxide would enable Saskatchewan to reduce the environmental impact of utilizing its coal and oil resources and would develop valuable technologies for use throughout the world.

Mr. Speaker, that was from 2002, and apparently they held that position until 2007 when in their glossy brochure it says, and I quote:

Saskatchewan's opportunity to advance technologies for using coal in an environmentally advanced way can make a difference on a global scale. This world-leading technology could provide clean energy for future generations in Saskatchewan and has the potential to be applied throughout the world.

2007 they were praising CCS technology, and I quote:

Saskatchewan Industry and Resources, in co-operation with the federal government, is investing in world-leading research through Saskatchewan's Petroleum Technology Research Centre to examine ways to store carbon dioxide deep underground in order to reduce the atmospheric impacts of CO₂ releases.

Mr. Speaker, again we agree. Although the NDP are apparently no longer in favour of either clean coal or CCS technology or I'm not even sure, Mr. Speaker, if they're supportive of Saskatchewan's leading role in this work, we believe that the world and the environment can benefit from the work that is being done right here in our province and from new advances that are sure to come through continued investment in research and development.

Mr. Speaker, we are committed to advancing these technologies. We are working on a Saskatchewan-Montana carbon capture and storage reference plant — a large-scale test facility that will capture 1000 tonnes per day of CO₂ from coal-fired power plants in southern Saskatchewan. Some of the

CO₂ would be stored in Montana and the remainder will be used for enhanced oil recovery. So there's an environmental and an economic benefit, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we also support the Consumers' Co-operative Refinery aquastore project which will store 500 tonnes per day of CO₂ in a deep saline aquifer beginning in 2011, and this is in partnership with the PTRC at the University of Regina. The project will be the first in Canada to demonstrate the feasibility and best practices for storing CO₂ in deep saline aquifers.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of Saskatchewan is proud to be able to help fund this project through our Go Green Fund. And, Mr. Speaker, we have SaskPower's Boundary dam clean coal project, something that the NDP are not in favour of, which will use technology at a coal-fired power plant in southeastern Saskatchewan to capture 1 million tonnes of CO₂ per year, starting in 2015.

Mr. Speaker, we are making strides to reduce our emissions while supporting technology that can be used around the world.

Mr. Speaker, I have attempted to point out that our two parties have more in common on this issue than we have differences. Our government and the NDP appear to agree on the following principles.

First, a climate change plan for Saskatchewan should be economically acceptable to our residents and economically sustainable for Saskatchewan industries and businesses.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, the NDP and us agree that Saskatchewan industries and exporters should not be forced to be at a disadvantage with other jurisdictions.

Thirdly, Mr. Speaker, the NDP and the Saskatchewan Party agree that Saskatchewan should do its fair share, based on our population, our resource base, and our unique weather.

Fourth, Mr. Speaker, the NDP and the Saskatchewan Party agree that levies and offset payments should stay in Saskatchewan to be invested in low carbon solutions right here in Saskatchewan.

And fifthly, Mr. Speaker, the NDP and the Saskatchewan Party agree that Saskatchewan already has exceptional technology, research, and development that will not only help us reach our targets, but it can help the global community reach their objectives as well.

It would seem to me, Mr. Speaker, that the main point of contention for the NDP is a difference in targets. I have already stated quite clearly why we felt the need to adopt the federal targets, and if the NDP want, I can once again read into the record the NDP Environment critic's quote demanding that we adopt the federal targets. But, Mr. Speaker, I think we've done that a couple of times today already.

Mr. Speaker, the basic premise of our positions is actually very similar and, as I've said, I think it's important that we present a united front to the world. We do have an amazing story to tell. We need to promote the work that has already been done in Saskatchewan and the work that can be done, Mr. Speaker, if

we work together.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that the opposition support this motion as we head towards talks in Copenhagen. I am not asking them to support the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker. I am asking them to support Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, I move the following motion:

That this Assembly support the government's plan addressing climate change, a plan balancing environmental protection with economic growth, thereby ensuring the well-being and future prosperity of Saskatchewan families; and

That this Assembly support the Saskatchewan plan to direct offset payments into the Saskatchewan Technology Fund to fund research into the development of technology needed to help the world reduce and control carbon emissions; and

That this Assembly encourage the government to actively promote the Saskatchewan plan at the United Nations COP 15 Conference in Copenhagen in December of 2009.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The motion before the Assembly is the motion by the Minister of the Environment:

That this Assembly support the government's plan addressing climate change, a plan balancing environmental protection with economic growth, thereby ensuring the well-being and future prosperity of Saskatchewan families; and

That this Assembly support the Saskatchewan plan to direct offset payments into the Saskatchewan Technology Fund to fund research into the development of technology needed to help the world reduce and control carbon emissions; and

That this honourable Assembly encourage the government to actively promote the Saskatchewan plan at the United Nations COP 15 Conference in Copenhagen in December of 2009.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to stand and speak to the Sask Party motion and certainly make some observations on the misconceptions that the minister has made in her speech.

The Sask Party motion is flawed from the start, Mr. Speaker. They talk about the Sask Party plan like they have one, when in fact nothing could be further from the truth. The closest they came to a plan was in the dying days of the spring session — literally in the eleventh hour of the spring session — within the last few days of the spring session when they were guilted into bringing something forward because they had promised to bring something forward.

So finally in the dying days of the spring session, they brought forward their climate change Bill. And then what did they do with that, Mr. Speaker? They let it die on the order paper and haven't brought it forward so far, not even a second reading of that Bill, Mr. Speaker.

The government hasn't taken a single legislative step to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Saskatchewan, and the only thing that they prefer to do is mock the NDP plan and the \$320 million that we had put in place to deal with the plan that we had set out.

And you know, what's even more interesting about that is, is that the minister claims that the money wasn't real, that it was only in the General Revenue Fund. Well then clearly what we've seen from how they handle the finances of this province, we see what happens to money that's in the General Revenue Fund or in the rainy day fund or elsewhere because it just seems to be all part of their let-it-burn policy in terms of making the money burn as quickly as they can.

The plan they brought forward was flawed. It didn't have benchmarks. It had no target year for stabilization and let emitters completely off the hook. And they have the nerve to ask this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, to support this so-called plan.

They're opposed to targets. They're opposed to cap and trade, and they're opposed to making polluters pay. So how can you have a plan, Mr. Speaker, when you don't believe in anything? It's quite remarkable.

The Sask Party broke their campaign promise and reduced the targets from 32 per cent to 20 per cent and, Mr. Speaker, so far it appears they can't even live up to that.

Now the minister likes to refer to the fact that the opposition critic asked for the federal target. Well in absence of this Sask Party government having any plan whatsoever to meet any of its commitments that it made in their election platform, they are correct that this opposition critic was looking for them to bring forward any target for them to reach — and at the very, very least, at the very least — something that the minister has been referring to often and enjoys mocking the Environment critic about.

So the plan that this government brought forward won't even be passed until the spring of 2010. And, quite frankly, at that point we're not sure how long it's going to take to bring into effect at that point, if they even want to. And as we've heard the Environment minister say today, she's not even sure whether they're going to meet targets, what they're going to do, what those targets will be. It's all when and if and maybe, and clearly, Mr. Speaker, no plan whatsoever.

Meanwhile SaskPower keeps building coal and gas plants, and this government has yet not, since it was elected in November of 2007, erected a single windmill in this province despite the fact that when they were elected in November of 2007, this province had a reputation for being a leading per capita producer of wind power in the country. It's shameful that they did not continue on with that legacy that the NDP government, former NDP government, left them in terms of something that we were doing in this country that was admired, was tangible,

was leading the nation on. And yet not one single windmill had been erected in the last two years since they've been elected.

Now granted they've announced that they have intentions of doing so, but as I said, they had a windfall of money to be dealing with when they were first elected. They certainly saw some increase of resource revenues when they were first elected, and chose to do nothing on the green economy in Saskatchewan.

Now this party, this is a party that has a history of climate change issues in terms of it has a caucus that's full of climate change deniers and skeptics. There are many, many quotes that one could offer up, which have been offered up many other occasions in the Assembly, as to the various members in the Sask Party government who believe that climate change is a hoax, that climate change doesn't exist, that climate change is some odd ploy of some, of many individuals, I guess, who believe in the fact that climate change is a reality for the world to be dealing with. So is it any wonder, Mr. Speaker, that they can't bring forward a plan?

Now the minister likes to purport the fact that the NDP had a glossy brochure, which absolutely it did. It had a wonderful brochure called the *Energy and Climate Change Plan*, which clearly laid out a plan. Not just some, you know, brochure with fancy pictures, but actually laid out a plan.

And unfortunately the minister mustn't have read the plan or can't remember what the plan said, so perhaps I'll just read into the record some of the things that the NDP established while it was in government and was going to be setting out to continue on and further with respect to the green economy in this province and sustainable energy in this province.

So, for instance, the NDP record is that the NDP built enough wind power capacity to provide electricity for 73,000 homes in the province of Saskatchewan. And as I said before, became the leading per capita province with respect to producing wind energy.

The NDP pioneered — yes, pioneered — carbon capture and storage technology. Now as the minister likes to rant on in her rhetoric in terms of her responses — and I won't call them answers — to questions in question period . . . They are merely responses that the minister provides. But she likes to rant on that we've flip-flopped on the issue of carbon capture technology.

Now the reality is, is that we have great hope, great hope, Mr. Speaker for carbon capture technology to be successful. There's no question about it. But we also know and so does everyone in the industry that it's not the silver bullet. And so therefore we also have to be careful about throwing all our eggs in one basket. And in this particular case, Mr. Speaker, it would be all our financial eggs, all our financial resources into one basket.

We have to be sure that what we're doing in terms of a sustainable economy and a green economy encompasses all of the technologies that are going to be needed, at the various costs that they are going to incur to be a fruitful economic plan and a fruitful, sustainable energy plan for the province of Saskatchewan. So we have to be careful that there's a balanced

approach for meaningful carbon emission reductions in this province. So as I said, those are a couple of the points so far.

The NDP promoted energy conservation through programs like EnerGuide, which provides assistance for Saskatchewan families to retrofit their homes to be more energy efficient.

Now what's interesting about the minister's comments and the minister's responses is that one never hears anything about conservation or demand-side management. It is as if those two terms don't even exist in the Sask Party language. It is something that is the cheapest form of energy in terms of conservation because obviously the energy saved is the cheapest form of energy. And yet this government, the Sask Party government, has no plan for the conservation or demand-side management and clearly doesn't even understand the notion of it because they can't seem to even bring it up in their vocabulary, Mr. Speaker.

[14:45]

And we're certainly seeing that in the hearings that are happening through Crown and Central Agencies Committee as well. The fact that conservation and demand-side management is something of a concept that they do not have grasp of or do not want to embrace is evident.

So the NDP also made it more affordable for lower income families to afford energy retrofits and reduce their carbon footprint by establishing the Saskatchewan home energy improvement plan to provide a top-up grant to the EnerGuide for Houses program. Again, we're talking about conservation again. And, Mr. Speaker, this is something that the NDP felt very strongly about. It's something that the experts in the industry feel very strongly about, knowing full well that this is the cheapest form of energy is the energy that is conserved, is the most cost-effective form of energy.

Now the NDP also reduced the PST, provincial sales tax on energy-efficient appliances to encourage more Saskatchewan families to buy them. The NDP also provided more than 16,000 homeowners with rebates and grants for programmable thermostats, Energy Star appliances, and home upgrading programs. And, Mr. Speaker, these programs were extremely successful. We saw a great uptake in these programs, and clearly it was something that was embraced by the homeowners of Saskatchewan and is something that has worked very effectively for the homeowners of Saskatchewan as well.

The NDP government, former NDP government, also set targets that would have achieved the highest per capita reduction in greenhouse gases of any province. So we see, Mr. Speaker, under the previous NDP administration, once again we would have led the nation, would have led the nation on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the country.

But yet again, what does the Sask Party government do? They make the phony promise by putting it in their election platform and then once they're elected they completely break that promise. It's completely eradicated. They make a promise to meet the federal target of 20 per cent instead. And as we've already said, they still don't even have a plan laid out as to how they're even going to reach that target. So at this point again it's

completely unclear as to whether they'll even reach the greatly reduced target instead of leading the nation again in greenhouse gas reductions.

The energy and climate plan under the NDP committed to stabilizing greenhouse gas emissions by 2010 and reducing emissions by 32 per cent of 2004 levels by 2020 and 80 per cent by 2050. These were absolute lofty goals, but goals that the NDP administration had every, every intent of meeting, absolutely every intent of meeting. As I said, Mr. Speaker, that's why there was a fund set up of \$320 million. There was also an aggressive move to expand the Office of Energy Conservation versus what the Sask Party government did, which was basically eliminate the Office of Energy Conservation.

And the previous NDP administration also had plans and was in the process of setting up the climate change secretariat. That's right, a climate change secretariat with its own deputy minister so that it would have the clout that it would need to deal with the various ministries to ensure that a viable climate change plan would be put into place and would be followed, Mr. Speaker. Not some empty, hollow, shallow promise which is all we've seen out of Sask Party government so far, but something that would be set in place which would actually have some teeth to be met and would actually have the clout it would need to make sure, to ensure that all the ministries were on board, Mr. Speaker.

And what did the Sask Party government do with the plan for a climate change secretariat in this province, Mr. Speaker? They completely annihilated it. It was completely bombed. They decided that they weren't going to go ahead with that plan. That plan lays fizzling on the floor somewhere as well as, Mr. Speaker, the \$320 million that the NDP government, that the previous NDP government had committed to a climate change plan — \$320 million. What did the Sask Party do with that \$320 million? They gutted it down to \$40 million. And what did they do with the rest of that money? Well it got burned up by whatever mismanagement, financial mismanagement the Sask Party was incurring in the day.

So the rest of that money is gone. It's absolutely nowhere to be found with respect to addressing climate change issues. It's become part of the Sask Party fund for expenditures which have increased, by the way, dramatically since the last NDP administration. Dramatically.

And you know, the Finance minister likes to refer to the fact that, well we misjudged potash. Unfortunately, you know, the potash revenues didn't come in the way we had hoped, contrary to the fact that there were many experts that were saying that this isn't something that they foresaw. Contrary to the fact that the NDP opposition, the NDP Finance critic at the time, said that it was clearly, clearly miscalculating their revenues on potash at the time that the budget was released in the spring of 2009. But the Finance minister likes to say, well you know, they just didn't come in the way we had hoped. Well, Mr. Speaker, part of what's going to be a deficit that this government is going to be showing is obviously the potash revenues.

But the greater part of the deficit that I have concern about, Mr.

Speaker, is their increase in expenditure. The increase in expenditure for this government has risen so dramatically over a short two-year period that it seems to be, Mr. Speaker, what my colleague from Regina Northeast referred to before, a movie that we've seen before, Mr. Speaker. This is, in my opinion, Devine Tory accounting all over again. We are seeing similar expenditures, similar promises. They want to be everything to everyone.

And where does that ultimately leave the Saskatchewan taxpayers and the people of this province? It leaves us in debt. And it leaves us crawling our way out of that debt yet again and having to pay the interest on that debt yet again. Mr. Speaker, which is exactly what the NDP administration had to do. From 1991 until 2007, the NDP administration was saddled with paying horrible interest payments on the debt that they left this province in. That debt, Mr. Speaker, was \$15 billion in 1991 — \$15 billion.

And when one looks at the population of this province being slightly over 1 million people, Mr. Speaker, on a per capita basis, that is absolutely deplorable. And they should be ashamed of themselves. So when they brag about the fact that they paid down some money on the debt, you know what, they should be bragging about the fact that Saskatchewan taxpayers have been able to pay down the money on that debt.

The debt that they incurred, Mr. Speaker, was something that the Saskatchewan taxpayers have had to pay since 1991. And when they brag about the fact that they paid a significant portion of that debt, that was done on the backs of the Saskatchewan taxpayers, the backs of the Saskatchewan industries. And was done again, like I said, not because of their largesse, but because of the fact that when they came into government in November of 2007, they were left with \$2.3 billion in the bank. Mr. Speaker, \$2.3 billion in the bank, on top of the increased resource revenues that they were able to work with. So let's make sure that their memories are refreshed on that particular topic.

The previous NDP administration also established the Green Initiatives Fund with \$4.9 million for programs like support for sustainable communities, green technology commercialization, and green energy conservation. Once again, Mr. Speaker, one can see the commitment by the previous NDP administration to the issue of conservation, knowing full well that that is the cheapest form of energy to be able to produce.

The previous NDP administration, as I've already said, established the \$320 million Green Future Fund with the proceeds from the sale of the government share of the NewGrade upgrader. And in other words, Mr. Speaker, the plan was to take the profits that Saskatchewan taxpayers made from something that produced greenhouse gas emissions and invest those profits in technologies that would reduce them.

Now, you know, Mr. Speaker, that sounds like an amazing form of similarity between what the Sask Party is now purporting to be their innovative and creative plan. But we had already talked about the fact that the proceeds from the NewGrade upgrader would go into a fund that would develop technologies that would be available to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions that are being emitted in this province. And, Mr. Speaker, when one

goes to what the minister likes to refer to as the glossy brochure, the *Energy and Climate Change Plan* for 2007, one can also say that something else is coming true. Which is that imitation is the finest form of flattery, Mr. Speaker.

And the reason I say that, Mr. Speaker, is because under the . . . I'll actually list it for the minister. It's on page 4 under "Expand Research and Innovation". One of the bullets reads this, Mr. Speaker:

Establish a Technology Fund to receive voluntary payments from Saskatchewan industry as a method of complying with industry's mandatory emissions reductions obligations under the federal climate change plan.

So, Mr. Speaker, they're taking one of our great ideas, and they're of course calling it one of their own which they tend to do, Mr. Speaker. I'm not going to take offence to the fact that they like the idea of setting up a technology fund for developing technologies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions because, as I said, that was something that we had already established in our plan. And so again, as I said, imitation is the finest form of flattery.

The NDP administration also proposed a \$40 million energy conservation loan program during the 2007 election to pay for energy conservation and efficiency upgrades, such as retrofits of wind and solar installations, heating installations, and energy-efficient irrigation systems.

So, Mr. Speaker, one can see that that's the NDP record. And there's many more that I can read into the record, but those are some of the highlights that I wanted to point out.

Now what's interesting about the minister's rhetoric that she likes to purport is the fact that they forget about what they have done and what they haven't done. And I use that have done with a little bit of tongue-in-cheek of course, Mr. Speaker, because it's not having done anything substantial in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, but rather what they haven't done in terms of addressing it.

So for instance the Sask Party climate change plan is quite frankly a broken promise. They promised a 32 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 during the election. But now, Mr. Speaker, what are they saying? They're saying that that will only be 20 per cent. They've broken a major campaign election promise.

They clearly put this . . . They adopted these targets from the NDP because these were obviously part of our plan, those targets. They adopted these targets from the NDP, stuck them in their election brochure, but had absolutely no idea, no plan, no concept whatsoever as to how they were going to achieve those greenhouse gas reduction targets.

Now what's interesting about that is — given that imitation is the finest form of flattery, and since they did adopt the NDP greenhouse gas reduction targets — what's interesting about that is that they gutted everything that the NDP had put into place to achieve those reduction targets and had yet no plan of their own.

So you would think if imitation was the finest form of flattery, that they would've imitated — or kept in place, I should say — the plan that the NDP set out, given that they had no plan, and in absence of any plan with respect to the Sask Party government. So, Mr. Speaker, this 20 per cent target that they've now put in place is nearly not good enough. The NDP had much more aggressive targets, with money and a plan in place to meet them. And the Sask Party clearly had none.

Now the reasons they gave for breaking the promise, Mr. Speaker, quite frankly are laughable. And the impact on, for instance when we're talking about the economy, Mr. Speaker, the economy definitely comes into play. There's no question about it. And the minister likes to have a . . . use word play with respect to how we've portrayed that. But the fact of the matter is, the economy is important in this.

As I've said before, had the greenhouse gas emission reduction target stayed in place, the Pembina Institute is saying that we would've achieved probably about 50,000 new jobs in this green economy, Mr. Speaker. So the economy is most definitely a major component in an environmental plan, in a green plan, and for a sustainable economy.

[15:00]

Now with respect to SaskPower rates, the government, the Sask Party government likes to say, well you know they couldn't have done this because it would have been too much of a burden with respect to SaskPower rates. But we know, Mr. Speaker, from the research that was done that the impact on ratepayers for Saskatchewan on the difference is quite negligible. The greenhouse gas reduction target that was in place of 32 per cent would have amounted to about a 20 to 22 per cent increase for SaskPower ratepayers over 10 years, Mr. Speaker.

So it was not something that was onerous. It certainly wasn't a legitimate reason for the Sask Party government to renege on its promise, to break its promise, its election promise, on meeting the greenhouse gas reduction targets that they had adopted from the NDP.

Now the same Sask Party government has unfortunately jacked up SaskPower rates by 8.5 per cent as of June 1st and has promised annual rate increases for the foreseeable future. So, Mr. Speaker, one has to wonder when one sees that there's going to be serious financial implications for the spending that this government has been doing, and obviously the deficit that this province is going to accrue again under this government.

And they talk about, oh well we're not going to, you know, we're not going to increase taxes. And depending on what day you're going to ask the Sask Party government about this question, I'm sure we're going to get different answers on that. Just like the Environment minister said today, may or may not on reduction targets. It's always a moving target, Mr. Speaker.

But one has to wonder if they aren't using the Crown corporations to backfill the financial losses that they are currently incurring because of their financial mismanagement and clearly . . .

An Hon. Member: — Exuberant spending.

Ms. Morin: — Exuberant spending. Exactly.

Now the Sask Party government says that the NDP has chosen between affordable utility rates and reduced greenhouse gas emissions, but the fact of the matter, Mr. Speaker, is this. The Sask Party is providing neither. In fact the report from the rate review panel made it clear that the real problem is the Sask Party's inability to manage costs at SaskPower. So, Mr. Speaker, it's quite interesting that the Sask Party has engaged in the spin that they're in, given that the facts state something quite different.

Now the Sask Party government could have used the \$320 million set aside by the NDP to subsidize ratepayers or industry for their rising costs for the out years, Mr. Speaker, but that's not what they chose to do. They chose to simply siphon that money off of the General Revenue Fund for their exuberant spending and without any thought whatsoever to a green economy.

Now when they talk about this legislation that they had introduced in the eleventh hour, Mr. Speaker, the legislation contained no year when greenhouse gases would stabilize. There was no baseline year against which reductions in greenhouse gases could be measured. And their plan let industrial emitters off the hook for violations of federal environmental law.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that doesn't speak to credibility for a Sask Party government which now, as of today, is touting the fact that they are very impassioned about the topic of climate change. And, Mr. Speaker, I welcome the notion of the Sask Party government being impassioned about climate change. We would just hope that it would actually come with something credible in terms of meeting that passion.

Now the minister also likes to talk about an equivalency agreement that was part of the discussions with the federal government, and again was talked about in the eleventh hour before the spring session ended in 2009. Now the cornerstone of the climate change plan that they put forward was this equivalency agreement with the federal government. That, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, doesn't even exist. It doesn't even exist, Mr. Speaker.

In place right now is an agreement with the federal government to talk about — that's right, to talk about — having agreement. And that the fact that these discussions won't take place until the fall of 2009 at the earliest. So again we've not heard anything about the fact that there may have been discussions that have taken or not taken place. We're not sure where the minister is on that one — may or may not have taken place.

But we certainly know that all it is, is basically what was announced in the spring was an agreement to talk about an agreement. So that was an interesting announcement that the government engaged in. Quite frankly if we would have as an NDP government announced every agreement to talk about an agreement, it would have been frequent, Mr. Speaker. So it's interesting that they have to cheerlead the fact that they are even able to have a discussion with their federal counterparts to talk

about an equivalency agreement.

Now this agreement to talk about an agreement was signed the same day the plan was announced which again, as I said, was in the eleventh hour of the spring session. So one has to wonder about the fact that this wasn't something that they simply slapped together to provide their promise that they were going to have something come forward by the end of spring session. This was their way of slapping something together to make sure something could be laid on the table, just so that they could say that they did something. But quite frankly, there was nothing there, Mr. Speaker. It was as good as the paper it was written on and, quite frankly, the paper it was written on is worth more. In this reality, the standard that . . . Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, this isn't what the people of Saskatchewan are looking for.

The federal government has announced that action on climate change will be delayed until 2012 at the earliest, Mr. Speaker — 2012. So the reality is that any action taken by Stephen Harper will be influenced by what the US does, and the US is moving to a cap-and-trade system. The US Environmental Protection Agency may regulate greenhouse gases as pollutants if Congress doesn't pass legislation. So what if there is a federal election in the fall before an equivalency agreement can be reached, Mr. Speaker?

As I said, I mean the agreement in the spring was as good as the paper it was written on. If there is another election — I mean, sorry, in the spring, not the fall — then it goes nowhere again. But you know, even if there is something that's signed, the plan won't take effect until the spring of 2010 anyways. And at that point, Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party government will be three-quarters of the way through their term before their plan will even be enacted. And let's face it, Mr. Speaker, it's a flawed plan at that.

So if a good economy is a bad time to introduce climate change targets, when is a good time, Mr. Speaker? If the Sask Party government can't introduce a climate change plan, a viable, comprehensive climate change plan with real targets and real baseline targets to measure against, when is a good time?

I mean, clearly they had a wonderful window of opportunity. They inherited, like I said, when they took over government from the previous NDP administration, \$2.3 billion. They also inherited a booming economy at the time, Mr. Speaker, a wonderful booming economy in Saskatchewan that would have been willing to — because we all know that we have obligations with respect to greenhouse gas emission reductions as good citizens of the province, as good citizens of the country, and quite frankly as good citizens of the world — industry would have been willing to embrace those at the time.

But now when you go to do anything meaningful on climate change when times are tough, obviously things are going to be more difficult. So if they wouldn't do it, if they wouldn't introduce climate change targets, significant climate change targets and a plan when the economy was good and when the province was sitting pretty, so to speak, when would be a good time, Mr. Speaker?

Now the inaction of the Sask Party government, Mr. Speaker, quite frankly is potentially risking our economic future. Media

reports from the United States make it increasingly clear that a cap-and-trade system is coming to North America, Mr. Speaker. And the US Environmental Protection Agency has announced that it will regulate carbon dioxide and five other greenhouse gases as pollutants even if Congress fails to act.

The National Round Table on the Economy and the Environment recommends that Canada adopt hard targets for greenhouse gas emissions and participate in the North American cap-and-trade system, and warns that Canada's economy will suffer if it doesn't adopt the US approach.

So, Mr. Speaker, the Premier has been very clear about how he feels about the cap-and-trade system, and further to that has not put anything concrete in the plan, has not laid out anything that would be salient for people to be able to say that, you know, Saskatchewan is really doing its part in terms of meeting its greenhouse gas emission reduction targets, be as pathetic as they are in terms of what they originally promised during the election campaign. But we're in some serious, we could potentially be in serious trouble with our economic trading partners if we're not going to do something viable on that front.

Saskatchewan deserves the opportunity to participate in the green economy of the future. Instead, the Sask Party may be cutting us off from those opportunities by insisting on policies our biggest trading partner may never accept. And, Mr. Speaker, that causes great concern for all of us in terms of what will happen to the Saskatchewan economy going forward if we want to present ourselves as an island with respect to the policy beliefs that this government is putting forward.

So, you know, Mr. Speaker, there have been some third party reviews of the eleventh hour climate change plan the Sask Party brought forward. And Mr. Speaker, I'd like to just read a few of those into the record. For instance, Ann Coxworth with the Saskatchewan Environmental Society, quoted in the *Leader-Post* on May 13, 2009:

“It's going to be really hard to measure how effective this program is . . . people will pay money into a fund rather than make emission reductions” . . .

So obviously, like I said, Mr. Speaker, it's not just the NDP opposition that has concerns about what the Sask Party government is doing or not doing. There are some other third party organizations that feel the same way.

Now also from another quote is, in total, 66 individuals participated in the consultation process for industry and association; 28 NGO and environmental group representatives participated in the April 27 sessions in Saskatoon. The post-session questionnaire asked participants to provide their overall assessment of the proposed climate change policy and legislation and the results were based on a five-point scale. Saskatoon environmental NGOs gave it a 2, Mr. Speaker. Now this is from a summary of stakeholder consultations on climate change legislation by Howard Crofts and Craig Gates at Meyers Norris Penny on May 5, 2009.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there is also some quotes by some of the Sask Party members, as I've said, from the past who have a serious disbelief in the fact that climate change even exists. And

this quote, Mr. Speaker, was much more recent than some of those quotes, and I'd just like to read that into the record as well. And that is from Fred Bradshaw who is currently . . . sorry, the MLA for Carrot River. My apologies, my apologies, Mr. Speaker, the MLA for Carrot River Valley. And the quote is:

Mr. Speaker, higher targets come with a cost. Higher targets [make] higher SaskPower rates — this at a time when the NDP are demanding holding the line on rate increases . . . the NDP cannot have it both ways. They cannot demand status quo on electrical rates while demanding harsher climate change targets.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we've already established the fact through the research that had taken place that it wouldn't have been an onerous situation for SaskPower ratepayers. It would have meant a 20 to 22 per cent increase over the next 10 years. And that's what the experts are saying, Mr. Speaker. So it's interesting that, despite the fact that the experts are giving us this information, that one of the Sask Party MLAs would claim something quite different.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the Minister for Environment states that she's proud to go to Copenhagen and represent Saskatchewan. Well you know, Mr. Speaker, there's no question that we're all very proud of our province and would be, you know, very proud to represent Saskatchewan in any forum that we would be representing the province. But, Mr. Speaker, I wonder if people understand that this is coming at a fairly hefty cost to the taxpayers of the province yet again. This is coming at a cost of \$24,000. And, Mr. Speaker, for \$24,000, the ratepayers, the taxpayers, and citizens of this province would expect some return on that investment, Mr. Speaker.

[15:15]

And clearly, since the Sask Party government has no plan in terms of how they're going to meet their reduced greenhouse gas emission reduction targets, and given that their climate change plan is just a hollow shell that wasn't re-introduced in the fall and was only introduced in the eleventh hour of the session in the spring just to make themselves look somewhat legitimate in terms of what the minister was saying that she was going to achieve by the end of the spring session, \$24,000 to sell no plan, and \$24,000 to go to Copenhagen and say, you know what, we've reduced our reduction targets from 32 per cent to 20 per cent — which will not be something that would be impressive to the other participants in Copenhagen — is not what I would call good value for our money, Mr. Speaker. Twenty-four thousand dollars just to be a cheerleader for the province and shake the pompoms in Copenhagen is quite a hefty price tag to pay, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, when we talk about their election campaign promise with respect to reducing the greenhouse gas reduction targets, the *Shellbrook Chronicle* editorial on May 22nd of 2009 had this to say:

This entire scenario has two large holes in it. First the Sask Party promised this as a part of their election platform. At the time they had to have done some math to have arrived at the number they came up with, 32 per

cent. Perhaps what is worse is that the newly reduced targets might not press companies and utilities to make meaningful changes in the way that they go about their business.

So we even see from the editorial in the *Shellbrook Chronicle* that there are serious concerns about how the province would move forward with respect to being good environmental stewards and good citizens of the country with respect to some serious commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

There was an analysis of greenhouse gas abatement opportunities for Saskatchewan which was prepared by M K Jaccard and Associates for the Ministry of Environment on January 13th, 2009. And, Mr. Speaker, what did they have to say? Well, they said this:

With a policy package that attains federal targets, residential electricity rates are estimated to increase by 20 per cent. With a policy package that attains provincial targets, the original targets promised by the NDP and adopted by the Sask Party, residential electricity rates are estimated by 20 to 22 per cent depending on the extent of revenue transfers. Other factors may have a larger impact on future electricity rates, including capital construction costs, deferred capital replacement, and the long-term effects of inflation on future investment.

So we see again from an independent that actually prepared this report for the Ministry of Environment, that with the reduced greenhouse gas reduction target of 20 per cent, the electricity rates are estimated to increase by 20 per cent. Had they stuck to the original 32 per cent reduction target, which they adopted from the NDP, they were only looking at an increase in electricity rates of 20 to 22 per cent.

So we can see, even from the expert advice that was given to the Ministry of Environment itself, that this wouldn't have been something that was onerous on the Saskatchewan ratepayers and the Sask Party ratepayer . . . SaskPower ratepayers, I should say. And so again we look at, what was the real reason that the Sask Party decided to reduce their greenhouse gas emission reduction targets, Mr. Speaker?

Now, Mr. Speaker, when we look at the original plan that the NDP had put into place — as I said, this was the wonderful plan that was researched and had some wonderful advice given to us by the former legislative secretary, Peter Prebble — there are a number of different initiatives that were either under way or were going to be adopted.

And the fact that the Sask Party is yet again putting forward another proposal . . . And I'm going to call it their proposal, because there is no plan. And in terms of anything tangible that anybody can actually take hold of, one has to wonder how many more of these announcements, proposals, cheerleading attempts are we going to see by the Sask Party before we see something actually happen in this province, to see the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions that need to take place and, quite frankly, we have a responsibility to see happen?

Now when we talk about Copenhagen, Mr. Speaker, the COP 15 Conference, which takes place in Copenhagen, is the

United Nations Climate Change Conference, and it runs from December 7th to the 18th. And it's the highest body of the United Nations framework on climate change, Mr. Speaker. The goal of the conference is to create a global agreement to address climate change that will include all countries of the world. Now the Copenhagen conference will fall short of a comprehensive international treaty, but it will determine if a framework can at least be agreed upon.

Now the hope is that the Copenhagen conference will hammer out an agreement to replace the Kyoto Protocol treaty before it expires in 2012, Mr. Speaker. And interestingly enough, Mr. Speaker, we see that the federal government is not going to have anything in place until 2012 — that is if they are still the government at that time. And because the Sask Party government is hitching its wagon firmly to the Harper Conservative plan, we obviously don't have much hope to see anything concrete happen in this province either.

Canada hopes to re-establish itself as an environmental defender at Copenhagen despite the fact that Canada has failed to meet the obligations of the Kyoto Protocol which, Mr. Speaker, Canada in fact signed. So you know, we see a bit of a pattern between the Sask Party government and its federal cousins, the Harper Conservatives we'll sign on to the Kyoto Protocol and yet we won't be able to meet the targets.

And the Sask Party government is, you know, put into their election campaign platform that they will meet certain greenhouse gas reduction targets, and yet breaks that promise as well and has no plan in place yet to reach the reduced reduction target that they had announced in the spring.

Now internationally, Canada's record on reducing emissions is recognized as "... [having] disgraced the country's good name." And this is from Jeffrey Simpson from October 27th of 2009.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in the meantime, Canada's domestic emissions continue to rise. Mr. Harper says that the Kyoto targets were unattainable and trying to achieve them would lead to economic ruin. Now this sounds very similar to what the Sask Party government said about reaching the greenhouse gas emission reduction targets that it put in its election campaign platform — which were adopted from the NDP from the spring of 2007 — that it would lead to economic ruin. But in fact, Mr. Speaker, we see that that wouldn't have been the case, especially when I spoke of SaskPower rates. We see that it would have only increased perhaps two percentage points compared to the increase that we already know of that would be approximately 20 per cent.

The recently released Suzuki Pembina report says Canada and Saskatchewan can achieve the government target of 20 per cent below 2006 levels by 2020, or a more ambitious target of 25 per cent below 1990 levels, and still prosper economically.

Now the Pembina Institute is an institution, Mr. Speaker, that I have a great deal of respect for, that many, many individuals in the country have a great deal of respect for. And they are experts that we should be listening to and listening to very closely.

The Premier himself even quoted the Pembina Institute recently in terms of talking about the legitimacy of a proposal that was made by the Pembina Institute, and so clearly this is something that we should be giving some credence to.

Now Canada has a 20 per cent reduction in emissions by 2020 from a starting point from 2006, Mr. Speaker. That's what Canada has on the table right now. But, Mr. Speaker, in terms of being good world stewards, this clearly won't cut it in terms of impressing anybody when we go to Copenhagen, that's for sure ... [inaudible interjection] ... No, just the Environment minister's going to Copenhagen, Mr. Speaker, and the Environment minister and some staff I'm sure, at a cost of \$24,000 to the Saskatchewan taxpayers, Mr. Speaker.

And as I've said before, the fact that the minister is going to Copenhagen and will have nothing to report in terms of a plan, or the fact that she is only going to be able to report that they've broken their election promise and will not even have a plan in place with respect to how they're going to even meet that reduced target, is something that I don't know if anybody in this province should be cheerleading or would want to cheerlead. And especially at a cost of \$24,000 to the Saskatchewan taxpayers.

Now you know, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan it begs the question, why? If a government is truly concerned about climate change, would you abandon the election promise to keep Saskatchewan's aggressive targets which would've made us a leader in the nation with respect to the targets that were being put forward by the previous NDP administration along with the plan that was put forward to reach those targets, Mr. Speaker?

So I guess in the Sask Party government's case, when you don't really believe in climate change or doing anything about it, Mr. Speaker, breaking a promise of that sort really isn't all that important anyways. Because, Mr. Speaker, it seems as though the goal of the Sask Party government is simply to cheerlead without achieving much at all. And we're seeing that on many fronts, Mr. Speaker.

But there are many of my colleagues that would like to speak to this topic as well, Mr. Speaker. So I'm going to take my place despite the fact that clearly I have many, many more things I'd like to say on the issue. But I'm going to allow my colleagues to get into the debate as well, so I'm going to take my seat at this time. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I wanted very much to participate in this debate. It's an important debate. And the views of members opposite, the views of members of this side of the House, I think should be on the record with respect to the issue of the energy and the environment and the confluence of those two issues and how they will impact life in the province of Saskatchewan, how they impact the environment of this province, how they will impact people's electrical bills in this province, and how they will impact the economy of Saskatchewan going forward for a very, very long time to come.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the member for Martensville, the Minister of the Environment, and I also want to congratulate the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood who felt it important that this Assembly consider a motion and then come to a decision on the motion.

Soon and very soon, the Minister of the Environment will attend the conference in Copenhagen that the hon. member who has just spoken has referenced, where the world is going to gather and possibly make some important decisions on the issue of CO₂. The attendees to the meeting in Copenhagen will include those in the emerging economies, countries like China. They'll include the United States. And so I think what happens in December will have the attention of the world because any climate change initiative — any CO₂ initiative — that doesn't include the position of the United States and the position of China, and I would argue India as well, is going to be very, very difficult to actually come to fruition in terms of the benefits that might flow either for economies or for the issue of the environment.

What's at stake for our province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is this. We rely 50 per cent on coal to generate our electricity. It has been like that for a very long time. We're making improvements on that. We're striving to do more in terms of renewables. And the Minister for SaskPower announced very recently that we would double our wind generation in the province of Saskatchewan from 200 megawatts currently, thereabouts, to 200 megawatts in the future.

Interesting to note that members on the opposite side of the House opposed this measure. The NDP said, no, it's not enough, that we should actually be doing what they campaigned on. Well we looked at their platform, and what they campaigned on was not 200 more megawatts of wind but 100 more megawatts of wind. So we hope that they would support the Minister of SaskPower in this initiative because it actually doubles the commitment they made in their own platform with respect to wind.

[15:30]

And the members opposite are saying, well you didn't do it soon enough. Well two years into the mandate, Mr. Speaker, and 112 promises kept and 40 per cent less debt in Saskatchewan and lower income taxes and lower taxes on education, Mr. Speaker, and key investments in community-based organizations like we hosted here today in the legislature, and doubling the NDP's own plan for renewable wind power in two years with two years left to go is a pretty good start, Mr. Speaker. And we're going to make some progress further.

But, Mr. Speaker, I think it's very important that this Assembly, that members of this House have two opportunities on this particular motion. The first opportunity is to speak, to debate, to represent their constituents, maybe to represent their party position or to balance that in some way. But I think it's very important that each member that wants to speak has the chance to speak to this particular motion because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of its importance.

I don't think there is a single more important issue in terms of

the economy of this province in 20 years or 30 years or 40 years, or even 10 years, than the issue of energy and the environment. What are we going to do with respect to our dependence on coal? What are the interim measures? Is it natural gas in combination with renewables? Is the long-term solution CO₂-free nuclear power? Does that make sense economically for the province or ought we to be investing in our already strong position with respect to clean coal technology?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, these are absolutely fundamentally important questions. And the motion that's before this Assembly today is really the bulwark that goes underneath all of that discussion and debate. The motion before the Assembly today is whether or not this Assembly will support the government's plan, climate change plan as outlined by the minister in the legislation she introduced last spring.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the previous debater, the member for Regina Walsh Acres, Mr. Deputy Speaker, said, well we need to have a plan if we're going to Copenhagen. The minister has been crystal clear about that plan for the province: that we would have targets of 20 per cent reduction using the baseline of 2006; that we would harmonize those target reductions with the federal government proposal that's made; that we would seek an equivalency agreement, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to accomplish a couple of things that I'll get to in a moment; and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the 20 per cent reduction would guide the government's action plan very significantly as part of the legislation that was introduced.

And the regulations that will back up that legislation is this premise: that whatever is levied in terms of fines or costs to those emitters after that legislation becomes the reality — whatever is levied, whatever is collected — stays in the province of Saskatchewan for reinvestment in the technological solutions to deal with this. That's the plan of the Government of Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The hon. member also has the Bill that was already introduced and will return and be passed, I believe, this spring, after more deliberation, but it will be passed this spring. That's the plan we want to take to Copenhagen.

Now the hon. member may not agree with the plan. More on that in a moment as well. She may disagree with it. That party over there may disagree with the plan that's been highlighted and that's what this place is all about. Then they are free to stand in their place and speak to it first if they choose or, if they don't choose, simply to stand up and vote against it. Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House can also speak to this Bill. And I think members on this side of the House are going to speak in favour of the motion.

Then what we have is something from this Legislative Assembly, from the representatives of the people we work for, of the people of this province, who have come together to debate a very, very important issue, arguably the most important economic issue facing the province in a generation. We can debate it. We can decide it by vote. And then that minister will take the position to Copenhagen.

And, Mr. Speaker, that's democracy at work. The people have

chosen their MLAs. Their MLAs debate a very important issue and then they vote on it. And that position becomes the position of the province of Saskatchewan, and the minister then takes that very clear and strong message to the federal delegation, to the Canadian delegation that will meet in Copenhagen in early December. That's what we're asking members opposite to do.

Now I've heard from my House Leader, from our House Leader, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that it's already the intent of the NDP not to let a vote on this come forward; that they're going to just speak out the clock today and maybe interminably. Why? — I ask. I ask this Assembly, why would they be doing that? This is a fundamentally important . . . They don't have to agree with the government's position obviously . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well the hon. member says they want an opportunity to speak. We will give them that opportunity.

We'll bring it back again tomorrow. I'll keep my remarks brief so each member could have a chance to speak on the issue. But at the end of the day, there needs to be a vote on this. They need to stand up and either say yea or nay to the resolution. That's part of their job, I would argue, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on this fundamentally important issue.

Now they're heckling and yelling from their seats as they've been doing for the last week, Mr. Deputy Speaker, partly because they do not have a consistent position on this issue.

We witnessed it earlier today when the Leader of the Opposition was up asking questions, speaking very favourably about carbon capture sequestration and technology. And that member was part of a government that initiated what is now the largest such project on the planet, which is a positive thing. Something that I've put on the record, we've put on the record significantly, and something that we wish to build on now in the province, even though, Mr. Deputy Speaker, even though — and the member that I'm going to refer to stood up and moments later asked questions of the Environment minister — even though that's not the position of the NDP.

They don't support carbon capture and sequestration. They don't provide that support to . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well I hear the member from Nutana groaning. Let me highlight why I would say that.

The member for Regina Walsh Acres in a media scrum, April 22, 2008 said, "They committed to the expensive and untried technology of carbon capture." It's been untried for eight years in Weyburn, Saskatchewan as a product of her party's project put in place there with EnCana and Apache oil.

She went on to say this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in a scrum. She said this — now this is the NDP Environment critic — she said, "Carbon capture and storage, a technology the Saskatchewan Party claims to be cost effective, which is a claim that is simply dubious." Those don't sound like the words of unqualified support and maybe invention that we heard from the Leader of the Opposition.

I remember a presidential debate not long ago in the United States where one presidential candidate, or maybe he was the vice-president at the time, claimed to have invented the Internet.

Well here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, we have a Leader of the Opposition that has claimed to have invented carbon capture and sequestration. Whoever invented it, whatever happened, it was a good project for the members opposite to pursue. And they need to have a consistent position because our province has a chance to lead, as we are leading now, on the issue of carbon, on the issue of carbon capture, and then successful storage as is already happening in the Weyburn area.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've heard the opposition have different positions on the role of the economy in this debate. They can't decide whether the economy should play a part in this debate or not. And the reason why we would be concerned about that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is this: depending on a cap-and-trade system that might come to Canada or North America, depending on what that system looks like, this could be very harmful to Saskatchewan's economy.

If a cap-and-trade system is about a tax for heavy emitters, the proceeds of which flow outside of Saskatchewan to other jurisdictions to fund other activities of government — highways or health care or some other infrastructure initiative, if the proceeds of that money go outside this province, and they fund anything but the technological solutions we seek to try to clean up coal or find some other application of fossil fuel or some other renewable energy, if they go to anything but that, then it's not environmental policy, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Then it's a tax. Then it's wealth transfer from this province, maybe to Ontario or Quebec or some other region in North America.

And that's why I say that members opposite who say the economy shouldn't be brought to bear in this debate, why I tell them that they are wrong. I respect the fact that they have the right to that position. They should maybe want to vote that. They should maybe want to stand up and take their place in the House and vote on this particular issue, but they can't have it both ways.

They can't say, as the hon. member, again the Environment critic for the NDP, the member for Walsh Acres in another media scrum on April 20th, 2009, not very long ago, said this. When asked about if it would tough on the economy to reduce GHG [greenhouse gas] emissions, the member for Walsh Acres, the Environment critic, in a spectacular show of misjudgment and miscalculation said, I would say that that is a red herring. I would say that that's also irresponsible.

The same member, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in question period and now in her remarks, the Environment critic for the NDP, the hand-picked spokesman by the Leader of the Opposition was quoting — spokesperson for the opposition, Mr. Deputy Speaker — was quoting studies that were looking at the economic impact of policies. She specifically was pointing out, I think, the TD Bank-sponsored report done by Pembina Institute and the David Suzuki Foundation — a very, very neutral force in this debate, I would say. Now, now . . . [inaudible interjections] . . . Well, now members want to enter the debate and I encourage them to do so.

That report says this, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That report weighs the impact on the gross domestic product of various places in Canada if the federal government climate change plan happens. That particular report, I would say to the member for

Elphinstone, if he wants to read it, says this, the province that he represents, the province that he serves as an MLA, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is at great risk if that plan is implemented and we don't get an equivalency agreement where funds stay in the province. Our GDP [gross domestic product], that's the measure of our economy, will pay in much greater ways than the GDP of every other province in the Dominion of Canada, according to that study.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that means money and jobs. That's what it means. And it's the Pembina Institute she quoted and the Suzuki Foundation study she quoted. That means money and jobs from our province to some other part of the country in the name of the environment when actually it's in the name of a tax and a wealth transfer, not unlike the National Energy Program, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So they don't have a position. One of the solutions that have been touted for cleaner sources of energy for the province of Saskatchewan has been nuclear power. And there's a lot of disagreement and debate and discussion about nuclear power. Though I note in a recent poll, in some recent polls in the province, that the support for nuclear power is about five times greater than the support for the NDP actually, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, some debate should happen about whether that's the right approach. Even though it's a CO₂-free source of power, there are other environmental issues. And so we're having a debate about whether that's good or bad.

Now what is the position of the opposition on nuclear power? Well take your pick. What day of the week is it? What day of the week is it for the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Deputy Speaker, who came back to the province on an itinerant basis every chance he could to speak to groups like the North Saskatoon Business Association, I think once a month, to lecture and hector the people of the province of Saskatchewan as to why they had not immediately put up nuclear power plants when he left for Alberta, however long ago that was.

He said, and I don't have the quotes with me, but the member for Thunder Creek went at him, listed them fairly significantly in the last session. I think the Hon. Leader of the Opposition, on nuclear power, said the time for debate is over. And I'm paraphrasing, but not by much because I'm not using the word, Mr. Speaker, disingenuous or ingenuous. It's just a paraphrase, though one of those isn't actually a word.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, he came and lectured the people of this province, anyone that would listen. Lectured Shirley Ryan, the North Saskatoon Business Association, the media in this province, and said the time for debate about nuclear power is over. He was talking about powering the oil sands maybe with Saskatchewan uranium. He talked specifically about nuclear power's application in the post ... [inaudible] ... carbon economy. He talked about all of those things, and the quotes are there for the world to see.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, now they've run away from that position as well. That's not their position today on nuclear power. It's not his position any more. He says well he doesn't ... He likes nuclear power still, but not this proponent. I have a feeling, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that regardless of the proponent that came forward or the size of the plant, 1000 megas or 200

megas or 300 megas, he would find a way, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to be against it. Because he had to in order to win the leadership over there, Mr. Speaker.

And right now I think it bothers him that he's changed his position. I do. Because I believe he strongly believes in the first things, the things he used to say about nuclear power. So he may have a little buyer's remorse about the new job he has, but I'm not sure who has more buyer's remorse — himself or the party that he now leads — based on the polling numbers that we've seen, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Now, now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are going to have a chance in this Legislative Assembly on this issue, on the motion before the House, for all members to stand up. And in the case of the members opposite, they may want to be critical of the government's plan. That's fair enough. That's part of the debate. We heard the member for Walsh Acres be very critical for ... [inaudible interjection] ... Well the member for Lakeview says, what's the plan?

The plan is 20 per cent reduction with a base year of 2006. The plan, Mr. Speaker, are regulations to ensure that levies collected, and through an equivalency agreement levies collected from those who emit beyond that 20 per cent level and beyond targets that are set, stay in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The plan is in a Bill that was tabled in this House — secretly tabled in this House and available on the Internet — from members opposite. That's the plan. That plan seeks to balance the economy and the environment. That plan is about the very future of this province of Saskatchewan. That plan is about Saskatchewan leading in the technologies that we know will actually do something about the issue.

[15:45]

That plan needs to go to Copenhagen, with or without the votes of the members opposite. But they should vote on it. They should vote on it on behalf of their party so that this Assembly sends a clear message that Saskatchewan's going to continue to lead in this issue.

Mr. Speaker, what is at stake is great. What is at stake is great. With reference to cap and trade, with reference to cap and trade, TD's [Toronto Dominion] chief economist Don Drummond on the GHG reduction report that his bank financed, this report was quoted by the member for Walsh Acres. The report that the independent Pembina Institute and the independent Suzuki Foundation funded. The report that said Saskatchewan's going to pay, that Alberta and Saskatchewan are going to pay to the benefit of somebody else.

Well I can see the member, the Leader of the Opposition, shaking his head. That is exactly what the report says. And if he aspires to any other office or desk in this Assembly, he ought to familiarize himself with that report because it represents a potential threat to the economy of the province of Saskatchewan and won't achieve anything environmentally. Here is what Don Drummond, who is an economist with that very bank that authored the report, said: "It will be the biggest fiscal shock in Canadian history, but the study shows it can be done."

And then the study goes on to show, again as I've said earlier in this debate, what will happen to the GDP of Saskatchewan and Alberta — but we should be focused on Saskatchewan — to the great benefit of other jurisdictions in the Dominion of Canada, Mr. Speaker. And it will be about a levy that goes to other things that government wants to spend it on, not about the environment.

Mr. Speaker, the plan we're proposing and offering today, and the resolution that forms the foundation for that plan, says simply this: we are serious about this issue. We know that 9 per cent of the emissions of CO₂ come from our province, and we only have 3 per cent of the economy and 3 per cent of the population. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we know we have to do more in this province. And here's the good news — this government and the people of Saskatchewan are prepared to do more. Mr. Speaker . . .

[Interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, on this particular issue, on this particular issue we recognize that our government, that our province, has to do more. That on a per capita basis, Mr. Speaker, based on what we've indicated, we're prepared to do at Boundary and at Shand — with a reference project, a joint project with the state of Montana on a per capita basis — there is not a jurisdiction in the country, not a jurisdiction in the country on a per capita basis that's prepared to do more.

But what we're not in favour of, as members opposite seem to be in favour of, we're not in favour of targets that will pipe wrench the very economy that's going to pay for the technological solution as members advocate. And I think come the next election there's going to be people doing math on their plan and how it'll impact people's power bills in this province and how it'll impact the economy. We're not in favour of that. And we're not in favour of New Democratic Party cap and trade, as we've heard from their federal party and members opposite, that would see taxes levied in this province and taken out and given to other jurisdictions to fund projects other than environmental issues and technologies in Canada.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the members opposite have a lot to say from their seats. I hope they have something to say on their feet, on their feet. Because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think the people of the province will want to know how they'll vote on this issue. And they can vote against it or they can vote in favour of it, but they should absolutely have the courage to stand and take their place and vote on this so that the Assembly can send a message as to the plan and the position of the Government of Saskatchewan and the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan.

An Hon. Member: — Voting on a motion. No legislation . . .

Hon. Mr. Wall: — The member for Moose Jaw Wakamow keeps talking about no legislation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when it was tabled in the spring. If she looked deep in her desk she'd be able to find a great preponderance of the legislation, to quote the hon. member from earlier this week. Preponderance, by the way, is on the same list as "ingenuine," Mr. Deputy Speaker.

It's a growing list that we have for members opposite.

Still, still notwithstanding that, well notwithstanding what the interventions are for members opposite, they should stand up and take a position on this particular issue on the principles that have been laid out by the minister and on the very important principle that says, let's make sure that the environmental plan adopted by the country, supported by the provinces, is actually about the environment. Let's make sure it's not about wealth transfer. Let's make sure it's not the next generation national energy program. Let's stand up for Saskatchewan, for the environment, but also for the economy, and also for the customers of SaskPower, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to be clear about what we're really talking about here today in this debate, this debate around the environment. And it's not a debate that necessarily is one that we're eminently qualified to enter into. We tend to be, if not seen by ourselves, seen by the general public as a collective group of grumpy old men and grumpy old women.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, the future, we have a piece of the future that's ours collectively. We have a piece of the future that's ours. But you know, the future is in our children and in our grandchildren. And it's those very grandchildren and their kids that we have to talk about in terms of the environment.

We have a situation today where the north polar ice cap is the thinnest it has been in many, many eons. It's not a four-syllable word, eon, not like the Premier used a four-cylinder word: preponderance. Eon is just a one-syllable word. I thought I'd speak in simple terms so that everybody in the Chamber could understand what it was we were saying.

Mr. Speaker, the North Pole is at the thinnest level it has ever been. When I was in grade school, they taught us that the world was getting colder, and indeed we might risk freezing to death. It was sort of the impression that we got. How things have changed quickly. We've got the North Pole, the solar . . . or pardon me, the polar cap melting. We've got oceans rising worldwide at a much faster rate than was predicted as little as three years ago. The ocean levels are rising much faster. It's going to mean the virtual disappearance of some 50 of the smallest island nations in the world. Now this should cause us some pause for concern.

There's all kinds of evidence that says what we're doing is wrong. One of the things that's happened, Mr. Speaker, is the carbon dioxide levels around the world are nearing 500 parts per million — 500 parts. And historically, it's more like 300 to 330 parts per million. It's now beyond 500 parts per million and growing at a horrendously fast rate. This is the highest level of CO₂ in millions of years, Mr. Speaker, millions of years.

And what's happened that's caused this? Well we could say there's some volcanoes, you know. But there's been volcanoes forever — forever. The world does what it will do. There's things that happen around the world that aren't brand new.

What is new is 6 billion or more people on earth consuming fossil fuels, consuming coal for electrical generation, consuming gas and oil for our transportation and to keep our homes warm. And it's many times more . . . Well I remember when the population of the world in my lifetime, in our lifetime, was something like 2 billion and now it's well beyond 6 There are problems in the world. But what we're trying to establish is a future for our grandchildren and our great-grandchildren and generations beyond. That's what we're really all about.

Now I want to, before I get into the major part of my speech, Mr. Speaker, I want to just suggest that the Premier may have it right when he says that what the democratic process is is that the government will put forward a plan and we don't have to agree but we have to discuss it. The government proposes a plan and we should discuss it and then we should vote on it. Well you know, there's nothing wrong with what he says, but talk is cheap.

Here's where it goes off the rails, Mr. Speaker. Here we are now nearing the mid-term of the Sask Party government, of that administration, nearing the mid-term and they still haven't got this blueprint, this environmental plan, tabled in the legislature and voted on.

Sure they tabled the Bill — I think it was Bill 95 — last spring, in the dying days of the spring where we have a fixed calendar. They knew there wasn't time to pass the Bill. Here we are, day 15 of the fall session, day 15 of the fall session. They haven't had the courage to bring that Bill back for our consideration. The Bill isn't even before the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker. No Bill. So we'd love to debate. We'd love to say yes we agree, no we don't agree. Here's what's good, here's what's bad. But we don't have that Bill to debate, Mr. Speaker, and what a shame.

So here we have the Premier saying, oh well here, you know, we should debate and then vote, but there's no Bill to vote on. Instead what we have is a motion, a motion that calls for . . . Essentially what it is, is the new version of National Lampoon's Copenhagen vacation for the Minister of Environment. That's what we're voting on, that we can send the Minister of Environment to Copenhagen, Mr. Speaker, at a cost of what? — 24,000 I think I've heard; \$24,000.

Well, you know, Mr. Speaker, this on the heels of . . . Find out earlier today the Premier's going to be going to Washington for his little vacation. He'll be gone on Thursday, leaving the Minister of Finance high and dry, answering the questions about the fiscal situation of Saskatchewan, about the financial situation. This on the heels of the Minister of Enterprise Saskatchewan coming back from Kazakhstan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the irony of all this world travel, this global travel, is that we have a government that admitted they had a financial problem, a fiscal problem and said publicly, we're going to cut out-of-province travel. We're going to really reel in out-of-province and out-of-country travel. I see or . . . No I don't see. I hear. I hear one thing, Mr. Speaker; I see something completely different. There's one set of rules for Saskatchewan people. There's one set of rules for the civil service and there's another set of rules for those Sask Party cabinet ministers in power. Travel for them is good. Not . . . [inaudible interjection]

. . . Yes. Travel first, ask questions later.

Mr. Speaker, we have a situation, we have a situation that was outlined very eloquently by my colleague, the member for Regina Walsh Acres, who is the critic for the Environment of the New Democratic Party, and we're very proud of the job that that critic does for us day in and day out. That critic who says things like, you know, we should be doing much more. The province could be doing much more on environmental, on energy conservation, Mr. Speaker. Yes, they've done some things. Your government has done some things. They've introduced a rebate for low-flush, low-flow toilets, and this is a good thing. This is a good thing. But it's a tiny step in getting us where we need to go. It's a tiny step, Mr. Speaker.

And what the people of Saskatchewan, what all of our — I don't want to personalize it and say my grandchildren — all of our grandchildren, all of the future generations, what they really are asking for is more walk to go with the talk. There's lots of talk but not much walk. And what they're really demanding is more action, more on-the-ground things that can help us.

And to which, Mr. Speaker, I'm reluctant to say this, but I suspect that I've read more books on global warming in the past 18 months than any other single member in the legislature. It's a concern and it scares. It scares. I don't mean that others don't read, and many of you have done much research. I know colleagues on this side have, and I'm confident that some members on the government side also have read on this important issue.

[16:00]

But really what we're talking about, Mr. Speaker, is more than just, will our economy thrive, will our economy survive? What we're really talking about is, will our future generations exist? Will they exist? Will they thrive? What kind of a world, what kind of a legacy are we leaving behind for them?

And you know, Mr. Speaker, when the time comes that I have to meet my Maker . . . I hope it's many years in the future but we never know. We never know. When that time comes, I don't want to have to answer a question that I could have done more to protect the future. I could have done more to alleviate the suffering. I could have done more to guarantee that our Saskatchewan continued to be the greatest place in the greatest country in the world to live.

We need to have that commitment, Mr. Speaker. We need it. What we see is just about the opposite of that. We see, with respect, we see a Premier gets up and waves his pompoms and says, well we've done more on wind power than the NDP opposition has in the last two years.

Well you know, Mr. Speaker, they're the government. We don't control that any more. We built the wind power to the point that Saskatchewan had the most wind per capita, wind power per capita of any province in Canada. We were proud of that. It was just a starting point, just a starting point. We campaigned, as the Premier pointed out, we campaigned — a little over two years ago — we campaigned that we were going to add 100 megawatts of wind. And now he's saying, well but they're going to go with something more than double that.

But let me point out this is now two and a half years later since we were campaigning on that. They've been the government for two full years. So far what we've got is an announcement that we're going to maybe see some wind power at some point in the future, but not a single wind power has been built. Not a single additional megawatt of electricity is online as a result of the talk.

So what people want is more walk to go with the talk. They want to see the windmills. They want to see them hooked up. They want to see them producing electricity. Clearly we've got a windy province. Clearly there is lots of potential for that.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I've done some reading on energy conservation. I've talked to some experts in the field, and I can tell you this. Let me start by where we were half a dozen years ago roughly. I was minister responsible for Saskatchewan Property Management for a while. We had five major building programs going on across the province where we were renovating the envelope and making these buildings much more energy efficient than what they had been when they were built some years earlier.

We were doing that for a couple of reasons. One, the buildings belonged to all of the taxpayers of Saskatchewan, the people of Saskatchewan, and they were basically very good buildings that needed to be upgraded. But more importantly or as importantly, when we were doing the modernization and the upgrading, we also paid very close attention to the environmental impact and to the ongoing requirements for electricity and for heating and for water consumption in all of those buildings. And we paid very close attention to all three of those areas. So that's, you know, just a little snapshot of where we were half a dozen years ago when we were in government.

But my reading tells me that there's a tremendous opportunity in housing stock, whether it's individual units — you know, the traditional two- or three-bedroom, single, detached building — or whether it's duplex or condo units or apartments. There is the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to more than double our energy efficiency. Put another way, we could cut in by more than half the amount of fossil fuel that's required just in heating, just in keeping these buildings lit.

And I'm not — I want to be clear about this — I'm not a proponent of, oh let us turn the thermostat from 22 degrees to 12. That's not what I'm talking about. I don't want to discourage anyone from turning the thermostat down and putting on a sweater. But what I am talking about is making sure that you've got very adequate insulation because your next, your cheapest source of energy is the source that you save, the energy that you save. That's always your cheapest source.

While I'm on that, it reminds me there's two major theories on where oil and gas come from. One is that it's plants and dinosaurs, you know, rotted millions of years ago and produce oil that we now pump out of the ground. And we use it to heat our buildings — buildings like this one, buildings like our homes. We drive here in our vehicles from either the plant and dinosaur leftovers, remains, that's cooked for millennia. Or the other theory is, that it's like iron, it's a part of the planet. Oil is just a part of the planet.

Well, Mr. Speaker, either way, either way I don't care. Either way, they're not making any more oil. There's no more dinosaurs helping make oil. And the earth isn't changing significantly enough that it's making more oil, if that's the theory that you might want to accept. So we have a resource that's depleting at a rate that's about 100 per cent. Every litre of oil or gas that we use is one litre less that remains for the future.

And while we're depleting that fossil fuel resource — I could add coal to it or any other fossil fuel — while we're depleting that fossil fuel, Mr. Speaker, that's one litre of, using my gas or oil example, that's one litre less for future generations. And we are pumping additional carbon dioxide into the air, a major greenhouse gas that has been acknowledged by everyone except some of the members opposite, has been acknowledged as a major problem, as a major contributor to global storming and global warming. A major contributor to the rising of sea levels. I might add, a major contributor to the salination of the seas.

And I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that as a scuba diver that wishes he could do an awful lot more scuba diving, it's just an amazing world. But I can tell you that the coral reefs certainly in the Caribbean are in distress. And what they're in distress from is oceans warming and the acidification — now that's a tough word for me this moment — but the acidification of the oceans. And this is causing grief to the coral reefs. And I've seen it. I've experienced it, and I'm distressed by it. So, Mr. Speaker, we have a situation just crying out for help.

I've already talked a little bit about energy conservation with respect to housing and buildings. And that could be government buildings. It could be government-owned housing stocks. It could be just the homes that we all own. We need to find programs to help create more action on energy conservation, on insulation, and on reducing the need for fossil fuels in our ongoing operations of buildings.

Transportation is a second area, Mr. Speaker. It distresses me to see SUVs [sport-utility vehicle] driving along the highways, at whatever speed they happen to be going, with one passenger. And I don't want to claim to be any purer than anyone who drives an SUV. On that I can do better. I can do better on my own front. I don't drive an SUV, but I can do better on that front. The government fleet can do better than it is doing.

And we need to do things to help organize so that we can reduce that footprint, that greenhouse gas footprint. Things like we tried in the early '90s, we had a park-and-ride program. And we encouraged civil servants to, and ourselves, to take the bus when we were going to Saskatoon, that being a major area. Or it could be any of the other cities too, but Regina to Saskatoon was the heaviest corridor. And we encouraged that we use public transportation, as opposed to just getting into our own little vehicle and roaring down the highway at whatever speed we felt comfortable driving.

So transportation is an area that, as we modernize our vehicles, we should also look to what is the most fuel-efficient, what's the most energy-efficient type of vehicle that we can reasonably buy that will serve the purpose. And I want to just highlight — that will serve the purpose. Because again, I'm not advocating that we provide somebody with a bicycle if part of their job is to go from here to Weyburn and back twice a week. Clearly a

bicycle is not the appropriate form of transportation. But we should figure out what it is that will serve them the best. And then that's what we should get.

Industry is the third area where we can clearly get into energy conservation, get into demand-side energy conservation, Mr. Speaker. We can get into electric motors that start up, requiring a lot less electricity in the start-up, and that they can operate ever more efficiently.

Mr. Speaker, we've got all of these areas of potential that I don't want to pretend to be the expert, the leading expert in the world on, because I'm not. Clearly not. But we've got all of these areas that the government could have moved on, every single one of them.

And how, you might ask? It's quite simple. We left \$320 million in the Green Future Fund, \$320 million that we got from the sale of a Crown asset. And we dedicated that to being spent on green initiatives — \$320 million that this government, now government, took into the General Revenue Fund and spent it. And on Thursday, we'll find out just how badly they've spent that amount of money.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan can be a utopia, but it requires us to move, to act. It requires us to do some things. It requires us to have the courage to introduce our environmental Bill. Now I understand why the government might be a little reticent, a little reluctant to reintroduce the Bill, because it again highlights that one of the things we did is we had campaigned on a 32 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. And our 32 per cent reduction was from the current day, which at the latest information when we were putting this together was for the year 2004. A 32 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions we committed to with the base year being 2004.

The Sask Party said, well that sounds pretty good, we'll do that initially. But where are they at today? If you believe and take at face value where the Sask Party government is at today, Mr. Speaker, is they've slid from a 32 per cent reduction in CO₂ with the base year being 2004 to a 20 per cent reduction with the base year being 2006. That's pretty darn significant. And yet the government would have you believe — you know, wave the pompoms — would have us believe that somehow they're doing something good for the economy.

Well, Mr. Speaker, they inherited a red hot economy, as my colleague the member for Regina Walsh Acres, the Environment critic said. The Sask Party came into office with \$2.3 billion in the Fiscal Stabilization Fund. An economy that was just the hottest in all of Canada. We had record job growth. We had record economic growth. And they did nothing, other than said, well initially the 32 per cent target that the New Democrats have set was acceptable for a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

[16:15]

Now they've slid where 20 per cent, a 20 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions is now the acceptable target. Well how does that work? How can you claim to be a government that is governing, not only for today but for the future, when there's so little action with respect to the environment? There's

so little action in a province that is blessed with people that are more than willing to pick up the challenge, to work diligently for it. They're just looking for a little bit more leadership. They're looking for some opportunities.

And there are opportunities galore in Saskatchewan. We just need to put our mind to how can we create jobs by working in energy conservation. How can we put people to work, for instance, moving into insulation, more adequately insulating homes? How could we upgrade windows and doors? How could we move so that we need to use less fossil fuel and employ people?

How could we move from incandescent lights to fluorescent lights or compact fluorescent lights? And many, many people have done so, but again there is more that needs to be done on that front. And more importantly, why don't we make the leap to LED [light-emitting diode] which is hugely, hugely more efficient than compact fluorescent? More expensive right now, but we need to put a little bit of the \$320 million that was set aside by the previous government, we could put some of that money into some lighting projects. We could actually have it where people could see how well LEDs work and then we might just, on our own initiative, might just move more that way.

Mr. Speaker, we've got a situation. We're asked to send the Minister of Environment to Copenhagen to support a plan that this legislature hasn't had a formal opportunity to discuss and vote on. That's what we're being asked to do. The government is asking us in essence to sign a blank cheque and to just trust them. After all they're good people. And you know what? Might be good people. Might be good people, but that's not the democratic process.

The democratic process is the government will propose. The opposition will consider and will ask its questions and make sure that the due diligence happens, make sure that the hard questions are asked, make sure that, when the Minister of Environment in this instance goes to Copenhagen, that that minister has a clear understanding of where we're at.

I want to be as clear as I can, Mr. Speaker. I clearly think that the minister could save \$24,000 of taxpayers' money, could save lots of tonnes of CO₂ from the eliminated airplane flights from here to Copenhagen and could spend that \$24,000 in energy conservation almost anywhere and get a multiplied return off of that. The minister could do that.

The Premier could . . . I shouldn't go into that. Mr. Speaker, it is necessary for cabinet ministers to do some travel, and it's certainly necessary for our Premier to do some travel. I don't want to pretend that I'm in favour of all of the travel they do, and clearly I'm not in this instance. This trip to Copenhagen I'm not in favour of. This trip to Copenhagen, I don't see that Saskatchewan is going to get any pay value at all for it. I think instead what we do is we potentially send off a relatively small delegation for the — how did I describe it? — the National Lampoon's Copenhagen vacation, Mr. Speaker. And that's essentially what it is. The payback for Saskatchewan — zero. The cost — \$24,000 up front. And at a time when we don't have a long credibility of having dealt with environmental concerns.

The government has proposed some major, what they'll call, energy or environmental programs. They've proposed for example that we should have a Bruce Power nuclear power plant, and then silent about it, except trotting it out every once in a while just almost as a veiled threat. Well it's interesting, Mr. Speaker, because when you read, you pick up today's *Leader-Post* and you read about nuclear power. And you have the government spokesperson saying, well if Bruce Power is looking for a government guarantee, a taxpayer guarantee, we're not interested. If they're looking for some guarantee on a special price that we'll buy the electricity, we're not interested. And if they're looking for some special environmental acceptances, we're not interested in that either. Well I don't know why the government wouldn't just say to Bruce Power, you can't build. Because in essence, that's where it's at.

There's no, no nuclear power plant built now that can produce electricity for less than what Saskatchewan people are paying for our electricity. The cost is going to only go up. They've admitted it earlier, when the nuclear power plant was still very much at the forefront, when they said what's going to have to happen is SaskPower rates are going to go up 8 per cent this year — they've already done that — and then they're going to go up about 10 per cent each year over the next decade, they said. Astounding. And wonder why the support for a nuclear power plant or anything that the Sask Party government wants to do disappears. It dissipates.

Well, Mr. Speaker, it's really quite elementary. Saskatchewan people used to enjoy the lowest cost utility bundle in all of Canada. They came to expect it. They came to believe that that was doable. We certainly know it's doable. We delivered it for 16 years . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And already I hear an oh. And I know I've overspoke myself, Mr. Speaker, because the promise wasn't there for 16 years. We had amongst the lowest, and then once we made the promise, we delivered it for four years. But before that, overall we had for example, always historically had, the lowest SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] auto insurance rates in Canada. We had SaskTel rates that were either lowest or second lowest in North America for most of that time.

The simple fact of the matter is New Democrats deliver low-cost utilities through our Crown corporations because we understand the Crowns. We created many of them, and we understand them to be a great way to organize our business affairs and to deliver the services that homeowners and businesses require to live in this relatively cold climate.

Mr. Speaker, the government has been long on talk and very, very short on walk. At best I could describe what they do on the environment as the environmental shuffle. And I've already talked about them having started with a 32 per cent reduction promise, of CO₂ reduction, and then that slid to 20 per cent, and it just gets worse.

Mr. Speaker, I know that I will have other colleagues that are interested in speaking to this matter, and I'm most interested in hearing from some of these colleagues. I know it'll be very interesting to hear how this debate unfolds.

But I want to close where I began and that's with this plea — that us grumpy, old men and women, us grumpy, old men and

women gathered here in the legislature to do good work. My plea is that we put future generations ahead of ourselves, that what we do is motivated for the long term as opposed to for the immediacy of today's debate.

What we need to do is pay attention to the environment. Without an environment that we can live in, Mr. Speaker, there can be no future. There can be no economic growth. There can be no utopian Saskatchewan or Canada — or world for that matter. The signs of crisis are everywhere throughout the world. There is no single issue that cries out and demands our attention more than the issue of global warming, of carbon dioxide growth, of the greenhouse gas growth. There's no issue larger. And I'm aware of this fact that I have not trotted in, but just when I want to put it into perspective so people understand when I say there's no issue larger.

Mr. Speaker, I think I've been speaking for about 20 minutes now, and for each of those 20 minutes, in each one of those minutes, 10 children in Africa have died of starvation. That's 200 children have died of starvation in Africa while I've been speaking about the environment.

There are clearly problems in our world that are almost impossible to tackle. That doesn't mean we shouldn't tackle them. It doesn't mean we shouldn't try. On the contrary, it tells me that as a rich province, relatively rich province in a very rich nation, we have an obligation to do, each of us, what we can to shoulder the burden. Each of us has an obligation to do what we can to make this world a better place. But without a liveable environment, there is no better place. There is no ongoing world for future generations.

The world won't end tonight. The world won't end, not likely, a decade from now. But the signs are there. We're stressing the earth to and, in many ways, beyond its limits, its caring limits, its limits of capacity to cope. The snow on Mount Kilimanjaro will be gone within the decade. There are problems throughout, Mr. Speaker.

I'm urging that the government withdraw this vacation trip to Copenhagen and instead spend \$24,000 on energy conservation. Spend \$24,000 putting together some programs that will make a difference to real people, putting together some programs that will help make facilities throughout Saskatchewan more energy efficient because every dollar that they spend that saves, results in us using less fossil fuel is just incredibly well spent, and it helps us in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I regret that this motion came before us. I think I've made it pretty clear where I stand on it, and I'm looking forward to colleagues on both sides of the legislature speaking out and representing their constituents as well. I thank you for your attention and your time.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Estevan.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand and address our government motion. The motion reads:

That this Assembly support the government's plan addressing climate change; a plan balancing

environmental protection with economic growth thereby ensuring the well-being and future prosperity of Saskatchewan families; and

That this Assembly supports the Saskatchewan plan to direct offset payments into the Saskatchewan Technology Fund to fund research into the development of technology needed to help the world reduce and control carbon emissions; and

That this honourable Assembly encourage the government to actively promote the Saskatchewan plan at the United Nations COP 15 Conference in Copenhagen in December of 2009.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to address this motion piece by piece.

The first part of this motion is suggesting that we continue to look for innovative environmental initiatives that will not be damaging to our local economy. Well I am proud to say that some of these world-leading environmental initiatives are happening right in my constituency of Estevan.

[16:30]

Saskatchewan is home to the world's largest carbon dioxide storage project which consists of two commercial carbon dioxide enhanced oil recovery projects operated by EnCana Corporation at Weyburn and by Apache Canada at Midale. Both of these projects obtain their carbon dioxide from a gasification facility in North Dakota. The carbon dioxide is shipped through a 325-kilometre pipeline that crosses the international border, and it is regulated by the National Energy Board.

Mr. Speaker, each day EnCana's Weyburn oilfield is injecting an amount of CO₂, which is equivalent to 30 per cent of the greenhouse gas emissions from all the vehicles in Saskatchewan. The neighbouring Apache Canada Midale project, Saskatchewan's second commercial scale CO₂ flood project, is injecting an amount of CO₂ equivalent to the emissions from all the homes in Saskatoon — the largest city in our province, Mr. Speaker.

Both projects obtain large climate change benefits with commercial gain. While it is important to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from small emitters such as vehicles or homes, governments should encourage the petroleum industry to store large volumes of CO₂ in oil reservoirs.

Carbon dioxide capture and storage, CCS, is considered a critical technology to reduce world greenhouse gas emissions. Mr. Speaker, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change of the United Nations is estimated that carbon dioxide capture and storage might provide up to half of all emission reductions necessary to stabilize greenhouse gas levels in the atmosphere. CCS plays a major role in the plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from industry at relatively low costs that have been developed by the Government of Saskatchewan, the Government of Alberta, and the Government of Canada.

The opposition members sit in their chair day after day and insist that the energy rates in the province are too high. Then

their next complaint is that our government is not doing enough for our environment in terms of green energy. Well unfortunately for the members opposite, they can't speak out of both sides of their mouths. If there is a desire to move forward with cleaner energy — and I think there is, Mr. Speaker — our government is going to have to continue to invest funding into new and innovative technology that will help reduce CO₂ emissions.

It is quite simple. To have greener energy is going to cost money, and even members opposite have made this observation. That is why our government believes that offset payments collected in Saskatchewan should stay in Saskatchewan. We are in the enviable position of leading the world in carbon capture and sequestration technology. And if there is going to be carbon offset payments collected in Saskatchewan, these funds should stay in Saskatchewan to allow for continued research and development of technologies right here in our province.

Mr. Speaker, the second part of our government's motion is really just common sense. I would be surprised if any member of this Assembly would vote against a motion that states if the money collected in Saskatchewan should stay in Saskatchewan and go towards the funding of more innovative, clean energy technologies.

The third part of our government's motion speaks for itself. I believe that wherever we send a representative, they should be promoting Saskatchewan's plans. Our government was invited to the Copenhagen climate change conference because we were considered leaders in carbon emission reductions. I am proud of the fact, and I know that our hon. Environment minister will do an excellent job of promoting our government's plans.

It is a plan that has stringent reduction goals as anyone in the country. Our reduction goals are now in line with the federal government — something that the Environment critic has asked for, yet she is grumpy about the plan. And yes, we will be promoting the idea that offset payments collected in Saskatchewan should stay in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, our government is taking the environmental concerns of the people in our province seriously. We are moving forward on reduction targets and are leading the world in carbon capture and sequestration technologies.

Our government has signed an MOU [memorandum of understanding] with Montana, agreeing to work together on the development of one of the largest international carbon capture and storage demonstration projects in the world, which would see carbon dioxide produced at the coal-fired plant in Saskatchewan, transmitted, and stored in Montana.

Our Saskatchewan Party government is moving to meet reduction targets while ensuring continued economic growth, which is so important. This motion is of particular importance to me, Mr. Speaker, and to my constituents as the Bakken oil field is an integral part of our economy. My constituents have been blessed with a valuable resource in the area. They feel that for too long government has stood in the way and not allowed them to reap the rewards of this good fortune. Now that Saskatchewan has become known as a place that businesses

want to invest in, there are fears that there will be too many restrictions put on resource development, and businesses will be scared off.

And, Mr. Speaker, I know my comments are brief. I know there's others that want to get in on this debate. So I will just close by saying, I am proud, on behalf of my constituents, I am proud to give my support to this motion that will see our government continue to move forward on balancing environmental issues with economic growth. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to rise and join the debate on the government motion here before us. I have some real issues about the actual wording in the motion and I'll get into that. And of course, this is a real opportunity for us to have a good discussion, a good debate about climate change and what this government is putting forward. And I see a lot of weaknesses in it.

And I know that my colleagues, first the member from Regina Walsh Acres had exhaustive discussion about some of the problems that she sees with the proposal; I'm not sure if I would put it a plan. But clearly we have some questions about that. And I also want to acknowledge my colleague, the member from Regina Coronation Park, who feels very strongly about this issue and framed it in a way, I think, that many of us should talk about this.

We are at a real crossroads, Mr. Speaker, where we can make a difference. And when we have people at international gatherings like this, it's so important for us to really do the right thing, do the right thing. And I worry about this motion because in many ways, I feel when I read the first two paragraphs, she talks about the government plan and she outlines the plan and I wonder, so where is the plan? Where is the plan?

We saw this, a Bill presented in the House, I believe it was on May 11th, just before we ended. It was the day of or the day before the session ended, at the eleventh hour, we saw the first reading. But we didn't even get a chance to get into second reading or into committee. All of the time was lost over the summer for the committee to talk about what are the pros and cons of the plan. It just disappeared.

And we hear today that it's going to come back, but it's going to come back maybe in the spring. Why isn't it here right now? It should be here right now. We've been in the House for several days, for several weeks. Why isn't it back right away as a priority piece if this is so important to this government? And so, clearly, I'm not sure if this is yet another example of a last-minute item that this government wanted to make sure they had something to show for themselves. This is pretty poor actually, that we don't have the Bill before us, that we could be voting on the Bill.

That would be the first two paragraphs and there would be a Saskatchewan plan, and that's the process. We know what the process is in the House. It's for the government to put forward Bills and the Bills get voted on. They go to committee. They get

public consultation. We don't do motions like this.

The third paragraph though is one that I find very interesting because you know, Mr. Speaker, I've actually been to a conference — the UNFCCC [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change], United Nations framework on the climate change commission — in Montreal in 2005 in December. And it was quite an event. And so I do support government members and opposition members going to these kind of things. It's very important.

But I do worry. The wording here implies it's almost like a trade show. She's going to a trade show. She's going to promote the Saskatchewan plan at the United Nations COP 15 conference in Copenhagen in December of 2009.

Mr. Speaker, the stakes are much higher than this. This is an international agreement on climate change we're talking about. We're talking about Canada's role in Copenhagen. We're not talking about Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan has a role for sure, to support our national goals at the United Nations.

We often hear how this government will talk about supporting Canada in its national responsibilities, its federal responsibilities. So I'm not sure if this government understands what will be happening at Copenhagen when they get together and talk about potentially a new treaty, some new agreements. The work is being done right now and they need to get behind Canada and say, Canada, make sure this happens — this happens.

This is my experience in Montreal actually, Mr. Speaker, where we were able to achieve an awful lot. And I will get into that in a minute. But it's very important that we see some real results.

Now my colleague from Regina Coronation Park talked about Africa, and there's some real impacts and we see that in droughts. But also, Mr. Speaker, if you were listening to CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] and members were listening to CBC this morning, the impacts on the Arctic are huge. The impact on the Arctic is huge. The temperature in the Arctic is very key for the success of what happens in the Arctic, the economy of the Arctic, the transportation within the Arctic.

And here we have a circumstance where we can be real global leaders, and I'm afraid that we're going there a little short-sighted here. If there had been a plan in place and that plan was something we could be proud of, we could understand what it is, then maybe we'd be having a different debate today. But we're not.

So I really urge . . . And you know I was just thinking though, that I do hope that when the minister does go — and she's taking two officials with her, her deputy minister and the person from corporate planning and policy — that maybe they'll come back thinking of themselves more of global citizens, thinking about global responsibility and how we really have to work hard to take this issue more seriously in terms of global issues.

Now I believe an awful lot in the saying, think globally, act locally. And I think there's a lot of merit in that saying, particularly when we're thinking of climate change. If you see the implications of what happens in Saskatchewan, in Canada,

and the role we can play as role models, moral leaders in the globe, in the global initiatives such as climate change, this could be a real opportunity.

So I'm hoping that, Mr. Speaker, that when the minister is in Copenhagen she takes an opportunity to really look at these issues through the perspective of others in the world and also others in Canada, keeping in mind the Saskatchewan circumstance, keeping in mind the Saskatchewan challenges. And things that we can do, I think, are huge.

But we know we cannot let this go. We cannot let this opportunity in Copenhagen go. We saw in Montreal in 2005 that there was a different American government, one that was being led by a government that really did want to see the end of Kyoto, that was bent on killing any agreements that came out of Montreal. And in fact that did not happen. In fact Montreal was fairly successful. And that's very, very important — that the Copenhagen conference be successful.

Now I want to review some of the notes here because I think this is important. We know the goal of the conference is to create a global agreement that addresses climate change that will include all countries in the world. And Saskatchewan can play a leadership role in making sure that Canada stands up and gets that job done. We know that there will be a problem if there's no international treaty signed, no comprehensive international treaty, but at the very least what can happen is a framework so further discussions can carry on.

Now what happened in Montreal was that they had agreed on a five-year plan of how we get the emissions and the regulations to continue on for five years past 2005. We're at that timeline, Mr. Speaker, where Copenhagen is huge, where we think of beyond the Kyoto Protocol when it expires in 2012.

Now unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, we recognize that Canada does not have a good reputation throughout the world of actually putting its words into action. And that is unfortunate because Canada is not alone and has provinces behind it, particularly I think of the Western provinces — Alberta and Saskatchewan — that could be doing more. But if Canada were to become an environmental defender, as it should be, then it should be doing more. And Saskatchewan could be helping it do more to make sure it lives up to the obligations that it had signed through the Kyoto Protocol.

[16:45]

And in fact we know that there's been much written about this. I think of Jeffrey Simpson in his article, "Copenhagen climate-change talks will produce only disappointment" in his column of October 27th, and I quote, "... [having] disgraced the country's good name." And clearly we can be doing much more. And so we look at this plan and we think that we should be doing a lot more.

But, Mr. Speaker, in fact we have a moral responsibility doing much more. And we think of future generations and their expectation, that when they look back and think about what we could have done at this time period in 2009 and in 2010 and what could have been in Copenhagen.

And in fact, Mr. Speaker, some people are calling it the hope in 'hagen conference because there's so much hope placed on this conference. But we're just not there. And in fact a writer, Bruce Anderson, said in ... "Copenhagen already a success." And I quote:

... public consensus is that we should reduce extravagant or unsustainable consumption of resources and do a lot more to avoid pollution, because we have a moral responsibility to do better by future generations.

And that is so, so important.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we think this is a real problem. We don't know what this plan is. There's been some real questions about this unique and practical plan, but yet we don't know the details of it. We've heard about the carbon capture aspect of it, but is that the only part of it?

We heard, we had questions in question period today about the 20 per cent decrease through conservation that the Premier had signed on through with the premiers in Quebec City. But we did not receive an answer in terms of, so what's happening with the 20 per cent work around conservation? Is that actually happening? SaskPower doesn't seem to be knowing too much about it. They said the best they could do is 9 per cent, not 20 per cent. Nobody's saying, do better. They're being a little bit left off the hook by saying, you know what? Nine per cent is good enough. Well it's not quite good enough. The Premier did make a commitment of 20 per cent increase in conservation activity and yet we're not seeing anything there.

So we have some real questions about that. We think this plan is flawed right from the very beginning and we see the missteps have happened already, the missteps that when it was introduced late last year — even though they have been talking about it for many months and then they introduced it late in May just before the House rose for the summer and then it died on the order paper — it didn't even get to second reading. And we think there's some real problems with that. We don't see the benchmarks. We don't have target years for stabilization. And they really let industry off the hook. What is the role for industry?

And when they had their consultations — and I want to talk a little bit about the consultations because we think it's really important — they talked to some business people, I understand, and there's some question about whether they talked to the environmental groups, the NGOs, but clearly there's some questions.

But did they talk to the public? Are the public engaged in this process? And I actually don't think they are. I don't think they are, and I think the government kind of likes it that way because there'll be some real questions about this. We saw what happened around the UDP [Uranium Development Partnership]. When the public did get engaged, it clearly sent a message. They needed more information. The economics of nuclear initiatives that this government's talking about were not making sense, just clearly not making sense. And so there were some real problems and so I think that it will be difficult to support this motion.

And I don't know why this motion is before us today. Clearly this is part of the government business. I think that it's reasonable to go and be part of the Canadian delegation if that's what the minister . . . And she's not talked about being part of the Canadian delegation and holding the Minister of Environment's, the federal Minister of Environment's feet to the fire to make sure that action does happen in Copenhagen, that we do have a moral responsibility.

But clearly, there's been very little discussion about that. And I hope that some of the members will correct me if they stand up and talk about the role of the federal government, and how the Minister of Environment, our provincial Minister of Environment will ensure that the federal Minister of Environment will do all he can to make sure the treaties or the framework . . . At the very least, they come out of Copenhagen with a framework agreement of how they're going to move this forward. Because I know that when you have a short time period, now you look and you say, well they're almost there for 10 days — I believe it is from the 8th to the 17th in December — that you can get an awful lot done. Work should have been done already to this point, but it's not being done.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about this so-called plan or proposal or what's happening. And I was struck by the Premier's comments that he had made. And he was sort of . . . I don't know how to read his comments around the TD report and Pembina and the Suzuki report.

And I remember, as a former minister of Environment, in fact the Environment critic — not the one from Last Mountain-Touchwood, but the one before from Wood River — he actually had an affection. I think he actually liked that David Suzuki. I remember him getting up in the House, and I think we had a question period over David Suzuki. And the Sask Party was using David Suzuki as their source. I remember this day in the House. And I think it was the member from Wood River who raised this question, and he was saying he really felt David Suzuki had a lot of credibility on that day. So I find it really passing strange that today David Suzuki doesn't have as much credibility.

But many people in Canada actually like to hear what David Suzuki has to say. They may not agree with him, and that's fair enough, but they do like to hear what a scientist has to say about climate change. And I think it's very important that sometimes we take a look and see what are scientists like David Suzuki and his foundation talking about this. Well first of all, I'd just like to say here is a quote from the foundation, David Suzuki Foundation, and I quote: "Instead of strengthening existing climate change plan, Saskatchewan's new government gutted it, including many good renewable-energy and energy efficiency programs."

Now that quote is from July 16, 2008. And this was a report that was released by the David Suzuki Foundation that showed ". . . while most provinces are ramping up activity to fight climate change, Saskatchewan under the Sask Party is moving in the wrong direction." And it reports that ". . . while the Sask Party's adopted the NDP's emission reduction targets, it has 'no plan or strategy to get there.'" And really, clearly they don't have a plan. They don't have a plan at all.

And in fact if they are not liking Dr. Suzuki's perspective on what's happening, then what are some of the columnists saying about the Saskatchewan plan? Here's a column from May 12, 2009, from the *Leader-Post*. And this is from a columnist, Murray Mandryk. The title is "Saskatchewan adopts Harper's hot-air plan" [too]. And this is from May 12th, and I'll just read the first part. I'll quote:

Even if one accepts the Sask. Party's premise that its own 2007 campaign promise of a 32-per-cent reduction in greenhouse gases was just too costly to the provincial economy [and then he goes] (and more in a moment on how the Environment Ministry sounds far too much like an economic development ministry), why did it have to be 20 per cent . . . [or] a 25-per-cent reduction?

Well, the only magical thing about a 20-per-cent emission reduction is that it happens to be the same as the federal Conservative government's, which takes us to the biggest problem with this supposed [and he puts quotes] "made-in-Saskatchewan" strategy: It's really a "made-in-Ottawa" strategy.

Now he goes on to say that, and I'll read this. And the quote starts here:

The problem, however, is that she didn't make [referring to the Minister of Environment, she didn't make] a great case that the province would be all that hard hit if it instead adopted the 32-per-cent emission target. Her own ministry's charts showed the difference between the 20-per-cent and 32-per-cent targets amount to about \$600 million more over 10 years. (And with the tax incentives and environmental credits for things like zero-till available, the wallop on business would be substantially cushioned.)

Moreover, most of the \$60 million a year would be borne by SaskPower, which categorized the difference between the 20- and 32-per-cent goal as the something-less-than-onerous difference between a 20-per-cent and a 22-per-cent electrical bill hike in the next decade. (Gee, wasn't it going to hike our rates by 13 per cent anyway, until the rate . . . panel said: "Not so fast"?)

So what it boils down to is this: we are accepting the fed's 20-per-cent emission reductions largely because the Sask. Party government wants to avoid showing up Harper and company.

So some questions about the plan. Some questions about the plan. So if you don't like Suzuki, what about Mandryk? Well here, how about these folks? Here's another review. This is the next day, May 13th, 2009. And this is Mr. Woods, James Wood, in a climate plan titled "Climate plan meets with scepticism."

Now it talks about "But at issue . . . "And the quote goes here:

But at issue particularly is the centrepiece proposal of an "equivalency agreement" with the federal Conservative government that would allow the provincial plan to be

[more] compatible national or international cap-and-trade system for greenhouse gas emissions that appears likely to be enacted.

And this is a quote from Aaron Freeman, policy director of the group Environmental Defence. He says:

[The difference] . . . here is that the whole state of play is in flux. They don't know what the federal program is going to look like because it's currently being written in Washington.

So it's a little premature to be talking about this particularly because we just don't know. And yet we're being asked to support this.

And I wonder . . . Again, this is a real opportunity for the Minister of Environment, when she's in Copenhagen, to really take this opportunity to learn what's going on around the world. The opportunity's going to be great. I can tell you that from first-hand experience when I was in Montreal. This is an opportunity in a lifetime. And I hope she comes back, and her deputy minister comes back, changed people with a real global perspective.

But I want to continue with this, I know my time's running out, before we hit the supper hour. But I want to talk about Ann Coxworth. Many of us know Ann Coxworth. She's from the Saskatchewan Environmental Society. This story talks about:

The potential effectiveness of the Saskatchewan program is also a concern of Ann Coxworth of the . . . Environmental Society.

And this is the quote:

"It's going to be really hard to measure how effective this program is . . . people will pay money into a fund rather than make emission reductions," she said in an interview . . .

So really clearly at the end of the day, we want to get to a point where we see real reductions. Now we know that there is going to be hard work to get to that point, but we do want to see reductions. We don't want to see this shell game thing happening here. And it's complicated enough when you're signing up with the Harper government federally. And this is a real problem.

And, Mr. Speaker, I know that the Premier did talk at length about the Pembina, the TD report. And I want to talk a bit about that because it is very important that we get all this information. And clearly Saskatchewan is a player, a significant player on the national scene. So it's important to hear what those kind of reports are saying.

But we know . . . And the Premier talked about and I think he used the quote, and I have the quote in front of me, talking about how it will be a shock. But clearly this whole thing around climate change is asking all of us to change the way we do things, change the way we do things.

Do you not think right now in the Arctic it's a bit of a shock,

what's happening in the Arctic in terms of climate change? Is it not a bit of a shock? And we can see that around the world in different circumstances. You know, we saw in past years the number of hurricanes going up. Now this year it's been a better season for that. It's a shock right around. When you have circumstances like New Orleans — New Orleans, a city wiped out like that. I think that's a bit of a shock.

But clearly we don't want to have a big shock in Saskatchewan. We want to go into this with a plan. That's why we're saying, where is the plan? Where is the plan? We can't be avoiding this because of fearmongering. We have to have a significant plan.

The Speaker: — Being 5 p.m., the Assembly will recess until later this evening at 7 p.m.

[The Assembly recessed until 19:00.]

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