



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
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The Honourable Don Toth
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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

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
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Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
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Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
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Furber, Darcy	NDP	Prince Albert Northcote
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Hickie, Hon. Darryl	SP	Prince Albert Carlton
Higgins, Deb	NDP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Hutchinson, Hon. Bill	SP	Regina South
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Junor, Judy	NDP	Saskatoon Eastview
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Krawetz, Hon. Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
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McMorris, Hon. Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
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Morgan, Hon. Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
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Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Norris, Hon. Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
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Reiter, Jim	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
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Schriemer, Joceline	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
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Van Mulligen, Harry	NDP	Regina Douglas Park
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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: — Members, before I recognize other members, I want to on behalf of our Sergeant to welcome a couple of individuals who have joined us in the Speaker's gallery: Michael Lonechild and his wife Phyllis Mosquito from White Bear First Nations. I'd ask the members to welcome these two distinguished individuals to our Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to introduce in the Speaker's gallery a couple of very good friends and supporters of mine and on behalf of the member from Prince Albert Carlton and myself, we would like to have a warm welcome for Bob Romanchuk from Aallcann Wood preservers in Prince Albert. He has his company in my constituency of Saskatchewan Rivers. And also Karen Worobec from the Enterprise Saskatchewan tourism sector team. So I'd like all members of the Assembly to give them a warm welcome to their Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The member from Yorkton.

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you and to all the members of the Assembly, I'd like to introduce a group of students, the grade 12 law 30 class, Yorkton Regional High School — my old school. Graduated there in '81, contrary to popular belief. And I'd like to have you welcome them to this Assembly along with their teacher, Ms. Susan Onda.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of the residents of Moose Jaw, and it speaks to the high reliance on property tax for the funding of education. And the prayer reads:

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I so present on behalf of residents of Moose Jaw.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to present petitions today on behalf of people of Saskatchewan regarding indexing of minimum wage to deal with the issues of sporadic wage increases for minimum wage earners and the cost of living. And the petition reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to commit to indexing Saskatchewan minimum wage to ensure that the standard of living of minimum wage earners is maintained in the face of cost of living increases.

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

Petitions are signed by people from Regina, Prince Albert, and Saskatoon. I so present.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present this petition on behalf of the students that signed it from Saskatchewan. I so present.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to present today a petition in support of new child care spaces. And the petition reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to add at least 2,000 new child care spaces in Saskatchewan by 2011.

This petition is signed by citizens in the good province of Saskatchewan from Saskatoon, Sedley, Regina, and

Churchbridge, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Philanthropist Supports Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to stand up and recognize the latest accomplishment of Saskatchewan's Brett Wilson, an individual who exemplifies the qualities of entrepreneurship and philanthropy.

Recently Mr. Wilson could be seen on the popular CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] show, *Dragons' Den*. But this successful businessman has Saskatchewan roots, born in North Battleford and having attended the University of Saskatchewan where he received his Bachelor of Engineering degree.

In one of the many ways he's giving back to his home province, Mr. Wilson put \$1 million behind the Wilson Centre, which will support innovation and teach undergraduates about entrepreneurship. Part of the Wilson Centre aim is to change mindsets about what to do with a degree and to foster an innovative spirit in our province, a cause that is near and dear to this government's heart. Through initiatives such as Innovation Saskatchewan and measures to help out those who are self-employed, our government is also working to support the Saskatchewan entrepreneur.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to invite my colleagues to join me in recognizing the latest achievement of Brett Wilson, who continues to work towards building an innovative and entrepreneurial Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

One Step at a Time Campaign in Moose Jaw

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a new partnership has developed in Moose Jaw. The Moose Jaw Warriors have joined with McDonalds restaurants, the Moose Jaw Health Foundation, and the Five Hills Health Region to form the One Step at a Time campaign. On the day of every remaining home game of the Moose Jaw Warriors in the 2008-09 regular season, \$1 from every Big Mac purchased will be donated to the renovations of the special room in the pediatric ward at the Moose Jaw Union Hospital.

The members of the Warriors have been very involved in providing ideas for the design of the room. This new area will feature a floor that will look like an ice surface coupled with simulated rink boards around the walls. There will also be a Warriors autograph wall where current and former players can write motivational messages to the young patients. The redesign is scheduled to begin as soon as possible.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to commend all of the organizations involved in the One Step at a Time campaign. Special recognition must go to McDonalds and the Moose Jaw Warriors for their tremendous effort to give young patients in our community a fun place to spend time while recovering.

Mr. Speaker, I'd ask that all members join me in thanking those responsible for the One Step at a Time campaign.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford.

Rescue at Atton's Lake

Mr. Chisholm: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to call attention to some of my local constituents: Millie Prescott and Gerald, Dayson, and Declan Desmarais.

It was on October 10, Mr. Speaker, that these individuals worked together to save the lives of three young men. It all started when four youth went to visit a friend at Atton's Lake. While canoeing, their boat capsized and everyone fell into the water. One young man swam to shore to look for help and stumbled upon Ms. Prescott's house. Millie then contacted one of her neighbours, the Desmarais family, to ask for assistance. Gerald and his boys immediately responded to her call. Gerald and his son Dayson borrowed Millie's canoe, and after several attempts they were able to rescue the three youths from the water. Mr. Speaker, what is exceptional about this action is that Gerald is a non-swimmer.

After the rescue, Gerald took everyone to his home while his other son, Declan, ran over to Millie's to retrieve the first young man. During this ordeal, Millie stayed in contact with the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police], keeping them informed of the situation. After their rescue, Gerald took these freezing young men to his home. His family provided them with dry clothes and a safe place to warm up.

Will Rogers once said, "We can't all be heroes because somebody has to sit on the curb and clap as they go by." Mr. Speaker, I think we should join in congratulating the heroism from the Cut Knife-Turtleford constituency.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Saskatchewan Party Convention

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to reflect on the recent Saskatchewan Party convention held in beautiful Saskatoon. For a new government, Mr. Speaker, one year into its honeymoon phase with a \$4 billion inheritance, one would expect 12 to 1,500 people to show up. But how many delegates attended the one-year anniversary of the Sask Party government, Mr. Speaker?

Well if you exclude all the Sask Party candidates, the MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] and their spouses or friend, that amounts to 116 people forced to go. You then

exclude the Sask Party constituency executives which probably totals about 174 province-wide. The provincial executive and their spouses, add another 30, Mr. Speaker. Guaranteed 30 observers and 10 media. Add up all these numbers, Mr. Speaker, and that totals 360.

We're told that the attendance was 400 people, meaning a grand total of 40 people showed up, Mr. Speaker. Furthermore, of the 38 sitting MLAs, they were commanded to each bring a family friend. And, Mr. Speaker, that again brings us down to two people. And oh, I forgot — the NDP [New Democratic Party] sent two observers, Mr. Speaker.

They then pondered 18 resolutions brought forward by three constituencies, Mr. Speaker. And they debated alternatives to plastic bags. They almost talked about splitting the party over the plastic bags resolution. Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party leader, making the joke that there are so many jobs available in the province, that Saskatchewan quote "isn't just a great place to be, it's a bad place to . . ."

The Speaker: — I believe the member's time has elapsed.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The member from Weyburn.

Ogema Wins International Recognition

Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in the House to share some inspiring news from one of the great towns in my constituency. I'm speaking of the community of Ogema. This small community, home to 320 people, has recently received international acclaim. Ogema may be small in size for now, Mr. Speaker, but it has lots of spirit and determination, and has really shown us what can be accomplished with a positive and entrepreneurial attitude and with people who have a vision and are willing to step up to be leaders.

In the 2008 contest of the world's most liveable communities, a United Nations recognized event held in China, Ogema placed silver out of 11 communities with a population under 20,000. The categories they were judged on included sustainability, healthy lifestyles, and planning for the future. Mr. Speaker, Ogema also received the Heritage Management Award, beating out 50 other competitors from across the world.

Mr. Speaker, Mayor Wayne Myren credits the entire town with having the vision and initiative to take on projects such as acquiring a short-line rail line, the restoration of the old railway station, and the development of local industry which is attracting new immigrants to the area, increasing their population, and, Mr. Speaker, keeping the local school viable.

Mr. Speaker, when we talk about creating a stronger Saskatchewan and enhancing quality of life, this town is what it's all about. On behalf of the government and the people of Weyburn-Big Muddy, I want to congratulate the town of Ogema on winning silver in this world competition, and thank them for showcasing Saskatchewan to the rest of the world. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Diabetes Awareness Walk

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Friday, November 14, I had the opportunity to participate in the Diabetes Awareness Walk that was held at the Saskatoon Field House. This date was chosen, Mr. Speaker, because it was World Diabetes Day. The awareness walk was made possible through the co-operation of the student wellness initiative towards community health or SWITCH, Central Urban Métis Federation Inc. or CUMFI, White Buffalo Youth Lodge, the Saskatoon Health Region, the Saskatoon Community Clinic, Kinistin Saulteaux Nation, the city of Saskatoon, and the Canadian Diabetes Association.

As we walked laps around the field house track, participants shared with me how they were learning to be more active and healthy through programs offered by the partner agencies. In particular, I was told how beneficial the Fitness Food Fun program has been for its members. Mr. Speaker, this program is provided by Saskatoon Community Clinic staff and regularly meets at the White Buffalo Youth Lodge.

After the awareness walk, participants were able to meet with representatives from the Canadian Diabetes Association to ask questions and learn more about diabetes awareness and prevention.

Mr. Speaker, it was only a few days earlier that many MLAs attended a reception here at the legislature hosted by the Canadian Diabetes Association. I know we all appreciated the opportunity to meet that evening and I appreciated to see first-hand the work done by the association in the community, the work that it does so well all year long.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating the many agencies and people that made the Diabetes Awareness Walk a success. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

[13:45]

Saskatchewan Exports Hit All-Time High

Mr. Michelson: — Mr. Speaker, it is a great time to live in Saskatchewan. In global uncertain economic times, our Saskatchewan economy is sound and continues to grow. We learned this morning, Mr. Speaker, that international exports from Saskatchewan have hit a new all-time high. Over the past year the value of those exports has climbed almost 120 per cent. That's over six times the national average. In September \$3.2 billion worth of Saskatchewan goods was shipped to points around the world. We are number one in Canada again.

In the year since the people of Saskatchewan voted for change,

Mr. Speaker, we have been leading Canada in many key economic areas including GDP [gross domestic product] growth, wholesale trade growth, retail sales, earnings, the number of people employed, the lowest unemployment rates, population growth, new vehicle sales, and the growth in building permits. Our government has been able to put that growth to work for the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, resulting in historic tax cuts, record debt reduction, the largest infrastructure investment ever, and \$2 billion fiscal insurance policy.

We're working to make Saskatchewan a stronger place, Mr. Speaker, which means a better life for everyone.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Decline of the Forest Industry

Mr. Furber: — Mr. Speaker, last Thursday the Sask Party quietly announced its plan to save the forestry industry. They — wait for it — gave the Saskatchewan Forest Centre a new name: ForestFirst. So encouraging was this news that the very next day Tolko Industries in Meadow Lake announced they were laying off more than 100 employees.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: how does changing the name of the Forest Centre bring any hope to the now thousands of people who lost their income under this government?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for Energy and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, clearly this is an industry that's in a great deal of peril. Everyone understands that. There are forestry companies shutting down operations all across North America. We see housing starts in the United States a fraction of what they were a few months ago. I think if we examine the record, I believe that there are eight primary forestry companies that have shut down in Saskatchewan — two have closed under the Saskatchewan Party administration; six closed under the former administration. So clearly although it's a challenged industry, we're working with the industry to see what areas we can do in terms of addressing the competitive issues that need to be looked at.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Furber: — Mr. Speaker, there are some exciting opportunities in biomass and agroforestry, but biomass energy is supposed to be generated from the residue left over after the rest of the wood has been used. It's not supposed to be the forestry industry.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: does he propose to replace jobs in saw mills, paper mills, and OSB [oriented strand board] mills with a handful of jobs, growing trees just to burn them?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Energy and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, if you recall the record, the former administration assigned an MOU [memorandum of understanding] with Domtar, committing \$100 million of taxpayers' money to that. You can only wonder where, given the market today, where that \$100 million would be gone.

And in light of the own member's, the member that asked the question, his own comments with respect to this, where when asked does he believe that the Saskatchewan government should be putting money into these industries, the member himself said no he didn't.

So which way is it today, Mr. Speaker? Does he believe as he said earlier that they should not be putting money in, or does he believe that, as the former premier believed, that they should be putting money into it?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Furber: — Forest first. It'd be a welcome change, but I'll wait for the details, given their record. This minister refuses . . . [inaudible] . . . the future of this industry. And he's so proud of this change that he didn't even issue a news release or bother to attend the event.

The only new dollars being invested in forestry development in Saskatchewan right now are federal dollars. Will he at least guarantee us that communities most affected will benefit from those dollars?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Energy and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, we have said time and time again, both in the legislature and outside of the legislature, that we are examining all of the different things that can be done to help an industry that is clearly challenged in these times.

We see housing starts a fraction of what they were in the United States. Today, Mr. Speaker, there is an industry that is in peril. We are discussing it with the industry on a number of occasions. We had representatives from Tolko in yesterday to talk about areas of interest to them in terms of competitive issues.

It's an industry that we are working with, will continue to work with, but at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, a healthy industry is not an industry that's funded by the taxpayers of the province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Furber: — Mr. Speaker, it's clear that the Saskatchewan Party has no plan to stop the bleeding in the forest industry. It was their promise before the last election, and we all remember the ad taken out by the member from Prince Albert Carlton. Why do forestry workers and their families come last for this government?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Energy and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it would be helpful if the opposition clarified where they're at. Do you believe, as the former premier believes, that you should be putting \$100 million of taxpayers' money at risk? Or do you believe, as the member for P.A. [Prince Albert] Northcote believes, and that money should not be put at risk? Well I would say to the member opposite that the Saskatchewan Party made the decision very . . .

The Speaker: — Order. The minister's been acknowledged; they have the floor. The Minister of Energy and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, when governments in the past . . . and the NDP have a very, very strong track record in terms of putting money into industries, they lose money on every occasion. That's your track record. And if you look at this industry, Mr. Speaker, the \$100 million of taxpayers' money that they were willing to commit, Mr. Speaker, one can only wonder where that money would be today, given the market as it is.

So who is it that speaks on behalf of the NDP — the P.A. Northcote member or the former premier who wanted to commit money to this, clearly in opposition to what his own member is saying today?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Corrections Issues

Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, this government is getting more arrogant by the day. Yesterday a delegation of front-line corrections workers visited their legislature to raise issues that they believe are important to help them do their job safely. Workers were particularly concerned that the layout and corresponding staffing levels at the Regina Correctional Centre leaves employees vulnerable to attack or abduction.

When questioned about this, the minister dismissed workers' concerns, saying he had toured the site and everything looked okay to him. Why does the minister believe that he knows better than the front-line staff who work at the Regina Correctional Centre every day?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Corrections, Public Safety and Policing.

Hon. Mr. Hickie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And to answer that member's question quite clearly: 14 years working in federal corrections, partly in the special handling unit where the most dangerous criminals live, day and day out; maximum security prison; medium security prison; and a minimum security prison, Mr. Speaker, I have some expertise and some knowledge as to prison design — what's worked, what hasn't worked, Mr. Speaker. When I saw that unit, Regina Correctional Centre, it's state of the art, Mr. Speaker . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Hickie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The unit in Regina, the replacement unit, Mr. Speaker, is a state-of-the-art unit. We have other jurisdictions coming to Saskatchewan to look at that unit, Mr. Speaker. They believe that it's cutting edge, state of the art — not going backwards, Mr. Speaker, but going forwards and being the leader. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, during a media scrum yesterday, the minister said he wanted to work in a spirit of co-operation, not dictatorship. But he thinks that one tour makes him qualified to judge whether the concerns of front-line workers are valid or not.

Another issue corrections workers raised was the need for more training on how to interact more closely with inmates. Surely everyone agrees that people working in such a dangerous occupation deserve the very best training possible. Currently workers receive only two weeks training when they commence employment and no further training for months or even years in the future. But instead of being open to the idea of more training, the minister's reply was there are staff willing to work there.

To the minister: why won't he listen to front-line workers who are telling him they need more training?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Corrections, Public Safety and Policing.

Hon. Mr. Hickie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to the member opposite for that question. We can't lose the sight of the fact, Mr. Speaker, that it was under their government they tendered that facility. They approved the plan, they put that into action, and now the members who work there have to work there under their design model, Mr. Speaker.

I will tell you right now something, Mr. Speaker, that the training the staff receive all across Saskatchewan in corrections deals with facility security, inmate security, inmate

programming, and staff security, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to the next question on that particular government and that former minister's inadequate action on facilities and infrastructure. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, this minister is confident that he knows better than his own front-line staff. It doesn't matter that workers are expressing concern about their safety; he's been on a tour. It doesn't matter if front-line workers feel the need for more training; he'll tell them they've had enough. Of course he won't say those things to their faces. Yesterday he had the opportunity to meet with them face to face and hear their concerns, and he refused.

Mr. Speaker, he refused to listen to the concerns of the workers who take risks every day to protect our safety. Instead he went into the ministerial protection program. He went into hiding. To the minister: why is he hiding from his own staff?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Corrections, Public Safety and Policing.

Hon. Mr. Hickie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, these are matters internally being discussed with CPSP [Corrections, Public Safety and Policing] officials, SGEU [Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union] member officials as well, Mr. Speaker.

Let's take a look back at the record. January 2004, senior officials in CPSP studied the problems inside the correctional facility. They struck a committee, Mr. Speaker, with SGEU members. In early 2006, when there was a cabinet shuffle when the previous government was in power and the member from Regina Dewdney became minister, he stopped all committee work, Mr. Speaker, involving staff safety, institutional security concerns throughout Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Answer that question, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Support for Renters

Mr. Quennell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A renter in . . .

The Speaker: — Order. The member from Saskatoon Meewasin has been recognized.

Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, a renter in Saskatoon wrote to us saying that as of February 1, 2009, her rent will be increased to \$960 a month for a one-bedroom apartment — an increase of \$270. She believes the rent increase is intended to recoup the cash incentives the builder's owner offered to each tenant to encourage them to vote yes in a recent tenant vote on condo

conversion.

Mr. Speaker, whatever the reason for the increase, this renter's situation is hardly unique. Many Saskatchewan people are being forced out of their homes due to rising rents and condo conversions. To the minister: what will she do this year to provide relief to renters?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Social Services.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — As I said many, many times in this House and out of this House, what we've done this year, Mr. Speaker, is that we've increased the shelter rates; we've indexed them to the regions, to the market rates. We've increased the rental supplements and indexed those to the regional market rates. And so I'm not sure where the member opposite wants to go. The condo conversions are approved by municipal levels of government, not the provincial level of government.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, it's the province's problem whatever is causing it. The trend towards condo conversions has resulted in a declining number of rental units in Saskatchewan. Many of these condo units which were brought up at the beginning of a boom currently sit empty.

Mr. Speaker, the minister's own task force on housing affordability suggested a number of ways to increase the supply of affordable rental accommodation, but she has yet to act on them. Mr. Speaker, to the minister: what is she doing to help Saskatchewan families being squeezed out of rental accommodations?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Social Services.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure where the member opposite is going with the supply. In actuality, there are 673 units, social housing units that are in progress in Saskatoon, the city that he's referring to. These are the Saskatoon housing activity of this year. Of those, 106 units are within the expression of interest, so those projects are under way. There was 40 units with the First Nations and Métis trust. There are various stages of units being built or renovated within Saskatoon to a total of 673 units, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:00]

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

Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, the minister talks about

increases in benefits, but for many people, those benefit increases are being clawed back by rising housing costs and by other increases in the cost of living imposed by this government, like rising SaskEnergy rates and means testing for the seniors' drug plan.

Another example, Mr. Speaker, a Regina senior named Shirley wrote to the Premier on October 31. She writes, quote:

Today I'll pay for food, rent, phone and power — no frills unless you call the dentist a frill. But I'll manage. I'll pay my debt and needs and keep trudging on. My mind imagines a time and place in which low-income people are able to pay their rent without pain.

Mr. Speaker, let's make that time today. To the minister: when can people like Shirley expect to see a time when they could pay the rent without pain?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Social Services.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Well I'm sure that Shirley was very pleased on the day that we announced 110 per cent increase to the seniors.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — I'm sure that Shirley had increases to her utilities, to her rent, to her cost of living over the past 16 years and saw absolutely no help by the former NDP government. So for the first time, Shirley saw a provincial government that was willing to step in and give her a hand.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, this minister talks of all that she has done for renters, but she has not provided new funding, she has not provided new funding for a single new housing project since she became the minister. The previous NDP government added nearly \$61 million to affordable housing in 2006-2007, but this minister cut \$5 million out of the Sask Housing budget this year.

Mr. Speaker, many people we've talked to live on fixed incomes. Rising rents are making it harder for them to make ends meet, and while renters are affected by rising property taxes, they don't benefit from the rebates. Mr. Speaker, to the minister: will this government provide a property tax rebate to renters?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Social Services.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, the member who's asking the question needs to ask his Housing critic, his

colleague, about the \$5 million because I've explained it to him, I believe, about five times.

The transfer in Social Services to the Housing Corporation is to pay for programming within Sask Housing. The programming in the previous year cost \$9.3 million, so therefore a \$10 million budget more than ensured that those programs continue. So therefore we are covering the programs.

The actual capital money is within the corporation, so the corporation had money at the time of the election. And we have since committed that to housing projects, Mr. Speaker. We have in total 935 projects in progress around the province. That has been a continuum of housing from those that are being completed to those that are in progress to those that are in design, Mr. Speaker. We have announced an unprecedented \$1.5 billion infrastructure capital fund; of that will be more funding for housing.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Relocation Costs

Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting that this government doesn't seem too interested in helping out renters. I guess their only concern kicks in when you're moving from one home to another, not trying to make ends meet in an apartment.

To the Deputy Premier: can he confirm that in the Sask Party's first year in power they've spent almost \$200,000 on moving costs to move 12 different political staff members here from out of province?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, I cannot confirm the exact amount. The member opposite suggests that there is up to 200,000. There are relocation incentives that are offered to employees. And I can provide that information in due course directly to her, that I can explain exactly how many dollars were spent on relocation costs for bringing people back to the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, this government has money to throw around on their political staff, but nothing for livestock and hog producers. Can the Deputy Premier explain why the Minister of Agriculture spent \$24,000 on moving two employees here for his ministerial office? Let me guess: there are no agricultural experts in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday I didn't get the opportunity to finish answering a question for the member opposite because she didn't ask another question. So, Mr. Speaker, I want to tell the member opposite, when she talks about change in government . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I call members to order. I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, there are changes that are made by government each and every year. There are changes that involve bringing in new people. They will come from other parts of Canada. That's what happens, Mr. Speaker.

I want to indicate to the House, Mr. Speaker, that the former government from 1992 to the year 2006 had 645 people that were released without cause. Mr. Speaker, 645 people were released by that former government. I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that there were people that were hired, people that were offered incentives to replace these people, Mr. Speaker. These were 645 people that were dealt with through the negotiation process of severance as provided by the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, meanwhile back at the ranch, I understand the Minister of Corrections and Public Safety had to import his entire political staff from out of province. I guess you need the best PR [public relations] people in Canada to make the minister shine.

But can the Deputy Premier please explain why the Minister of Public Safety gets \$25,000 moving allowances for his political staff and the Minister of Advanced Education and Labour only gets to spend \$5,000? Clearly the Advanced Ed minister needs some help as well.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in the last number of days of this Legislative Assembly, as a government moves through its transition process, as it changes the staff . . . The former premier released 150-plus people from this Legislative Assembly. They would have had to have been replaced, Mr. Speaker. Those people, as I indicated yesterday, received \$4.5 million worth of compensation. Mr. Speaker, those people are being replaced.

And I dare say, Mr. Speaker, across our government, we have attracted back many former Saskatchewan people that were driven out of this province by the policies of the NDP. Mr. Speaker, we're happy to welcome back Saskatchewan people to assist in a new government's policies of moving this province forward — not into a state of decline, which is where the NDP moved this province for 16 years.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, will the Deputy Premier confirm that the Premier spent \$35,000 moving a single person, a single political staffer, into his Executive Council? Thirty-five thousand dollars — that's more than some people in this province make every year. To the Deputy Premier: how can he justify \$35,000 for a political staffer to move to Saskatchewan? Aren't there any PR people in Saskatchewan that can do that job, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to report that we have attracted a great many qualified individuals who are assisting not only in Executive Council, not only in Advanced Education, not only in Agriculture; they're helping with all of our ministries. Some of the people have come from outside of the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a growing province, a government that wants to attract quality people has to ensure that there are some incentives to ensure that they come. Some of those incentives involve moving expenses.

So, Mr. Speaker, the entire amount of information is going to be displayed in public accounts that will be distributed for the entire province, and we will ensure that that information is open and transparent within public accounts.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, we've got \$35,000 for a political staffer in the Premier's office. We've got \$20,000 for a political staffer in the Minister of Agriculture's office. We have over \$17,000 for one political staffer in the Minister of Corrections and Public Safety. We have over \$9,000 for the Minister of Social Services for one staffer. Mr. Speaker, where did they move from? Thirty-five thousand — where would you be moving from? Was it China? Hong Kong? Was it London, England? Was it Germany? Where on earth would someone move from and have \$35,000 worth of moving expenses paid for on behalf of the Saskatchewan taxpayer?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Before I recognize the Deputy Premier, I just want to remind members that it would be nice sometimes if we could actually hear the response to the question or the question given. Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, yesterday the member opposite asked me questions about settlement packages, negotiated packages with different individuals. Mr. Speaker, there were 44, there were 44 people on that list that was provided in the way of a written response to a question asked by that former government. Mr. Speaker . . .

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

[14:15]

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker . . .

Bill No. 63 — *The Saskatchewan Housing Corporation Amendment Act, 2008*

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

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Social Services.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, of the 44 people on this list, there are three individuals who received a severance package commensurate with the legislative policies of over 200,000 but less than 275,000. Three individuals, Mr. Speaker, of a list of 44. Mr. Speaker, there is one individual that received \$275,000 from that former government. That member, Mr. Speaker, is Murdoch Carriere. Mr. Speaker, there was a suggestion in this Legislative Assembly by a number of the members opposite that that member was dismissed . . .

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 63, *The Saskatchewan Housing Corporation Amendment Act, 2008* has now been introduced and read for the first time.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Social Services has moved that Bill No. 63, *The Saskatchewan Housing Corporation Amendment Act, 2008* be now read the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

The Speaker: — Order. Deputy Premier can wrap up his answer.

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, clearly there was a suggestion to a number of people from Justice officials, from other officials, that there would be wisdom in challenging and going to court. They said no, it was not going to be because it would be more expensive. Mr. Speaker, the information that we've been provided, it would have been far less than 275,000. Two hundred and seventy-five thousand is more than any of these 44 people have received.

Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Next sitting of the House.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

The Speaker: — Members will come to order. Members will come to order.

Bill No. 64 — *The Northern Municipalities Amendment Act, 2008 (No. 2)*

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 62 — *The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act, 2008*

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

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 64, *The Northern Municipalities Amendment Act, 2008 (No. 2)* be now introduced and read a first time.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 62, *The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act, 2008* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Municipal Affairs has moved that Bill No. 64, *The Northern Municipalities Amendment Act, 2008 (No. 2)* now be read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Justice has moved that Bill No. 62, *The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act, 2008* be now read the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried.

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

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

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

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

Bill No. 73 — *The University of Saskatchewan Amendment Act, 2008*

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 73, *The University of Saskatchewan Amendment Act, 2008* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister Responsible for Advanced Education, Employment and Labour that Bill No. 73, *The University of Saskatchewan Amendment Act, 2008* be now read the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried.

Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

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

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answer to question 107 and 108.

The Speaker: — Answers tabled to questions 107 and 108.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 59 — *The Election Amendment Act, 2008*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege to rise today in the House to move second reading of *The Election Amendment Act, 2008*. Mr. Speaker, the amendments to *The Election Act, 1996* introduced today will implement the promise that this government made to extend and toughen the election advertising requirements of Saskatchewan.

To quote from this session's Throne Speech:

During the course of the last election, my government promised fairer elections by removing the advantages held by the governing party — advantages that led to political gamesmanship and voter cynicism.

Mr. Speaker, that is what our government wishes to achieve with passage of this Bill. The provisions of the existing election Act have been in place in our province for more than 20 years. They are intended to protect the fairness of the electoral process by ensuring that the government of the day is not perceived as using political resources or the civil service to conduct its political campaigns.

These provisions are also intended to protect the public service from being unintentionally drawn into a political debate during an election campaign. As promised in our election campaign, with this Bill we are taking steps to not only maintain these principles but also to significantly enhance the protection of these principles.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill provides that in the 30 days prior to the issuance of an election writ, no government ministry shall advertise in any manner with respect to the activities of that ministry. This prohibition is subject only to emergency or compelling public safety information.

In the 90 days prior to this new 30-day pre-writ restriction, there will also be a restriction providing that no government ministry shall advertise in any manner any information except for the following: information that is intended to inform the public about programs and services of the ministry for the public benefit of Saskatchewan people and information which addresses public safety issues.

Mr. Speaker, government resources and the public service must not be used for partisan purposes. By extending these restrictions, we are confident that fairness will be enhanced and the integrity of the public service will be protected during this period of heightened political activity. This Bill will address the long-standing concern that government advertising seems to spike upwards prior to an election.

In the 120 days prior to the issuance of a writ for a fixed-date general election, no government ministry shall spend more than the average monthly amount for advertising. As with the existing section 277, Crown corporation advertising with respect to their competitive business interests would remain exempt from these advertising restrictions. This exemption would exist to avoid erosion of their market position.

Mr. Speaker, we have also heard concerns that advertising intended to promote Saskatchewan to other provinces has been run within Saskatchewan as goodwill advertising in the period leading up to an election. Accordingly we are addressing this problem. In the 120 days prior to the issuance of a writ for a fixed-date general election, no government ministry shall advertise within Saskatchewan information that is intended to promote our province to audiences outside of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, with the change to a set election date, several of the concerns we are addressing with this Bill have become more acute. Now that all Saskatchewan residents know the date of our next provincial election, government advertising in the pre-writ period requires more attention to ensure fairness. As promised, we have taken important steps in that direction with this Bill. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to move second reading of *An Act to amend The Election Act, 1996*.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Minister of Justice has moved second reading of Bill No. 59, *The Election Amendment Act, 2008*. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from The Battlefords.

Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a

pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill No. 59, *An Act to amend The Election Act, 1996*, Mr. Speaker. I listened intently to the introduction by the Minister of Justice, and indeed I found a number of his comments interesting that I will refer to shortly.

But, Mr. Speaker, we all recognize that prior to the election just past, Mr. Speaker, members of the then opposition Saskatchewan Party and now the government across the way, Mr. Speaker, were quite critical of government advertising prior to the election, Mr. Speaker. And of course when we review what some of those advertisements were doing — informing members of the public of how to access government programs, and to know that on matters of importance to them that in fact their government was working, Mr. Speaker — we find that of course there was a lot of political rhetoric at that time with regards to financing, government financing of advertisements prior to election.

That having been said, Mr. Speaker, we are aware that the Saskatchewan Party is now in government and are working very diligently, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that some of the things that they said in opposition — not all, as we know, Mr. Speaker, but some of the things that they said in opposition — they're actually going to do.

And, Mr. Speaker, as I will outline in a few minutes, this is a Bill that perhaps has some unintended consequences that I think we should examine before this Bill is concluded in the Chamber. And at the same time, Mr. Speaker, not only unintended consequences, but can actually allow for some additional manipulation by governments, Mr. Speaker, and I'd like to address some of that as well. So that's the direction that I will take in my remarks, Mr. Speaker.

Let's just review this again for the public that are listening, Mr. Speaker. *The Election Amendment Act, 2008* does a couple of things. It addresses the issue of the fixed election dates, Mr. Speaker, and it tries very hard to work back from that fixed election date established in a previous piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that we have some dates set aside for publications of one kind or another, and indeed talks about advertising 30 days before the issuing of the writ, and in fact other dates like 120 days prior to the setting of a writ.

Now, Mr. Speaker, all of this is built upon the idea that a fixed election date is in fact a fixed election date. We have legislation passed by this Chamber earlier this year, Mr. Speaker, that sets the date for the next election in 2011 — a very specific fixed election date. Now, Mr. Speaker, nothing wrong with that if governments are certainly prepared to follow the law.

Mr. Speaker, we all know in this Chamber, anyone who watches politics closely, that if the Sask Party's Conservative cousins in Ottawa do something, it's not too long later that the Saskatchewan Party in Saskatchewan does something similar. Or if the Saskatchewan Party's government here in Saskatchewan sees something being done by their Conservative cousins in Alberta, it's not too long later that it's done here in Saskatchewan by this government.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we just came through a federal election. We just came through it, Mr. Speaker. Only a few weeks ago that election was completed, Mr. Speaker. Prime Minister Stephen

Harper, before that election was called, had brought forward legislation to set fixed election dates. He campaigned on fixed election dates, he put them in place, the legislation was passed, and then what does he do, Mr. Speaker, after he gets an election? He ignores the legislation and calls an election. Which we also know, Mr. Speaker, at the end of that election showed that in fact nothing had changed; there's still a minority government in Canada, Mr. Speaker.

And all of the money spent on that federal election, Mr. Speaker, which could have been used on so many other things, Mr. Speaker, basically a lot of Canadians are saying, well that money was just wasted, Mr. Speaker.

And here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, we have a fixed election date passed by law. This legislation in front of us today depends on that legislation being honoured by government. Pardon us, Mr. Speaker, if there are some in Saskatchewan who have expressed some skepticism that in fact this government can be trusted to keep that fixed election date promise now that the legislation is in place. And Ottawa has proven — their cousins in Ottawa have proven — that indeed we don't have to listen to the law of the country, of the province.

So, Mr. Speaker, here we are. It's interesting that in fact this piece of legislation continues on politics but not very much on substance, Mr. Speaker. We've got this Bill, as I said, Mr. Speaker, that could indeed have some unintended consequences, Mr. Speaker, that we have to pay some attention to. And in fact if all of this process is set in place but the government chooses to ignore its fixed election date, what happens to all of this stuff, Mr. Speaker? You could ramp up spending in 2010, call the election at the end of 2010. Absolutely nothing, Mr. Speaker, absolutely nothing in this legislation in front of us today would apply. It's absolutely meaningless, Mr. Speaker, in that context.

And indeed, what about the other concern that it allows for some manipulation? One clause in the legislation, Mr. Speaker, actually talks about spending being an average of the previous year's expenditures, monthly expenditures. Well, Mr. Speaker, knowing when the election date is, there is nothing to prevent this government from upping election spending in the year prior, therefore increasing the amount of money that could be spent in the months preceding the election based on the language in this legislation. So there's the possibility, Mr. Speaker, for some manipulation to occur. It's all about the politics.

Now, Mr. Speaker, at the same time as we're thinking about these things and we take the concept of, it's all about politics, one step further, Mr. Speaker, let's just see if there's anything in this legislation. Maybe we should all read it together, Mr. Speaker. Is there anything in this legislation that actually provides for a penalty if they break it? Oh, Mr. Speaker, I see nothing in here about a penalty or consequence if the Act is ignored or, in fact, broken on purpose, Mr. Speaker. I mean I could take time and read this for everyone here if they haven't figured it out yet, Mr. Speaker. But my goodness — no penalties, no remedies.

[14:30]

You know, Mr. Speaker, they've done a lot, the government that is, Mr. Speaker, is doing an awful lot to say they're keeping a promise, but you know, they've made sure that there's no consequence to this. The promise is kept today; it can be broken tomorrow and no consequence, Mr. Speaker. They will rely on somebody in the media saying, you know, oh my goodness they broke this promise, three years from now, Mr. Speaker.

It's very interesting that we have an Act setting out some very serious matters that the public was obviously somewhat concerned about, Mr. Speaker, and then no penalty, no consequence. I think, Mr. Speaker, we have to take that, keep that in mind as we review this.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice in his remarks said very clearly, and I support this quote entirely, he said, you know, the legislation in front of us is intended to protect the fairness of the election process. Mr. Speaker, absolutely intended to protect the fairness of the election process.

We have to do everything we can, Mr. Speaker — whether we're in government or in opposition or just members of the public watching these things, Mr. Speaker — we have to do everything we can to ensure that the election process is fair across the board, Mr. Speaker. If there's a test about how fair this Act is to the process, Mr. Speaker, I would think this piece of legislation would fail.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice also said he was confident integrity would be enhanced by this Bill. Well, Mr. Speaker, where's the integrity when there is no consequence to breaking the Act itself? Where is the . . .

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

Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I know that the member from Moose Jaw across the way is saying something, but I don't know . . .

The Speaker: — Order. I would ask members not to bring other members into the debate and just continue on with the response to the Bill that was brought before us. The member from The Battlefords.

Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. So I repeat that the Minister of Justice said he was confident the integrity would be enhanced. But I've indicated, Mr. Speaker, integrity is something that is very clear. It stands out; you recognize it right away; and there is no questioning what integrity is all about, Mr. Speaker. If there's the possibility of unintended consequence, if there's a possibility of manipulation, and if there's no consequence to action, Mr. Speaker, we are not, we are not seeing integrity being enhanced by the piece of legislation.

So, Mr. Speaker, I indicate to the Chamber that I believe that we are seeing — in this Bill anyway, and I think we will see that in other pieces of legislation that the government has introduced — we are seeing in this piece of legislation the government's intending to inject politics into the legislative process. Mr. Speaker, this is something that we have to ensure goes beyond politics and recognizes that there is fairness needed in the delivery of legislation. Therefore, Mr. Speaker,

we are going to review this legislation with members of the Saskatchewan public and therefore, Mr. Speaker, at this point I would move that debate on Bill No. 59, *The Election Act* amendments be now adjourned.

The Speaker: — The member from The Battlefords has moved adjournment on Bill No. 59. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried.

Bill No. 60 — *The Senate Nominee Election Act*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to rise today to move second reading of *The Senate Nominee Election Act*.

Mr. Speaker, with the introduction of this Bill, this government is taking an important step towards ensuring that in the future Saskatchewan senators can be chosen democratically by the people of our province, rather than in the backrooms of Ottawa.

This Bill will authorize provincial elections held to elect individuals to be put forward as Saskatchewan nominees for federal appointment to the Senate. The number of nominees to be elected in the given election would be set by order in council depending on the number of Senate seats that are available or that may become available in the immediate future. The qualifications for a nominee are primarily those established by the constitutional requirements for a senator.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill provides that a Senate nominee election would be conducted at the same time as a provincial or federal general election, or on such other date as set by order in council.

The decision to hold a Senate nominee election would not be automatic with every provincial or federal general election. If it is not viewed as necessary to identify additional nominees at the time of a general election, there will be no Senate nominee election held at that time. The term of a Senate nominee would run from one Senate nominee election to the next. A Senate nominee may run as an independent or as a representative of a federal political party.

As this is a federal rather than a provincial position, the election spending limits and the requisite deposit for a nominee would be based on that of a federal MP [Member of Parliament]. Any matching payments to a nominee post-election would be provided federally and not provincially. Political contributions to a nominee for election purposes would not receive a political tax credit under *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act*. Similarly, the election expense limit for a candidate under this Bill is based proportionately to that of a federal MP candidate. The regulations under the Act will ensure that election expenses and other financing requirements are adopted from *The Election Act, 1996* and adapted as appropriate.

In terms of procedure, the Bill adopts *The Election Act, 1996*

process and terminology as much as possible in the conduct of voting, enumeration, balloting, final count, and return of the writ.

Mr. Speaker, the results of the election would determine the candidates in the order of preference in which they would be recommended for appointment. The order of the candidates would be based on the number of votes each received. If only one candidate ran for election, he or she would be acclaimed. If there were two or more candidates, then an election would be held to determine the order of preference for recommendation. In this manner, Mr. Speaker, we can determine who has the highest level of support from Saskatchewan people for appointment as one of our senators. In turn we can recommend to Privy Council and to the Prime Minister his or her appointment to the Senate. It is our belief that any federal government of any political stripe should not ignore this clear expression of democratic support.

Mr. Speaker, we are aware that this approach has not met with universal support in Ottawa or in some other provinces, and we are aware that Alberta's successes in this regard have come slowly and with much effort. However we are firmly of the view that democratically elected senators are a critical evolution for Saskatchewan within Canada.

Mr. Speaker, with this Bill we are not demanding drastic constitutional change in Ottawa, nor blindingly championing the unlikely dissolution of the upper chamber in Ottawa. Rather we are taking the democratic steps that are available to us and expressing our commitment to elected Senate nominees for the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, it is my very great privilege to move second reading of *An Act to provide for the Election of Saskatchewan Senate Nominees*.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Justice has moved second reading of Bill No. 60, *The Senate Nominee Election Act*. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina Coronation Park.

Mr. Trew: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure today to stand up and present somewhat of a different version of what should be going on with respect to the Senate. And just to be absolutely clear, I don't have a lock on this position, just like government doesn't have a lock on their position of an elected, effective Senate. That's broadly speaking the Government of Saskatchewan's view of the national Senate. My view of the national Senate would be one of more of a triple A position which is the same as my leader — a triple A position is abolish, abolish, abolish.

I want to try and mount why I come to this thoughtful position, Mr. Speaker. This isn't something that I just decided last night or in recent times, but the way I feel about our whole electoral system is that we need to — particularly in this era of instant information — we need to find ways to break down barriers between the electorate and elected officials, be they MLAs or be they members of parliament or city officials. But we need to find ways to reduce the barriers, the buffers that are between us.

And I submit that the Senate of Canada provides a buffer

between the electorate and their MPs, and I further submit, Mr. Speaker, that what we really do need to make our whole electoral process effective is for people to be engaged. And that's really what this Bill, *An Act to provide for the Election of Saskatchewan Senate Nominees*, I believe, is intended to do, is to engage people. And for that I congratulate members of the government for at least trying to find ways to engage people.

I am submitting that Canadian politics shouldn't be . . . We're different than politics in other countries. I'm going to use an analogy of recent events in the United States, but at the same time I want to be quick to say, Mr. Speaker, I don't favour that Canada adopt the United States version of electing senators or congress people or anything else. Our great neighbours to the south have a wonderful constitution and it has served them very well in the past. I believe it will serve them well into the future. I'm not trying to dish the United States here, but we have a different form of representative democracy in Canada, and we followed more the British model of parliament and that's a model that has served us very well.

The elected Senate has come out of a period of Western alienation, a time when Preston Manning led the Reform Party of Canada and there was many people in Western Canada, I'll describe — I think it was more in Alberta, but I'll describe it as Western Canada because there were people in Saskatchewan and British Columbia that felt equally alienated. But the whole idea of an elected Senate came out of that reform policy, that reform time, when the West was feeling blocked out of Ottawa. And I submit that this was a time of, great time of BS — that is, before Stephen. And now we have a Prime Minister that got elected out of a Calgary riding and times have somewhat changed.

So the reasons that many people wanted to have an elected — and they said effective and equal was part of it — Triple-E Senate, which this Bill doesn't address. This is simply an opportunity to nominate a senator. This is simply providing an opportunity to nominate, for people of Saskatchewan to participate in the nomination of a process that at the end of the day the Prime Minister, whoever the Prime Minister of the day is, has to take that nomination forward to the Governor General for appointment. So it's just adding one more cog in the electoral process without anything coming back at it.

We need, Mr. Speaker, more reasons to participate in voting. I said I was going to talk a little bit about our great neighbours to the south, and I'm greatly encouraged. I know that people around the world are greatly encouraged, some a little discouraged. But mostly it's universal joy with the fact that we have President-Elect Obama who is going to be . . . Clearly he's about change. Clearly he's about engaging people. Clearly there are minorities in the United States that are now looking at that model, at President-Elect Obama as potentially even a role model, and that the importance of this is, Mr. Speaker, that the United States have an elected Senate. We have an elected Senate. What I'm trying to portray is that in the United States, in great numbers, people have gone out to vote, and they have because they've been engaged unlike any engagement that they've had in recent decades.

[14:45]

I'm submitting that in Canada this Bill No. 60, which is *An Act to provide for the Election of Saskatchewan Senate Nominees*, is intended to engage the electorate. Absolutely. And I've already congratulated the government members for trying to do that — engage people. I'm submitting that there's a more effective way of engaging people, Mr. Speaker. The more effective way is to have fewer buffers.

Right now the senators of Canada are nice people. They're good people, and most of them even work hard. I'll give them that. Most of them are even working hard. but at the end of the day what they're providing is a second voice or a potential veto for any federal legislation. Whether I voted for my current MP or not, we had an opportunity and I participated in that election. We elected members of parliament to go to Ottawa to represent our views.

A Senate provides an additional buffer, and I just want to know that at all times I have access, at all reasonable times I have access to my Member of Parliament. I can write a letter. I can send an email. I can drop by at my MP's riding office if I so choose. There's various ways of connecting with elected officials. I don't find it helpful to have a senator that I don't know who my senator is. And I'm far from alone in that, far from alone in that. And I don't see a ready value in a senator being around, Mr. Speaker.

What I do know in this Bill No. 60, *An Act to provide for the Election of Saskatchewan Senate Nominees*, is there's even an attempt to limit the amount of money that a nominee can spend in the process of getting elected to be a nominee so that the name can be submitted to the Prime Minister of Canada. And the Prime Minister of Canada in turn might, might resubmit that name to the Governor General for appointment.

And for the privilege of maybe working your way through that process and maybe, maybe getting a nomination, maybe being appointed to the Senate because that's the way it is, you might make something less than what the spending limit here is. The spending limit is \$180,000. And that leads me to question — there's no tax credit for it — where does this money come from? And what favours might be involved with Senate nominees? What might they have to promise to get elected or nominated to the Senate?

I pointed out that this is one approach. It's an approach to introduce a Bill to involve the electorate in the selection of a Senate nominee for Saskatchewan. It is one way that we could go. I pointed out, Mr. Speaker, that it was done at a time when the situation was different in Western Canada. We felt we were on the outside looking in. Now some of us feel we're on the outside looking in anyway but for a completely different reason. And now we have a Prime Minister, for better or worse, who's elected out of a Calgary riding. And you know, Stephen Harper's my Prime Minister just like he's the Prime Minister of all other Canadians. And we have a great system that allows us to have a say at election time around that.

The money that this could cost, Mr. Speaker, I note that there's comment of . . . Let me just find it here. I've got it right at my fingertips. But campaign spending limits will be set by a formula based on federal parliamentary constituency limits. That would likely mean at \$180,000. So I or anyone else could

spend \$180,000 to become a Senate nominee and there's no tax credit support.

So who is it that's going to come up with \$180,000? At this time, when I see the cattle industry in a crisis, I see grain producers — I grew up on a farm and have family on a farm — I see fertilizer at \$1,200 a tonne and up. I see prices going down. The money that's spent on this could be spent in support for agriculture. It could be spent in many, many different ways.

In this same article it points out . . . I know I talk about the \$180,000 per candidate but, Mr. Speaker, let me quote from the *Leader-Post* yesterday. And the article, just so people know, can follow, it's "PM may appoint new senator." That's the headline. And this is by James Wood in yesterday's *Leader-Post* and I'm quoting from this. Quote:

The Saskatchewan Party's bill also allows for cabinet to set a stand-alone Senate election. But Justice Minister Don Morgan suggested again Monday the province doesn't want to pay the potentially more-than-\$6 million cost for a stand-alone vote and would only hold one if the federal government footed the Bill.

And I submit, Mr. Speaker, that it's the same taxpayers that are footing this \$6 million bill. When I file my income tax, some of it goes to the federal government and some of it goes to the provincial government. But it's the same. I file it at exactly the same time and the two tax structures are connected.

So, Mr. Speaker, the bottom line of all of this is there are people that feel there's a different way other than electing senators. There are those of us who would like to see the Senate simply abolished, and I think that a good number of Saskatchewan people would salute that position.

I am urging that when the time comes, that there be support for a position that my leader has taken, and that is that he has already served notice that he plans to urge that there be another question put on the ballot and that question being one of, do you even want to elect a senator? Because that's a fundamental shift in where we're at. And I think that we should, before we say let's get on with electing the senator, let's have a plebiscite; let's have . . . If we want to do it in that democratic way, let's have a vote on should we elect a senator or not. And then subsequently, if the vote was yes, well obviously we would be bound by the yes vote. And if the vote was no, obviously that should end that portion of the democratic reform. As my colleague, seatmate says, it's fairly straightforward.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's more that I would wish to speak to on this Bill, and I just might take up that opportunity. But for the moment I'm going to move that we adjourn this debate on Bill No. 60.

The Speaker: — The member from Regina Coronation Park has moved that adjournment of debate on Bill No. 60, *The Senate Nominee Election Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried.

Bill No. 61 — *The Local Government Election Amendment Act, 2008*

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

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 61, *The Local Government Election Amendment Act, 2008*. Mr. Speaker, *The Local Government Election Act* provides a legal framework for fair elections in municipalities and school divisions. This Act governs elections for mayors, Reeves, and councillors in all type of municipalities, including cities, towns, villages, rural municipalities, and northern communities. It also governs school board elections which are usually conducted by municipalities on behalf of school divisions.

Amendments to the LGEA [*The Local Government Election Act*] are generally made between municipal and school division elections. The next elections are in fall 2009. Rural municipal elections occur every year as RM [rural municipality] councillors have two-year, staggered terms.

The amendments proposed are intended to fine-tune the Bill to address minor issues that have arisen as a result of recent elections. At this time, Mr. Speaker, I will discuss amendments that address issues raised by our municipal sector partners.

SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] asked for amendments to allow councillors to stand as candidates in a by-election for mayor or reeve without resigning their council position. Without amendment, if an election were to be held and several councillors wanted to run for mayor, they would all have to resign their council position. Council might lose a quorum as a result. The municipality would then be unable to conduct business during the by-election, and a second by-election would be needed to replace councillors who resign. Mr. Speaker, this situation will be avoided through the proposed amendment in the Bill, which will let sitting councillors run in a by-election for a mayor. If they are elected mayor, they will resign their other seat.

The city of Saskatoon asked for an amendment allowing a municipality to withhold the candidate's deposit until he or she complies with the bylaw requiring disclosure of campaign contributions.

The current Act permits a municipality to pass a bylaw requiring candidates to disclose their campaign revenues and expenditures, but does not provide means of enforcing such a bylaw. The proposed amendment is similar to the provisions of *The Election Act* for provincial elections.

The current Act provided only urban and northern municipalities with the process for developing and using a voters list. Mr. Speaker, the proposed Bill provides a process for rural municipalities to develop and use a voters list instead of requiring all voters to make a declaration at the polling station. This provision is comparable to that for urban municipalities.

The provincial government decided not to go ahead with the proposal to lengthen the term of office for urban and northern

municipal and school board officials at this time. While there was support from the municipal and education sectors, other stakeholders expressed concern. As a result, we believe that more public consultation is appropriate.

A number of proposed amendments are housekeeping items that clarify procedures and make adjustments to the legislation so that it continues to meet the needs of stakeholders. For example, several amendments are being made to reflect amendments proposed to *The Education Act, 1995*. That Act will no longer require school boards to appoint a secretary-treasurer. All references to a secretary-treasurer are removed from this Act and replaced for references to school boards and their employees.

Mr. Speaker, these amendments were developed in consultation with representatives of municipal and education sector associations, including SUMA, SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities], the Saskatchewan Association of City Clerks, the Urban Municipal Administrators' Association of Saskatchewan, the Rural Municipal Administrators' Association of Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan School Boards Association, the Saskatchewan Association of School Business Officials, and New North. I would like to take the opportunity to thank those individuals who took the time to provide advice in the development of this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, this government recognizes the importance municipalities have in our province's future. We intend to continue working with municipal leaders to ensure that we have fair, responsible, and appropriate municipal governance to build the quality of life we desire and to provide a future for our families and young people.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 61, *The Local Government Election Amendment Act*.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Minister of Municipal Affairs has moved that Bill No. 62, *The Local Government Election Amendment Act, 2008* be now read the second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina Lakeview.

[15:00]

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to respond to the minister on this particular piece of legislation. Mr. Speaker, it appears that the provisions of this legislation do come from an ongoing process that has been developed for many years within the department of or the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, or whatever the present name is right now, whereby people who run into problems in local government elections can bring forward ideas for change or correction.

I think the other thing that's part of this particular Bill relates to the fact that there's a desire at the local level to have many of the rules in local elections be similar or the same as those in provincial elections or in some cases federal elections.

Mr. Speaker, this is a process that I know a number of my

colleagues on this side of the House put into place over many years. The capable people within the ministry have listened carefully, worked together with the officials in the Department of Justice, and have been able to bring forward this legislation.

Now there are a number of provisions in the legislation that relate to specific requests from municipalities or from others who are given the responsibility of administering this Act and, Mr. Speaker, those requests seem to have been reviewed quite carefully. There are a number of places where we will want to ask some questions of the various groups who have suggested the changes, and also from some of those groups that we know on this side of the House may not be as in favour of the changes that are here. My general sense is that this has been a relatively carefully drafted piece of legislation, but we think it's important that we spend time looking at the specific provisions to make sure that we catch all of the nuances of the suggestions or identify problems that may arise.

Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House we have quite a number of people who have experience either at the local government level or as being a minister involved in this particular area, and they will be looking carefully at the provisions to make sure that they're in tune with what's going on. We also may identify a few other areas where we would suggest to the minister that he may want to fine-tune this. We will be doing all of this over the next period of time, but we also understand that we want to get this completed so that it will be available for the next local elections.

So, Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to adjourn debate and have this matter adjourned. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The member from Regina Lakeview has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 61, *The Local Government Election Amendment Act, 2008*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 58

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Gantfoer that **Bill No. 58** — *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2008 (No. 2)* be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Quennell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to begin by commenting on a remark that came across the way when my colleague and seatmate, the member from The Battlefords, rose to enter into the second reading debate on this Bill, the first member from the opposition to speak on the Bill. And one of the members opposite, I believe it was the Minister of Health, said well surely you're not going to argue with the tax cuts.

And, Mr. Speaker, that's not all that we do over here and I think the Minister of Health, who's spent quite a bit of time over here, knows that, Mr. Speaker.

And we're not merely arguing or necessarily arguing at all with the income tax cuts, Mr. Speaker. I would characterize these tax cuts as the least the government could have done in the circumstances and say that politically they have done the least that they could do, Mr. Speaker.

We were in a financial situation coming up to the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, where, despite what the government had said upon coming to power, that the cupboard was bare, that the situation was stark, the financial outlook for the province and for the government, its revenues, its ability to balance the budget was, in the terms of the Premier, stark.

Well that representation of the state in which the previous NDP government had left the province and the government and its finances didn't last much more than one day of withering criticism from all sides, Mr. Speaker. It was a joke and it was quickly abandoned.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, these are the circumstances. An enormous surplus was left to this government by the previous government. No government leaving office in this province has ever left such a circumstance, such a happy circumstance, such a surplus for the incoming new government, Mr. Speaker.

Certainly 17 years ago, Mr. Speaker . . . And I know the members opposite like to talk about the 16-year record of the NDP government: four successive majority governments during which there were 16 credit upgrades, Mr. Speaker, in case the members opposite forget what that record was really about financially. But when that government came to power in 1991, it did not find itself in the circumstance where it could possibly think about income tax cuts, Mr. Speaker. And you might remember that tax increases that had been imposed by the previous Conservative government because of the debt it had created, the deficits it was running, were maintained in some form or other for a number of years until the corner was turned in the mid-1990s, Mr. Speaker. But of course much of that debt is still there.

The circumstance is different now, Mr. Speaker. The revenues of the province are much greater. The financial books of the government were left in good order. There was a surplus in place. And people were asking, people were asking, if there's a boom in the province of Saskatchewan. And it's clear that there's a boom in the province of Saskatchewan if you look at a number of the indicators, Mr. Speaker, and the government members like to point to the ones that look the best. There was a boom in the province, but people weren't feeling it, Mr. Speaker. And I would argue that many people are still not feeling it today. Mr. Speaker, I quoted some of those people in question period today, just are not feeling the boom. It is not getting to them.

And so the government had to respond. They've responded in part, in large part I would say, Mr. Speaker, with this income tax cut set out in this Bill that we're debating this afternoon, and as I said, it's the least they could have done. And I think they took the political temperature and they had to do this. I think

they would have liked to have put the tax cuts off until they got closer to an election, but in the context of the province — what people's understanding of the circumstances actually are and people's understanding of what their own personal circumstances are by comparison — this they had to do, Mr. Speaker.

But to call this tax cut, as members of the government call it, historic, I think is a little incredible, Mr. Speaker. It is not historic in any sense. It is not historic in the sense of the amount of money being returned to the Saskatchewan people by the tax cut. It is not historic in that sense. Nor is it historic in the confidence it expresses in the Saskatchewan economy, Mr. Speaker. And if I may contrast it with the record of the previous NDP government and particularly of the last term of that government, as the member from Regina Dewdney pointed out, the amount returned to citizens by this tax cut is not equal to, is not as great as the amount that was returned to the people of Saskatchewan by the sales tax cut of the previous NDP government.

But it is not an historic tax cut, Mr. Speaker. And if you add together, if you add together the income tax cuts, the property tax rebates, the business tax cuts, and the sales tax cuts that were done by the previous NDP government only in the last term of government, they dwarf, they dwarf this so-called historic tax cut, Mr. Speaker. It's not historic by the amount returned to the Saskatchewan people, and it is not historic in the ability of the government to make a tax cut, Mr. Speaker.

There was extensive income tax reform and income tax reductions after this province's books were restored to order by an NDP minister of Finance, previous to the last term of government, Mr. Speaker, that were done when the surplus, the surplus to the budget was less than \$100 million. Here we have a surplus now in excess of 2, maybe in excess of \$3 billion, Mr. Speaker, and these cuts in proportion are not historic. These cuts in proportion are dwarfed by the income tax cuts that were made by the NDP government, and in absolute numbers dwarfed by the tax cuts in last term of the NDP government overall.

These tax cuts are also not historic in the confidence they express in the Saskatchewan economy. In fact these tax cuts do not express a lot of confidence in the Saskatchewan economy, Mr. Speaker, because of the small proportion of the tax cut compared to the opportunity of the province, the opportunity of the provincial government to provide tax relief.

The NDP cuts were made when the surpluses were much smaller, as I've said, Mr. Speaker, and when oil was priced at a price even lower than it is today, Mr. Speaker. And I appreciate today's price is lower than yesterday's price, but the average price of oil while the NDP was in power over those 16 years, Mr. Speaker, was \$22 a barrel. And every one of those cuts to income tax, to business tax, to sales tax, and the property tax rebates were done within the context, Mr. Speaker, of oil priced at \$22 a barrel, Mr. Speaker.

Well these tax cuts are in the context of a price of oil that averages out perhaps at four times that, Mr. Speaker — four or five times that, Mr. Speaker — while this government has been in power. These tax cuts provide no risk to the government

revenues whatsoever. If the Saskatchewan economy had not grown after the NDP administration had made those tax cuts — and I think specifically of the income tax cuts that were made two terms ago and of the business tax cuts that were made last term — if the economy had not grown as a result of those tax cuts, the Saskatchewan government would have been hard-pressed to replace the revenues.

Significant revenues in proportion to the revenues of the province, significant revenues were given up by the NDP government in confidence that the people of Saskatchewan, given those revenues themselves, would build an economy that would more than replace those revenues, Mr. Speaker. And that is indeed what happened. The NDP had faith in the Saskatchewan economy, the Saskatchewan people, and the effects of what were in fact, Mr. Speaker, not just for the NDP but for the province of Saskatchewan, truly historic tax cuts — unlike these.

There was a cash cushion kept, Mr. Speaker. There was a cash cushion kept by the New Democratic Party government at the time. The Saskatchewan Party called it a slush fund. And the Minister of Health — who wants to enter the debate and I will in a few moments sit down so that he can; he wants to enter the debate — he, I'm sure my memory serves me correctly, called it a slush fund. The Saskatchewan Party now is keeping a much larger proportion of a much larger surplus after these tax cuts than was kept by the NDP government after its tax cuts and after its investments in the economy.

But now, Mr. Speaker, yesteryear's slush fund is this year's insurance policy, Mr. Speaker. It is a very large insurance policy. And one of two things is true: because the NDP tax cuts were much larger than the cash cushion kept; with the Saskatchewan Party government, the reverse is true. The cushion, now called an insurance policy by the same people who once called it a slush fund, is much larger than the tax cuts, Mr. Speaker.

I mean the number that all the members have heard, including the Minister of Health, is 10 per cent back to the people, 60 per cent staying in what once was called by the members opposite a slush fund, and is now called an insurance policy. Ten per cent for the people, 60 per cent in the cash cushion — the insurance policy, the slush fund, whatever we want to call it, Mr. Speaker — exactly the reverse of when the NDP cut taxes, Mr. Speaker, and then maintained nearly as large a cushion. Took some risk, but that risk was . . . And that faith in the Saskatchewan people was returned in a growing economy.

But this money is being held on to for the most part. As I said, Mr. Speaker, the government is doing the least it can do and taking the most credit that it can for doing the least it can do.

[15:15]

But one of two things is the case, Mr. Speaker, because of the amount that's being retained — the amount that is not being used either for the income tax cut being provided for by this Bill or being invested in infrastructure or being used to pay down debt. The large amount that's being retained is for one of two purposes, Mr. Speaker: either we can expect a major pre-election party with the funds retained by the Saskatchewan

Party in the so-called insurance policy, or the government opposite is not as confident in the Saskatchewan economy and is not sure that these tax cuts — politically necessary as they may feel them to be — are actually sustainable. It is one or the other, Mr. Speaker. And I don't know which it is, and time will tell.

And perhaps the members opposite seeing clouds in the horizon don't know if they're bringing rain or not, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps they don't know either. But it's an insurance policy, I suggest, more for the government's credibility than it is for any other purpose.

If a Saskatchewan Party government is confident that Saskatchewan is now this year's country — the language of the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker — then more needs to be done than the least the government can do. And more needs to be done this year. Real relief needs to be provided in respect to housing and home heating so that low-income citizens of Saskatchewan are not borrowing against next year's tax rebates, Mr. Speaker. Because the issues that brought forward this tax fund — the issues of core inflation in housing and in heating our homes — those issues are not addressed, at least this year, Mr. Speaker, by this tax cut.

This is a tax cut to everybody that pays taxes, not just the low-income taxpayers. We accept that it is a large benefit to low-income taxpayers. It is not — or at least most of it is not, Mr. Speaker — of any benefit to those who do not file income tax because they do not have income and do not appreciate that they don't . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, Mr. Speaker, if you file, there are benefits here, whether or not you pay income tax. But not everyone appreciates that, Mr. Speaker; not everyone takes the benefit of that, Mr. Speaker.

A cheque for your rent rebate, a credit against or a reduction on your natural gas bill does not require you to file income tax, perhaps something that many low-income people have never done, Mr. Speaker, have never done. Now that's a gap. That's a loophole that the most vulnerable people will fall through, Mr. Speaker. And if you wanted to see some genuine concern about them, then the government would be looking at a way of addressing that issue, Mr. Speaker. And this Act doesn't catch all those people, Mr. Speaker.

But that's not what this Act is about. This Act is about the government doing the least they can do, getting the most credit they can from it with circumstances that are far, far more happy than this government wanted to pretend that they were when they first came to power, Mr. Speaker.

As I said, we don't want to — or at least I do not, Mr. Speaker — spend a lot of time arguing against these tax cuts. We're not arguing against these tax cuts, Mr. Speaker. We're saying they are not sufficient. They are not enough, and they are not . . . For now, Mr. Speaker, more needs to be done, and more needs to be done now. I'm sure more of my colleagues will want to speak to these issues and therefore I move that we adjourn debate.

The Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Meewasin has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 58, *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2008 (No. 2)*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried.

Bill No. 43

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 43** — *The Trespass to Property Act* be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Furber: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to enter into the debate on Bill No. 43 today, *An Act respecting Trespass to Property*. I think that the aim of any legislation like this when it's brought to the legislature is to benefit all the people of Saskatchewan. And in that vein it's the job of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition to ensure that it takes into account a number of things that may not have been first thought of by the government.

And I've read through the Bill and read through some of the comments provided by members on the Bill, and I have some questions regarding the onus placed upon the owner of the land that's in question here. It is stated that signage must be in place in order to make this legislation come into play. And so what is the onus on the owner to provide signage to that effect? How close together do trespassing signs have to be? Do they have to be written in both official languages? A number of questions regarding what is the onus upon the owner.

Another part of the Bill with regard to the ownership piece of it is the definition or interpretation in the Act of enclosed land. And it says that enclosed land means that it's land that is surrounded by a fence, a natural boundary, or a combination of the two. And it's enclosed in a manner that indicates the occupier's intention to keep persons off the occupier's premises.

Now a fence isn't necessarily an intention to omit people from entering the property, but it might just be to keep animals in. And so just because you have a fence there doesn't mean you're trying to keep people out. And so it's up to the interpretation of somebody that might trespass to make that judgment. And so I don't know how you enforce a law where somebody can simply say, it wasn't my intention to break in; I just assumed that the fence was there to keep animals in and not people out.

It's interesting to note also who benefits from this Bill. Was somebody calling for this? I know I spent a great deal of time talking with constituents and canvassing constituents, and in no case when I've spoken with them have they brought this forward to me to bring forward to the legislature. So I'm curious as to who was calling for this and for what purpose the government brought it forward.

What is the impetus of the Bill? What is the Bill intended to stop? What is it intended to keep from happening? Are there specific examples that the government could provide for that purpose?

It appears that because trespassing is prohibited, there may be

unintended consequences of this Bill, including protests. I know a number of agriculture rallies that have taken place on the legislature, and they certainly drive on Crown land and in roadways to get here. Now is it an unintended consequence of this legislation that enables the government to stop a protest like that, peaceful or otherwise? And so is that an unintended consequence or is that the intended consequence? And so I think if it's the intended consequence, the government ought to come out and say it. They don't define Crown land in this Bill in any way, shape, or form.

So does it include highways in the province? And so if there's a demonstration, peaceful or otherwise, or if there's a fundraiser that seems to bother one person that drives down the highway, can that be stopped arbitrarily and can the person be fined under the legislation?

Are sidewalks included? Is there a case where you'll have folks protesting in the front of the legislature or downtown Saskatoon or Prince Albert in a peaceful demonstration where this Bill can now come into play and those people be forced to leave or consequently fined? And is that an intended consequence of this Bill, or is that an unintended consequence?

Is this government so afraid of the decisions they might make in the future and the ones that they've made now, where they've seen over 2,000 people gather at a peaceful demonstration in Saskatoon to oppose their policies, did that frighten them so much that they brought this Bill forward in order to stop something like that?

Why is it that they don't define what Crown land is? And can we look forward to a definition of Crown land by this government?

Now the members over there laugh and think this is funny, and it's unfortunate that they bring a Bill forward that has possible consequences like this and laugh at what might be the outcome. I think people see through what the intended consequences of this Bill are. It's transparent and it's a little unfortunate.

Additionally it would be interesting to note who was consulted in regard to this Bill. Did the government consult with property owners that frequently have hunters on their land? It says specifically that the Bill doesn't apply to hunters, trappers, fishers, but it says nothing about people who like to take a hike. So if at the end of your hike you shoot an animal, you're allowed to trespass. But it's not the case if you're simply out walking. So if you go out for a walk with a gun and shoot something, it's okay. But if you go out for a walk without the intention of killing an animal, it's not okay under this Act.

So interesting to note who was consulted. Were peace officers consulted? And do they foresee issues with the enforcement of a Bill like this? How will they enforce a Bill that has 200 peaceful demonstrators on Crown land and the government decides that they don't want them any more and so they invoke Bill 43? Have they consulted with peace officers who'd effectively have to issue tickets to 200 people at a peaceful demonstration?

And so there are a number of questions that we've got in reference to this Act that either wasn't well written or wasn't

well presented in second reading. So we'll take some of these questions or all of these questions to the people in this province and ask them what their views are and to the stakeholders. And we'll bring it back and try and make improvements as is our job as the loyal opposition. With that, I move to adjourn debate.

The Speaker: — The member from Prince Albert Northcote has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 43, *The Trespass to Property Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried. Thank you.

Bill No. 57

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff that **Bill No. 57 — *The Land Titles Amendment Act, 2008*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased today to rise to speak to the second reading of Bill No. 57, *An Act to amend The Land Titles Act, 2000*.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to rise to speak to this Bill and, Mr. Speaker, I also appreciate the comments of members that have been made prior to my speaking on this Bill.

[15:30]

By and large, Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the government for taking certain steps within this legislation. And, Mr. Speaker, in doing that, I think I should point out some of those measures.

But first of all before I do that, Mr. Speaker, I want to remind members in the Chamber and the folks at home who are watching about what the minister responsible for the land titles Bill in front of us said during his introductory remarks in this regard. The minister's remarks which appear on page 1680 of *Hansard* for November 17, Mr. Speaker — that was just yesterday — the minister stated, and I quote:

Saskatchewan's land registry system is known nationwide for innovation, reliability, and customer service. The amendments contained in the Bill will enhance the reliability and security of Saskatchewan's land registry.

Well, Mr. Speaker, in my opening remarks to this Bill, I want to congratulate the minister for his words. But more importantly, Mr. Speaker, for his acknowledgement that indeed the system that is land titles in this province that has been developed over many years, Mr. Speaker, by some very hard-working people within the land titles system, within the legal community, and within the legislature here with a number of different ministers, Mr. Speaker — primarily New Democratic Party ministers, Mr. Speaker — I thank the minister opposite for his acknowledgement that indeed this system is known nationwide for its innovation, reliability, and customer service.

That having been said, Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge as well that some people in Saskatchewan have experienced some difficulties with the land title system over the years. And, Mr. Speaker, many of those difficulties were dealt with over the last five or six years, Mr. Speaker, as the land titles system moved from a paper-based system to a digital or electronic system, Mr. Speaker. And I think those who are dealing with land issues in the legal community, Mr. Speaker, speak volumes of good things about the changes, that how more efficient and more effective the new system is at managing the intricacies of land titles.

Now, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that I think the public is going to be pleased about with this legislation is that it tries to settle concerns that people have with regards to losing their homes as a result of fraudulent activity. Mr. Speaker, it hasn't happened very often in Saskatchewan, but there's always the fear that it could happen.

One of our — in fact not one of our, Mr. Speaker — our most important possession is our home, Mr. Speaker, what we refer to as, what is our shelter. And when we have invested in that piece of property, Mr. Speaker, and in many cases as we age, the value that is in that piece of property, Mr. Speaker, whether it's farm land or a single house or, in some cases, the business that we own as individuals or in partnership with friends, families, or acquaintances, Mr. Speaker, these properties are indeed our most valuable possessions. Therefore we are often worried about how easy it is to lose that possession if there is someone out there who is determined to take it. Well, Mr. Speaker, this legislation attempts to relieve some of those concerns and, Mr. Speaker, that is very important.

Also speaking before I spoke, Mr. Speaker, the member from Regina Lakeview had a number of interesting and very astute comments with regards to this Bill. And, Mr. Speaker, in that regard let me quote from the member of Regina Lakeview who spoke yesterday in the Legislative Assembly here, November 17. And I quote from the member, Regina Lakeview, this corporation, meaning ISC [Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan], Mr. Speaker, the new land titles group, ISC:

This corporation was an attempt, and I think it's been a very successful attempt, to modernize the land registry in Saskatchewan because what everybody knows is that the ability to have a chance to borrow money against land or to know for sure that you have the use of land in developing business, in providing security for your home, making sure that you've provided for your family — whether it's a farming operation, ranching, mining, or an industry — is absolutely crucial.

Mr. Speaker, the member from Regina Lakeview certainly puts the whole picture in context, that land titles register is not just personal property but business property, farming property, and, Mr. Speaker, the critical importance of that registry to the security of the property.

He also indicated, Mr. Speaker, how successful ISC has been. The efficiency and customer satisfaction has certainly increased over the years.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, he acknowledged that this legislation

is one more step. There have been many steps in building the efficiencies into *The Land Titles Act*. This legislation is just one more step, another step along the road to making sure that businesses can rely on the land titles system we have in Saskatchewan, run by ISC, so that further development of business in Saskatchewan can continue without any restrictions.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation is indeed fairly complicated. It's complicated in the sense that it deals with title insurance. It deals with the oil and gas sector and what they call . . . I'm just looking for the language in here now, Mr. Speaker, as it applies to the oil and gas sector. It has something to do with fractured titles whereby there are numerous titles relating to minerals, Mr. Speaker, along specific surface titles.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's a fairly complicated piece of legislation that's going to require a little bit of work in committee, some consultation work prior to going to committee. And therefore, Mr. Speaker, knowing that we still have some consultation to do, knowing that we have some questions that we need answered before sending the Bill to committee, I would move, Mr. Speaker, that debate on Bill No. 57, *An Act to amend The Land Titles Act, 2000* be now adjourned.

The Speaker: — The member from The Battlefords has moved that Bill No. 57, *The Land Titles Amendment Act, 2008* be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried.

Bill No. 9

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Gantfoer that **Bill No. 9 — *The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Amendment Act, 2008*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and it's certainly nice to be able to stand up in the Assembly here and speak to the Assembly here today on Bill 9, *An Act to amend the Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Act*. There's some parts of this Bill that certainly we're agreeable in the terms to. We as an opposition always want to ensure that we're looking at these with a co-operative and constructive mind as possible, and there are a couple of pieces that we certainly have no major problem with or are agreeable as I said.

And I think that we can certainly agree that annual reports do not disclose personal information. And the kind of personal information that we believe should be protected, as this Bill describes, are names of individuals who have retired or died during a period covered, as well the names of superannuation or other allowances or benefits granted in individual cases — any other personal information respecting any of those individuals. So with the element within this Bill that protects protection of information, protects the identity of individuals, we certainly support that aspect.

We can certainly also agree on the proposed minor amendment regarding the calculation of pension benefits for a spouse. We will be co-operative there. But as I said, part of our role as opposition is to both be co-operative but also to be constructive. And the thrust of this Bill just isn't sellable with the voters of Saskatchewan; thus it's not appropriate that it's being put forward. In fact it's offside with my constituents. It's offside with people across Saskatchewan.

And the piece that's very contentious is the amendment that would allow for an individual to collect a salary and a pension at the same time for the same work. And this is what we have referred to as the double-dipping Bill. This is the thrust of this Bill, the main purpose of this Bill, and we simply don't support this principle nor do the people of Saskatchewan.

We're talking about individuals here, Mr. Speaker, who are employed in a senior role within government for many years and that are simply one day retiring and sitting in the same desk, now being rehired, receiving now a paycheque on top of the paycheque they're already receiving through the defined benefit pension. And that pension plan of course is funded directly from the GRF, from the General Revenue Fund, as is their salary. They haven't had a change in employment, a change in role, and it's just not healthy within an organization.

I think it's really important that we get this point across that this part just really doesn't sit well with the Saskatchewan public and certainly not my constituents. I know that the Sask Party brought forward legislation last spring. Many pieces were very debatable and of concern for Saskatchewan people, maybe no more so on a couple that weren't maybe seen in a broader debate.

But I know from spring session until now, I hear time and time again and have had so many phone calls from individuals who are really concerned about the unaccountability Act that was brought forward in the spring, that being the Bill that allowed ministers to authorize or to cut cheques for up to \$350,000 without any scrutiny, without responsibility. And this Bill was pulled. I know that the government were rather embarrassed when they put this Bill out so they chose to pull it, which was a good choice for them. They should have never had the audacity to put that Bill out in the first place. But they pulled it, and the Saskatchewan public has certainly had concerns since.

And many times you'll bump into somebody and say, you know, I think one of the biggest concerns is when they point to that Bill and say, you know, that tends to point to the direction that this government will go at some point. And that's from an accountability perspective.

I know the Minister from Environment's asking kind of how many phone calls did we receive there. And the answer would be numerous, numerous.

And I can talk about here in Regina. In fact as MLAs we attend many events, whether it's in the business community or social organizations. And so many individuals who have a good strong memory in this province, who lived through the '80s and watched government at that time, a least accountable time for government, arguably in North America, occurred right here in Saskatchewan with their cousins and our Premier working for

them.

And this is the kind of reminder that just makes them feel uncomfortable with the direction or potential direction of this new government. But the reason I bring this piece of legislation up is because what we're seeing here today is a reintroduction of a piece of legislation that brings equal contempt from the Saskatchewan public. This was brought forward again by the Saskatchewan Party, and I'm incredibly surprised, rather appalled, that this legislation's been brought forward again, this double-dipping Bill that simply is completely offside with the Saskatchewan public.

To go straight to the General Revenue Fund which is supplied by taxpayers across this province — hard-working families, hard-working business people putting those dollars into those coffers — are now going to be used in a way that just isn't appropriate, and putting exorbitant salaries into the hands of a select few, and not healthy in the end for our public service as a whole.

[15:45]

So, Mr. Speaker, you know, it's a question that we have to ask. Is this double-dipping legislation simply a very costly but simple solution to something that's a little bit more complex? When I'm talking about something that's more complex, that might be succession planning in the public service or it certainly is closing some loopholes that have been identified by auditors.

I think that it's a shame that Saskatchewan taxpayers are going to be on the hook for a poor policy of our current government here as opposed to fixing the loopholes, the challenges that are occurring where there's a circumstance where someone's double-dipped when they shouldn't. Because the thing is, Mr. Speaker, that rules and regulations are put in place in society for a reason and with best interests. Now not everybody abides them, Mr. Speaker. We can always do better to make sure that those rules and regulations make sense, but that they also can be adapted to close those gaps.

I think we can look at a speeding limit as an example that's put in place for public safety. Not everybody abides it and there's a consequence for which one pays, but you're not always caught speeding as well, Mr. Speaker. And just the same as this double-dipping, certainly there's been some circumstances of double-dipping over the years that have been inappropriate. But instead of addressing the issue through legislation and changing the policy, we're seeing simply the rules and regulations being tossed out the window and saying, go ahead and do it. Well, Mr. Speaker, the answer to individual speeding on the roads isn't to simply say, well let's take the speed limits off the roads. Safety is too important.

I think we could liken this as well to if we look at some of the RMs across Saskatchewan. And they have value for rules and restrictions within their domain there. And I guess we can look at some of the economic activity we have. And if we're looking at the heavy haul truck routes that are established and the big trucks, the B-trains, I believe a B-train, Mr. Speaker, is equal to almost 10,000 passes of a pickup truck — one pass of a B-train equivalent to almost 10,000 of a pickup truck. And this is a

concern for RMs on the note that they have heavy-haul routes laid out, but that they're not always followed by truck drivers. And I know that RMs work their best to try to address this solution. Some have even gone into different ways of enforcing. They've been very resourceful in this, and they look for solutions from other levels of government and other levels of support.

But the reason this is a very similar circumstance is that what RMs aren't saying is, get rid of the heavy-haul roads and let them drive wherever, because that would simply be eroding the public road infrastructure at a huge cost to taxpayers, simply eroding that infrastructure at a huge cost. And it just shouldn't, shouldn't be allowed. So the answer isn't to say, oh, get rid of those heavy-haul routes; get rid of speed limits. The answer is to work your best to fix the problems.

And so when we are looking at this legislation here that protects the Saskatchewan taxpayer and makes sure we have a healthy public service, and that where there is opportunity for vertical movement and succession within that, that this just doesn't work for Saskatchewan people. It doesn't protect their dollars that they place into government coffers. It doesn't offer them trust in their government. And it's offside with the Saskatchewan people.

So we have questions I guess about, you know, why was this brought forward; why wasn't there more thoughtful debate as to how they could have fixed the problem that actually existed and how individuals can double-dip right now. And you know, there's fundamental questions about who was consulted in this process. And you know, I wonder if there was other alternatives that were explored before this amendment was brought forward again, because it was incredibly offside with the people in the spring session when it was brought forward. It's equally offside now. And it's a simple response that comes at a huge cost to Saskatchewan taxpayers.

When we talk about allowing or creating an environment for an individual to draw a pension from their position, the next day be drawing that salary, we're talking about creating environments where someone's immediately taking almost 170 per cent increase in their salary. This isn't in line with the kind of increases Saskatchewan people across the board are seeing.

What is something that Saskatchewan people are facing across the board are costs. And Saskatchewan people are really concerned about costs and affordability, and I know it's a big concern to my constituents. I know it's a concern across communities across Saskatchewan, whether that be housing, whether that be transportation, whether that be food, whether that be their property taxes. And we need to make sure our government's aware of those costs and are working towards those. But this completely displays a complete disconnect between this government and Saskatchewan people and, in effect, it could create a real bottleneck within our public service as well. By allowing individuals to exercise this right that would be allowed through this legislation, we could really prevent vertical movement within our public service.

And I know that there's likely challenges within the Public Service Commission or within the public service just the same way as there is across labour markets across Saskatchewan. We

are in a hot economy and we do need to plan for the succession beyond the baby boomer generation that we have employed. But we can do this in a more thoughtful way than bringing forward the double-dipping policy such as we see here today.

I think it's really important to recognize that when we're looking at this double-dipping, it's only for a select few individuals that this would be built into, but at a huge cost. These are individuals with defined-benefit pensions, which means they're assured their exact percentage for the rest of their life. Well I think this shows again what a disconnect and how offside this legislation is with Saskatchewan people as so many people have been affected by this global economic turmoil, this historic market drop.

I know I have so many constituents who are putting off, postponing their retirements right now as they're concerned looking at their defined contribution funds or looking at their RRSPs [registered retirement savings plan] or their pooled investments that they have because they've taken such a hit. And at the same time, while these individuals are postponing retirement, they're continuing to pay taxes. And they're pushing off being able to move out of their business, and they're continuing to work and pay taxes. The very taxes that they're paying at the same time are going to these double-dippers who have the Cadillac of a pension — being defined-benefit pension — and then are drawing this salary again. And we're talking about senior-level positions that will be exercising this opportunity here.

It's just, as I've said, it's offside with the Saskatchewan people. It's offside with what's going on in our global economic challenges. And this side just really doesn't support it. You know, I think it's important that we realize that there's many financial ramifications that this legislation could bear, even far beyond what we're talking about here today. And whether that's severe congestion in the public service or the actual financial costs that are going to be borne through this and at the expense of hard-working Saskatchewan people and ratepayers, it's just not appropriate. We need to stand up for the public. We need more transparency, more accountability than we're getting here right now, and that's simply what we're calling for.

For all these reasons, Mr. Speaker, the legislation must have a much longer, much broader, much wider consultation than it's had to this point. I'm appalled in fact that we are debating in this House again, because I thought the right decision was made back in the spring not to move forward with this Bill. I hope to continue to hear from constituents and people across the province who are concerned by this legislation. Certainly I invite anybody with a different perspective on this as well to contact me.

But on that note there needs to be more debate, more thoughtful consideration of this Bill. So at this time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will move adjournment of this debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — It has been moved to adjourn debate on this Bill. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — Carried.

Bill No. 46

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Stewart that **Bill No. 46 — *The Labour Market Commission Amendment Act, 2008*** be now read a second time.]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I recognize the member for Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's good to have the opportunity to be able to rise and make a number of comments on this Act that will amend the Labour Market Commission. Mr. Speaker, often before we can truly understand where we're going with some of these things, we really need to understand where we have come and the process that has been building over many years to get to the point where the Labour Market Commission was put in place and has been doing its work, just really getting going over the last couple of years.

Many years ago and long before I was in politics, I remember a great deal of discussion talking about the enacting of the Labour Force Development Board. And really what it did — and we have to be going back about at least 15 years, 14 to 15 years when the Labour Force Development Board was put in place — and what it was doing at that time, even then people realized that to have a better coordination, to have a real focus on our labour market and labour force and be able to develop the areas that were needed and areas where there may be gaps, that there needed to be a committee in place. This Labour Force Development Board that would look at big picture overview and work towards making sure that our labour market in Saskatchewan fit the needs that were there.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, a lot of the areas that were looked at really tried to draw in a lot of the advantages and resources that we have in the province, mainly utilizing our regional colleges in a more appropriate way, SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology], along with the universities, making sure that students came out of high school with the appropriate skills that they needed and were able to move into the fields of their choice, had the appropriate support so they could be well-prepared for the labour market here in the province of Saskatchewan.

Over a number of years . . . And I believe the initial funding for the Labour Force Development Board came from the federal government. And I'm not certain on this, but I believe that's where some of the focus came from on the initial board as it was set up. But as we moved along, you looked at other provinces, their labour force development boards fell by the wayside. So it came to the point in time when Saskatchewan's Labour Force Development Board was the only one that was still in operation.

But we realized then that there needed to be some changes made, the structure needed to be changed, and also the focus needed to be changed and be a little more all-encompassing. Hence we moved from the Labour Force Development Board into the Labour Market Commission — its expanded and enhanced vision that it had for the province bringing together all partners to work towards labour market issues and solutions

for those labour market issues and what needed to be there.

I don't think there's anything more frustrating, and I think when we look at any issue — when we talk about dealing with governments or whether it's dealing with different sectors — we all realize that there needs to be a point in time and a spot for all of us to come together, do some networking, do some comparisons, and work together to provide solutions that fit the best for our province. And that's really what the Labour Market Commission put in place.

I know there was a huge amount of work that went into the structure, making sure that we had appropriate representation, the best people that we could find to provide the direction and the input into the commission. And really, when we look at just some general points about the Labour Market Commission and the Labour Market Partnership, and it was created under legislation and it was formed on a basis that labour market planning and coordination is best achieved through a partnership between labour, business, education and training institutes, government, and other stakeholders to essentially connect the dots within Saskatchewan's labour market.

[16:00]

The Labour Market Commission will have an industry focus on providing advice on Saskatchewan's key labour market issues. It sounds pretty straightforward, but I know it took a great deal of work to put in place and was off and running and providing some good advice.

So, Mr. Speaker, now we see that the Labour Market Commission is being changed, downsized, and this strikes me as being very odd when we've seen just today some of the sector committees put in place for Enterprise Saskatchewan — huge number of people brought together to give advice to the government, but yet they're cutting the Labour Market Commission to a smaller size, downsizing it.

A great deal of effort was put into making sure that all sectors were represented, that there was fair representation and advice from all sectors that were necessary were being brought into the Labour Market Commission. So we all recognize that that's important that you have the appropriate balance and the appropriate voices at the table when you are making decisions that affect the province as a whole.

So I'm not sure why the government is looking at changing the Labour Market Commission, downsizing the number of board members that are on there. Maybe they feel that some sectors aren't important; maybe they feel that some sectors' voices aren't worth hearing on the board and on the commission. I'm not sure. But like I say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there was a great deal of work that went into making sure we had the appropriate balance on this commission.

So it's somewhat of a disappointment to see the changes being made, when the government has talked about hearing from stakeholders, building our economy, and making sure that Saskatchewan's prepared for the future, to see some steps being taken that are regressive in many people's views.

One area that I see is being changed . . . And I haven't gone

through all of the background information; I've been working my way through. But I see that one of the existing provisions that is being changed is the social economy, which it's a definition that refers to the non-for-profit sector that seeks to enhance the social, economic, and environmental conditions of communities and includes the voluntary sector. And I see when we look at the explanatory notes that, throughout the piece on the amendments to *The Labour Market Commission Act*, the social economy definition is being removed from the Act throughout the whole Labour Market Commission Act. Anything referring to the social economy is being removed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the big advantages that Saskatchewan has is its quality of life. One of the big determinants for young people that are coming out of university and moving into the workforce, looking to establish careers, looking to settle down and build a family, is quality of life. And a social economy leads into that. The social economy enhances those priorities within the province of Saskatchewan so that young people and families will find what they are looking for in our province.

We often take for granted the things that are closest to us. We don't take advantage or don't talk enough about the advantages that we have here in Saskatchewan. We don't talk about the clean environment. We don't talk about the lots of wide open spaces, the reasonable housing, the reasonable distances in most of our communities that we have to travel to and from work, short commute times. These are all part of the social aspect of our jobs which is becoming more and more important to young people. So why all of a sudden do we go strictly to, I would assume, a business model that the social economy and the social economy that's important to our communities is no longer being given any type of visibility in this Act?

Mr. Speaker, it raises many questions, and there's a number of questions that need to be asked when we look at this Bill when we get into committee. I mean really there's more of an obligation on behalf of government to make sure that Saskatchewan meets the challenges for economic growth. It isn't just the bottom line of dollars and cents. There's much more to it when we look at quality of life and our social and economic development, but the social economy needs to be part of the considerations when we are looking at the big picture.

We are experiencing a labour shortage in many areas, and there is a large gap between what the government is doing and what actually needs to be done to address that. The changes in this Bill, does it enhance what's being done or does it really move us backwards and take away many of the aspects that are important to many people?

We — and I mean many of us who have been involved, whether it's the Labour Force Development Board in its early stages, whether it's the new generation of the Labour Market Commission — have a great deal of respect for the work that these people have done over many years to build the networks, to build the connections.

And in many cases, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to build the trust. To build the trust between different sectors that while we may speak somewhat different of a language, we may use terminology somewhat different, our goals are the same. That

trust that's been built and the work that's been done is invaluable to the success of the Labour Market Commission, and you cannot underestimate the value of the work that's been done.

And that's what I'm afraid these changes do is shift the direction, change the people that have been involved, change a lot of the networking, the relationships, and the trust that's been built over a number of years, and shift it in a totally different direction. Are we starting from zero? Are we building on those good relationships that have been established?

And that's an important point because does it move us forward or, like I said, Mr. Deputy Speaker, does it put us backwards? Does it move us back a number of years especially at a time when the economy of the province of Saskatchewan is moving ahead? There is lots of demands. There are many shortages in many sectors that are out there. We need to be moving ahead. This is not a time for the Government of Saskatchewan to be moving the Labour Market Commission backwards and making it start again from the beginning, to redo work, good relationships, the networking, the trust that has been built to this point. We should be moving ahead, not backwards.

Mr. Speaker, throughout the current boom it's clearly evident and I think the Saskatchewan Party has made it clear that it believes labour to be an impediment to growth. Not only when we look at the changes that are made to the Labour Market Commission but when we look at the committees that have been released, the sector committees that have been released from Enterprise Saskatchewan to date. A huge amount of people — huge amount of people — from all over the province that were appointed to boards and sector committees that will meet on a regular basis, but there is no committees that deal with labour or labour market.

It seems to be viewed that we will carry on and Saskatchewan's economy will do well in spite of ignoring a whole sector of the population, a whole sector of the taxpaying population in the province of Saskatchewan, ignoring a whole sector of the taxpaying, very mobile portion of the population. And that I believe, Mr. Speaker, is a mistake.

So who did the Saskatchewan Party consult with before drafting this legislation? And when we talk about Enterprise Saskatchewan being given a seat on the commission or taking over a seat on the commission, however you want to put it, it's very much an unknown entity. While the Saskatchewan Party has talked about it, Enterprise Saskatchewan is still an unknown entity. And what direction are they going to take, what direction are they going to move the Labour Market Commission? And it's really, really a huge unknown at this point in time. And, Mr. Speaker, I think there would be many people across the province that would say quite clearly that they disagree with the Labour Market Commission being folded into a new entity that we're not sure where it's going.

And I can't express strongly enough the concern that all the work that has gone into the Labour Market Commission, all of the consultation, and I just can't stress enough that the good working relationships, the trust that has been built, the comfort and understanding that has been built between the parties, between the sectors that are represented on the Labour Market

Commission, that is truly too valuable to be tossed aside. And it will really put the Labour Market Commission back years in the work that it has done and is on the verge of doing in this exciting time for the province of Saskatchewan. I have to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that it truly is not a time to be moving backwards. It is not a time to be moving backwards.

So while there is a bit of consultation, or a fair bit of consultation actually, and a number of questions that still need to be asked on the changes that are being put forward to the Labour Market Commission, Mr. Deputy Speaker, at this point in time to give myself and my colleagues time to do more consultation and ask questions and seek advice from stakeholders across the province who have a great deal to say about the Labour Market Commission — because there isn't a sector in the province that isn't struggling with labour shortage; that isn't looking at retraining for workers that they may currently have; that isn't looking for improvements in their sector and in their area — so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would adjourn debate on this Bill so that my colleagues and I will be able to do the research that's needed. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adjourn debate?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — It's been agreed. Carried.

Bill No. 49

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. McMorris that **Bill No. 49 — *The Ambulance Amendment Act, 2008*** be now read a second time.]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Fairview.

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am pleased to rise on second reading of the Bill 49, *The Ambulance Amendment Act*, and I wish to acknowledge all those who are obviously listening, but as well as who had made comments on the Bill. And we would under this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, under this Bill, the minister outlined that there were . . . was repealing some obsolete sections under the Act and with those we have, we're not overly concerned with those. We agree with those.

I want to say at this time as well that our side of the House is also very grateful for the work that our ambulance operators and the personnel who operate those ambulances perform. I know in my own city of Saskatoon, many times the residents of Saskatoon witness the work that these people do. They work very much in the public eye and their work is very much appreciated.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are a lot of questions I think that we will need to be asked about this Bill, but one of the other things the minister also talked about, the paramedics and having them be self-regulating, and that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is overdue. And we're also quite pleased that with the expanded role of

paramedics, not only with the ambulance system but as well with the health care system.

There are a lot of these . . . I would say that these moves are heading in the right direction and are positive for health care. And however, Mr. Deputy Speaker, being in Saskatchewan there's obviously a lot of distances that need to be travelled, the expansion or the rural areas, and the coverage, and we all know the challenges that this poses for the carriers.

[16:15]

Other changes, and that the minister said that he was having ongoing discussions with Saskatchewan Emergency Medical Services Association, that hopefully will help to develop the roles and improve health care quality in the province.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have in Saskatchewan . . . Saskatchewan has a history of rising to challenges that we have in health care, provision of health care services, particularly in transportation and in dealing with the health care needs of Saskatchewan people. And our party believes that there should be more consultation, more consultations to deal with issues and we should be out talking to the people of Saskatchewan.

As I mentioned, I know the minister has said he has had ongoing discussions with Saskatchewan Emergency Medical Services Association. I know our side, when we were in government those discussions were held, but it is never a bad idea, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to continue those discussions. And if an Act such as *The Ambulance Amendment Act* is opened up, it is always appropriate that perhaps it gives us an opportunity to look further and determine the other needs and talk to people in rural areas — not only rural, but in the cities — to find out what other decisions or changes that can be made. It gives us an opportunity to discuss further our health care system which is always evolving and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it also is a benefit to those operators and personnel which I spoke of earlier.

I just want to further add that the work that they do, and the personnel and operators that are continually open to discussions, they are eager to put forward ideas. And it is times like these when we have an Act that we should take that opportunity, take the time, as many of the people who my colleagues have spoken on this have suggested, and I would say to you that I support that idea.

There are many stakeholder groups that perhaps that we should be talking to before we rush headlong into making these amendments. Again I have said that some of the more housekeeping amendments, I think everyone can agree to those, and I think those we can move on. And those are not necessarily the problem. But in our ever-changing world that we have, there are many other issues that come forward. We have looked at . . . And perhaps in the issues of larger regional boards, that that has to be taken into account, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we want to move in an area such as Bill 49, *The Ambulance Amendment Act*.

It is good news, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Minister of Health has gone forward and proposed changes. He has indicated that he has discussed in his . . . In *Hansard* here I see, and has “. . . discussed these amendments with representatives

of the regional health authorities and with SEMSA, the Saskatchewan Emergency Medical Services . . .” He says that: “These groups support the changes.” And he hopes that, I quote here: “I am confident that this spirit of co-operation will move us forward as . . . [the] emergency medical services sector continues to evolve to meet the need of patients.”

And I think that’s important for all of us to take account of — that the sector is evolving — and it is important that we continue, that we continue to strive to meet the needs of the patients. And I would just suggest, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that, as many who have spoken, that these types of situations that because it is evolving, that when we take the opportunity to open up the Act and make changes, that we should go further, hold consultations, talk to all the stakeholder groups, talk to our city and rural residents, and take a wider approach perhaps than what is being taken here. And I would perhaps suggest to the minister that he would pause for a second, look at this, take some time and do the things that are necessary for the people of Saskatchewan.

An Hon. Member: — What minister is that?

Mr. Iwanchuk: — That’s the Minister of Health. And so knowing that the Minister of Health would be open and hoping that he does agree with a consultative type of approach, I would make those suggestions to him. As he said, the sector continues to evolve and to meet and he would like to make changes to meet the need of patients. And I think it is important to, first of all, not assume that he knows the needs of those patients, that I think it’s important that he consult those patients and determine what those needs are.

One of the others and other than just consulting, perhaps this is an opportunity for us to expand this legislation before it is passed. We can always strive to improve ambulance services, improve delivery of emergency health care. It would be positive for the province to take this on, to hold discussions, to listen to people. And I am concerned somewhat, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that perhaps . . . that in fact this was not done; that this might be a missed opportunity for us here, for the people of Saskatchewan to deal with some very, very serious issues.

And as I mentioned previous, the operators and the personnel who do this work, the dangers that they face, perhaps there are other issues that we should be looking at that are important. And I did mention that they are in the public eye. Perhaps if I could put it this way, in our own Saskatoon experience, many times, whether it be family members, neighbours, other citizens have all been part of, have used this service, or in fact have had family members use this service, have had neighbours. So this is the type of service, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we all come in contact with, that we all rely on.

And I again mention that the Minister of Health’s . . . that there is an evolving system; that we always have to keep an eye on this. And this would be a great opportunity when we have opened the Act up to have a close look at all these, at all the possible variables that exist, do the necessary due diligence on this, and so that we can meet.

And I would just like to make a few comments also on the rural areas which pose their own particular concerns, and to have a

look and perhaps look closer at the needs. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have all . . . in the cities here are in closer contact but the rural areas pose a special concern especially in the delivery of this service. And I think that we should always be looking at this, always looking at the service that needs to be provided.

Again it is much like the profession now being self-regulated — the paramedics profession. And that’s an evolving profession too. And that took many years to do, but it was also under sort of constant review and that brought that sort of policy forward.

These paramedics in our system who are expanding their roles and perhaps see expanded roles in the ambulance system and in the health care systems, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have to be aware of these. We have to understand and perhaps we should be talking to them more to understand how they see their system evolving with the new technologies that are out there, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It would be well worthwhile to pause and to say to them, what more can you suggest that we should be doing? Mr. Deputy Speaker, it never hurts to talk to people. We can never lose when we do that.

And I, just for the bit of work that’s been done here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would offer kudos to those who have gone out and done this work. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we can do more. We can always do more here. And in health care particularly — being the prime concern in this province — we should be, we should be concerned with doing more and doing better, doing better. So what better time than, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with Bill 49, *The Ambulance Amendment Act* to start doing that good work that is necessary.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know that some of my colleagues wish to make further comments, and on this Bill there are more questions that we should have. We would like to see those consultations move forward. We would like to see the due diligence done on this Bill, the careful study of it. There’s many questions we have. And with that, I would move to adjourn debate.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — It has been moved that we adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — Carried.

Bill No. 53

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. McMorris that **Bill No. 53 — *The Medical Profession Amendment Act, 2008*** be now read a second time.]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan): — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Eastview.

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees. *The Medical Profession Act* . . . I wanted to say a few things before I actually talk about the Bill.

We support the College of Physicians and Surgeons as the self-regulatory body of physicians and surgeons in Saskatchewan, and the Saskatchewan Medical Association as the organization that represents the physicians and the doctors. Everybody agrees that the important contribution that doctors make to the system . . . and they are of course continually and every year the most respected and trusted profession when people are polled.

The amendment that's proposed in *The Medical Profession Act* allows the College of Physicians and Surgeons to share information regarding certain investigations — example, quality of care issues like patient death. They can share them with the appropriate stakeholders who are doing similar investigations or reviews. Of note is the limitation of only sharing information regarding investigations and issues surrounding patient care, including patient death.

It does not allow any information sharing around physician discipline issues, investigations, or competency hearings of physicians. It is limited to investigations that are ongoing, that perhaps are being done by another organization. And, for example, if the competency committee of the College of Physicians and Surgeons or the complaints investigation committee of the College of Physicians and Surgeons is doing an investigation and so is a health region, then they can share their information. This will optimally improve the quality of care for Saskatchewan residents by encouraging co-operation in investigations and information sharing. And it will reduce the overlap or the replication in these times.

We need to be assured that the Bill does only do what it has been specified and in no way jeopardizes the confidentiality of the . . . or the patient confidentiality or the physician confidentiality or in any way the integrity of an investigation into physician conduct.

There are many stakeholders who the minister mentioned in his second reading speech. I've spoken to several of them and still awaiting conversations with many others. Our work will continue on this Bill and talking to these stakeholders, but I do now . . . In our opinion, we can let it go to committee. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — Second reading of this Bill.

The Deputy Speaker: — To which committee shall this Bill be referred? I recognize the Minister for Liquor and Gaming.

Hon. Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

This Bill will be referred to the Human Services Committee.

The Deputy Speaker: — This Bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

[16:30]

Bill No. 45

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 45 — *The Credit Union Amendment Act, 2008*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am extremely pleased today to stand and enter into the debate on Bill No. 45, *The Credit Union Amendment Act, 1998*, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this particular piece of legislation makes amendments that will result in the makeup in the board of the Credit Union Deposit Guarantee Corporation changing to be more in keeping with current governance principles of similar organizations and corporations around the world, Mr. Speaker. The governance change in the Credit Union Deposit Corporation, Mr. Speaker, is in keeping with those principles of other corporations and banks, Mr. Speaker, in ensuring that the members on the board are able to deliver, without any negative influence or interference, Mr. Speaker, the responsibilities of the board.

But given the recent turmoil in the financial sector, Mr. Speaker, this is even more important than it would have been previously. Providing the additional stability to the credit union system that is providing good service to the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, is to be applauded. It is a good change. We thank the members opposite for bringing forward this change. We understand it is supported by the credit union board itself as well, Mr. Speaker.

But in this particular time these types of changes are more important than ever. We've seen the impact of poor governance and poor regulation in the US [United States] economy, Mr. Speaker, and its impact upon the entire world economy. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's prudent that at this time that these changes are coming forward. And so once again, as I said earlier, we do applaud the members opposite for bringing forward this particular piece of legislation.

As people may not know that are watching this throughout the province, but I hope you all would, credit unions play a very integral part in our communities and in our province. They are very large financial lenders in our communities. Many, many Saskatchewan citizens use the credit union as their primary institution to obtain loans and credit from, Mr. Speaker, so this helps and stabilizes and ensures that those who are using the credit union system in our province have that little extra step of guarantee, a little extra level of guarantee, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Because they're such important institutions both financially and socially in our communities and across the province, Mr. Speaker, the impact that credit unions would have in a province

like Saskatchewan is far greater than it would in other parts of the country and parts of the world, Mr. Speaker.

Consultation on these matters is important, and we are pleased that the Credit Union Central and the Credit Union Deposit Guarantee Corporation have been consulted on this matter. Again, the members opposite have taken the time to consult with the appropriate officials within both Credit Union Central and the Deposit Guarantee Corporation, Mr. Speaker. And once again that's good for the province of Saskatchewan and good for the people of Saskatchewan.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, there are still issues that we will want to take some time to consult with some others, and there are some issues that we would like to take a little further investigation on prior to moving this piece of legislation onto committee, Mr. Speaker. We are somewhat concerned though that any time a government starts to concern itself with the numbers of people on boards, and who gets to be on those boards, and what the criteria of those boards are, and what their actions are, there's going to be a number of questions we're going to want to ask when we do get this Bill to committee.

But at this time, Mr. Speaker, I would move that we adjourn debate.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for Regina Dewdney has made a motion to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 44

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 44** — *The Agreements of Sale Cancellation Amendment Act, 2008* be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Furber: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm pleased today to rise and add to some of the comments that have been made by other members in the legislature regarding Bill 44, *The Agreements of Sale Cancellation Amendment Act*. The Minister of Justice and the member from Battlefords have provided some comment on this item already.

And the amendments proposed in this Act add a definition of a contract agreement for sale of land that limits the application of the Act to proceeding brought by sellers of land who provide financing or accept instalment payments for land over a period of time of more than six months. Now I guess that leaves a question initially with the time period. And I believe that the Act is good and does a bit of housekeeping and actually aids in the clarification of three other Acts additionally, and that's helpful.

But the time period, I think, draws into question whether or not there can be some abuse prior to the six-month period. Does it

leave a situation where you enter into an agreement with a person to purchase their cottage or their home, where it's a rent-to-own type of situation, and at the five-month period, the owner who sees a rapid increase in the property value in that time — which has happened in Saskatchewan very recently — who would seek to end that contract and enter into another one because the property value has increased? And so I have some concerns, and we'll do some consultation regarding whether or not that time period is sufficient.

Essentially the Act, the intent is to clarify for users and avoid unnecessary court applications where the cancellation of an agreement doesn't fall within the scope of the Act. Now we appreciate clarity for users and believe that the government's on the right track there.

The Act defines agreement for sale in a number of Acts, including the land contracts Act, *The Limitation of Civil Rights Act*, and Saskatchewan farm securities Act. It's intended to ensure that the agreement for sale is given the same meaning for all types of land, and we appreciate the fact that it combines and clearly defines rules for this Act in addition to three others.

As the Bill is being looked at, I just want to mention the type of person and effects, and it's small in its scope, but it would affect a contract where you were in a rent-to-own situation where a landowner offers and is essentially the financier for a person he's selling it to. In addition to being the owner, he also finances the place for you, so it's a rent-to-own type of situation. And so this helps to clarify the definition of the contract between those two parties where it aims to end an opportunity for the person making the purchase to tie up land with small instalment payments. Say they purchase a cottage at Emma Lake and they want to continue with the contract, but they tell the original owner that, you know, I can't make the entire payment this month but we'll make a portion of that payment. And so it leaves the owner to wonder whether or not there's a situation where they can actually end the contract because there is a small payment being made.

This Bill appears to be small in its scope, but there are some applications that we have to question and ensure that it's been thought of by the government. Another opportunity for abuse past the six-month stage would be a situation where you own a property at Candle Lake and you put it up for sale and finance it as the owner of the property in the same type of contract. And a person enters into that contract as a purchaser, makes their payments in a timely fashion and for the proper amount over a period of time, but the owner of the property then says, well my property value has doubled since I sold it you to you 14 months ago so I'd like to cancel this contract and enter into a new one with you that would see you pay twice as much. And so we appreciate that this Bill aims to end that sort of possibility for abuse.

And because of those examples and some of the questions that I've raised about the application of time and whether or not that's sufficient, I would move to adjourn debate to give the opposition time to scrutinize this Bill appropriately. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — Is the Assembly ready for the question? Question before the Assembly is a motion that Bill No. 44, *The Agreements of Sale Cancellation Amendment Act, 2008* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Did he say adjourn? Okay, sorry, I didn't hear the member adjourn debate. I will back that up and I will ask, is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion to adjourn debate?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried. That motion is carried.

Bill No. 47

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Boyd that **Bill No. 47 — *The Pipelines Amendment Act, 2008*** be now read a second time.]

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Sometimes you rise in this House and talk about amendments to current legislation that's largely housecleaning in nature. I'm tempted to say that this is largely pipe cleaning in nature, but perhaps I'll not go any further down that line.

I think this is a fairly useful Act. It's actually quite symbolic, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the changes that have come in the industry around . . . where before it used to be oil or natural gas was largely the contents of pipelines and the focus of, you know, Acts like the 1998 pipeline Act. But of course over the past decade, Mr. Speaker, we've seen great advances in the use of carbon dioxide, or CO₂ and particularly as it relates to enhanced oil recovery. But this legislation expands on the good work that's been done around enhanced oil recovery using CO₂ and I think foresees the day when we might be able to be storing underground, taking the CO₂ from things like the emissions at a plant say like the newly named Evraz steel plant out northwest of the city here, or from say the various power generation stations, and transporting that CO₂ for storage or for sequestration for the long term.

So again taking the CO₂ from the environment and either storing it for use or storing it for taking it out of the environment to improve the environmental situation — this works very well with a solid foundation that certainly members on this side were very happy to lay in partnership with groups like EnCana or Apache.

You think of the EnCana play around Weyburn or the Apache play in Midale — and not just pioneering for Canada, but the pioneering work globally that's been done in terms of enhanced oil recovery for CO₂ — and again you think of the expression win-win propositions, Mr. Speaker. What could be more win-win about taking CO₂ out of the environment — you know, a harmful greenhouse gas, injecting it into the ground to increase and enhance the potential for oil recovery, extending the lifetime of fields like the Apache by many years, Mr. Speaker?

[16:45]

And again, it's good to see that there's some possibility here in terms of building on good past work, work pioneered by not just EnCana and Apache, not just the good folks in the Midale, Weyburn regions, but by the good folks at the Petroleum Technology Research Centre and the kind of value-added, innovative work that very much on this side of the House we believe in, Mr. Speaker.

And certainly, we put our money where our mouths were in terms of making the strategic investments to make sure that the PTRC [Petroleum Technology Research Centre] was able to not just get off the ground, but to carry on the work. And of course the attention that's been given to the PTRC globally and perhaps even some of the jealousy that's emerged in other places in Canada . . . I know that there was some question back and forth with the federal government around should they be investing in Alberta technology and work under way then, or should they build on the already pioneering work of the PTRC. Of course, Mr. Speaker, we were very proud of the work being done at the PTRC and supported that down the line as government.

We certainly know that the members opposite have paid some lip service to that. They're quite happy to tour people from around the world to it. We hope that indicates a solid commitment to the work done at the PTRC, and we hope that that commitment bears fruit.

We'd like to think that the legislation today provides, you know, another avenue for the great work at the PTRC to be expanded upon. Again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we'll see how this plays out. But for the meantime, we think this is a good step forward — good, good progress being made. And I guess, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've seen in the remarks from the minister that there is certainly support in the industry for this. I believe this lives up to what we're hearing from the industry as well.

But of course we want to do the due diligence on our part as the official opposition to make sure that this is the best possible piece of legislation, to make sure that what we think is the case is actually the case. So in that regard, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we're going to take a bit more time to make sure they're getting it right, to see if there isn't something we can suggest in terms of improvement. But the early assessment would be encouraging, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So in that vein, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would move adjournment of debate.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre has moved a motion to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Agreed. Just before we read the next Bill, there is some conversation going on. I'm having kind of trouble hearing some of the members. I would ask to keep the level of conversation down a little bit in the House.

Bill No. 50

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 50 — *The Missing Persons and Presumption of Death Act*** be now read a

second time.]

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to stand today and enter the debate and the discussion on Bill 50 and that is *The Missing Persons and Presumption of Death Act*.

Mr. Speaker, this is a new Act, a new Act that's being brought in in order to provide more clarity to a situation, more direction to a situation when a person is missing and then later on presumed dead. Mr. Speaker, whenever bringing in new legislation, whenever bringing in a new Act, it's important to examine the Act closely. It's important to look at the Act and ensure that it is in fact accomplishing everything that it needs to accomplish.

It's true that over time legislation can evolve, legislation can develop, and legislation can be improved, but it's always best, it's always ideal to be able to introduce the Bill, introduce the legislation as close to perfect, as close to ideal the first time round, Mr. Speaker.

So when we're looking at a new Act, we're certainly going to be spending time to ensure that it is accomplishing exactly what we need it to accomplish as opposition, that the government also needs — and most importantly, why we're all here, Mr. Speaker — to ensure that it's accomplishing the needs for the people of Saskatchewan and the broader community.

New Acts and legislation can come about in a variety of ways, Mr. Speaker. This Act or this Bill, Bill 50, has come about through previous work done through the provincial partnership committee. And this was a committee, Mr. Speaker, that was established to look at how best to deal with the situation when a person goes missing and then later on is presumed dead because they've been missing for a period of time.

It's always a positive thing, Mr. Speaker, when a group of people can come together, people that have an interest in how this process goes on, on a regular basis, whether they are from the legal end, whether they're from the family end, or whether they're from law enforcement.

It's through a committee, and I believe it was through the provincial partnership committee, Mr. Speaker, that was present . . . or that was established, and the recommendations came forward under the previous NDP government. It's important to look at these recommendations seriously, to consider them, and to act upon them because when you have a broad group of people coming together with a lot of expertise, Mr. Speaker, one is able to truly get the important aspects to a Bill that are needed. And as I said earlier, with a new Bill, it's essential to get it right the first time. It's essential to have the Bill speak to the needs of the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I've personally never been in a situation where someone in my family or close friends have gone missing. I can't imagine, Mr. Speaker, the emotions and the state that that puts family and friends into when someone is gone, without knowing why that person is absent. There are so many questions a family, loved ones would face when someone is

missing. And when you're facing all those emotions, I would expect that it would also be difficult to be dealing with all the day-to-day matters that are ongoing, that occur regardless of whether or not the person is found.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, we live in a very advanced society with complicated banking, with taxes that need to be paid to various levels of government on an ongoing basis. So it's important that, I think, that we have the provisions in place that when someone is missing and later on presumed dead, that things are as easy for the family as possible so that the family is not put under any greater stress than what they're already experiencing going through the heartache, wrestling with the questions as to why their loved one is not coming home.

So, Mr. Speaker, I have to believe that the provincial partnership committee, with their expertise and with their know-how from a broad group of people, took that into consideration when they made their recommendations. They understood the strain and the pressure on families, and their recommendations would have taken that into account.

Estate matters are very complicated. I've never personally had to deal with settling an estate. But having watched some family members and friends go through that process for loved ones who have passed on, I know it's a lengthy process, and I know it can be a complicated process too. That varies according to the finances of each person, but it's certainly something that takes some effort. So anything that we can do as a province, Mr. Speaker, to make that process easier for families again, easier for friends, loved ones, it's important that we do that.

It's also important, Mr. Speaker, to clearly lay out how the process from going from a missing person to a person presumed to be dead, how that process occurs. The timelines need to be clearly laid out, so it's important that this legislation doesn't leave any question marks for families.

Involved with any case, Mr. Speaker, with missing people, we also face . . . or not face, but there's also a very important role for police and for law enforcement officers who'd be playing a role in this process. So it's important that the legislation clearly outlines what is required of law enforcement officials. When a person is declared missing and later presumed dead, there's also an important role for a public guardian or a trustee. It's important that the duties and the responsibilities of a public guardian and trustee are clearly laid out so that they don't have doubts and questions as to what they should be doing. The more clearly we can lay it out in plain English for individuals with rights and responsibilities, then that is a positive thing.

It's obviously a delicate and a complicated matter when dealing with someone who is missing, so it's important that we strike the right balance, the balance of safeguarding information, safeguarding the finances of an individual who might be missing, but also ensuring that law enforcement officers and families have the tools at their hands and the rules clearly laid out for them to proceed to best deal with a difficult situation for everyone involved.

So having made these comments, Mr. Speaker, I know there's other members on this side of the House who would like to enter discussion on this Bill, so at this time I would move to

adjourn debate.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Massey Place has made a motion to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried. I recognize the Deputy Government House Leader.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In order to accommodate the work of the committees, I do move that this House do now adjourn.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Deputy House Leader has made a motion that the House now adjourn so committees may carry on later this evening. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried. This House now stands adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow afternoon.

[The Assembly adjourned at 16:57.]

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