



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)

Published under the  
authority of  
The Honourable Don Toth  
Speaker



**MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**

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

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

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

**Clerk:** — I wish to advise the Assembly that Mr. Speaker will not be present today to open today's sitting.

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, thank you. I'd ask for leave to do an extended introduction.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Wood River has asked for leave for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is indeed my pleasure today to introduce through you, to you, to the House, a number of guests sitting in the Speaker's gallery that are representatives of the military. Earlier today along with many of our colleagues joined me in unveiling a decal in support of our troops that will be displayed in government vehicles.

And I would like to introduce the members one at a time. Master Corporal Neil Bird who spoke on behalf of the military earlier this morning. Master Corporal Bird has served one tour in Bosnia in 1997, one tour in Afghanistan with the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. He's currently serving with the Royal Regina regiment.

Sergeant Melanson. He was posted to 15 Wing Moose Jaw until 1999 when he was posted to Gagetown, New Brunswick. In March 2005, he served on a UN [United Nations] tour in Haiti for six months. Sergeant Melanson was recently posted to 16 Service Battalion in Regina armouries and is still currently serving in the Canadian Armed Forces.

Corporal Tellier. Corporal Tellier volunteered for a tour in Afghanistan in September 2006, began the training in December 2007. He was employed as a driver for the task force protection convoy escort company and returned from Afghanistan in September 2008.

Bombardier Weir. Bombardier Weir entered the military in 2005 in Regina. He was selected to go on a tour to Afghanistan where he was employed as a M777 gun detachment member and driver. Bombardier Weir returned from Afghanistan in September 2008 and is now employed as a part of the 10th Field Regiment in Regina.

Sergeant Fitzpatrick. Sergeant Fitzpatrick joined the Canadian Forces as a reserve soldier in 1984. He has participated in

peacekeeping tours in Cyprus and two tours in the former Yugoslav Republic. He's employed as chief clerk of 16 Field Ambulance reserve unit in Regina and supervisor of the Regina Armoury Garrison's orderly room.

Corporal Brian Milne. Corporal Milne began his military career in 2002 in Regina. In 2005 he applied for task force 1-06 in Kandahar and spent the next nine months there in several positions throughout Kandahar. After returning home Corporal Milne spent the summer of 2007 in Shilo working in demonstration platoon where he was selected to create a lesson plan for and instruct a class on vehicle checkpoints and searches of persons and vehicles.

Warrant Officer Pociuk joined the Canadian Forces in Winnipeg, Manitoba, as an armoured soldier in June 1985. Warrant Officer Pociuk has completed three peacekeeping tours in Bosnia and two combat tours in Afghanistan. Warrant Officer Pociuk is currently employed as the Regina Garrison Sergeant Major and the public affairs representative.

Mr. Speaker, we're very proud of our military, and I would ask all members to please join me in thanking these men for their contributions to our country and welcome them to their legislative.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Very quickly if I can on behalf of the government to join with the member for Wood River and the Government of Saskatchewan's Armed Forces liaison in welcoming these gentlemen to their Legislative Assembly.

I had a chance to talk with some of them outside during the unveiling of this new sticker, and it was just a great honour and pleasure to talk with them, and I want to on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan as well welcome them to their Legislative Assembly today.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Meewasin.

**Mr. Quennell:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again briefly I want to on behalf of the official opposition join with the government in welcoming our guests here today. As members know, my son serving in the reserves spent six months in Afghanistan and returned in September 2008 like a couple of the gentlemen in the gallery, Mr. Speaker.

And there are many people in Saskatchewan that have a personal connection with the mission in Afghanistan. There are too many people in Saskatchewan who have an unfortunate personal connection with the mission in Afghanistan. I think all Canadians share in the high ideals of that mission in which, I might add, I think Canadians have carried more than their fair share, Mr. Speaker, but have carried it well and proudly and everyone in this Chamber, I know, is proud of and welcomes

our guests today.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Ms. Schriemer:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, today I would like to have you join with me in welcoming and introducing three people from Ducks Unlimited. Ducks Unlimited is one of the most successful conservation programs in the entire world. We welcome today Jeff Nelson, executive vice-president; Brent Kennedy, Saskatchewan provincial manager; and Peter Carton, Chair of the board for Canada. I ask members to help me welcome them to their legislature.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Ms. Morin:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with the member for Saskatoon Sutherland in welcoming the gentlemen here from Ducks Unlimited. They play an incredibly important stewardship role in the province and we're very proud to have them join us in the legislature today. Thank you very much and I welcome you to the legislature.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Hutchinson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, seated in the gallery today are students and chaperones visiting Regina from Yokohama, Japan. There they are.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Hutchinson:** — Our guests from Japan include school administrators and teachers, Yoichi Sakakibara, Tsuyoshi Saitoh, Yoshiko Honma, Maiyu Komatsu, and approximately 50 students, as you can see.

**An Hon. Member:** — Read their names, please.

**Hon. Mr. Hutchinson:** — We'll do our best. They are accompanied by Campbell Collegiate teacher and program organizer, Mr. Bob Stephenson and Mr. Larry Schier, Chair of the parents group.

[The hon. member spoke for a time in Japanese.]

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Hutchinson:** — Now, Mr. Speaker, these students are part of the Regina Yamate Gakuin and student exchange program. They will stay in our province for two weeks learning about another culture. Then in July a group of Regina-based students will make a return visit to Japan. In preparation for that visit, the Regina students have been taking language and culture classes.

Mr. Speaker, Yamate Gakuin is a private, coeducational high school in Yokohama with 1,600 students. The school was founded in 1966 and has been organizing these international student exchanges since 1969. The school believes the international experience is an important part of the educational process.

Members of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, please join me in welcoming these students to Saskatchewan. We know they will have an enjoyable and informative stay.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I just would like to join in on behalf of the official opposition in joining our guests from Japan. And it's a wonderful role that our school system here in Regina and particularly Campbell Collegiate — some familiar faces up there today — are playing in this exchange. I hope that the exchange is worthwhile. I know that it will be and I thank you for joining us here today.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

#### PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Mr. Harper:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition calling on the government to do repair to Highway No. 123. That is the only access road to the community of Cumberland House, Saskatchewan. And the prayer is as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the Government of Saskatchewan to stop denying the money that was allocated to the highway and commit immediately to providing the repairs to this highway that the people of northeastern Saskatchewan were promised.

And, Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the good folks and leadership from the village of Cumberland House and Cumberland's First Nation. I so submit.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Trew:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour today to present petitions. The petition is in support of changes to *The Highway Traffic Act* to be referred to as the Gallenger amendment. The petition reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to enact changes to *The Highway Traffic Act*, to be referred to as the Gallenger amendment, which would require all vehicle traffic to slow to 60 kilometres

per hour when passing a snowplow with their warning lights activated on Saskatchewan roadways.

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

Mr. Speaker, these petitions come from Edgeley, Rocanville, and Regina, Balgonie, and other communities in the Regina area. Mr. Speaker, I present.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I rise and present petitions in support of indexing the minimum wage. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we all know that the minimum wage increases are often sporadic and do not always reflect the rising cost of living faced by minimum wage earners. And the petition reads as follows:

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.

The petitions, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are signed by residents of Balcarres, Lipton, Fort Qu'Appelle, Esterhazy, Grenfell, Siltou, and Saskatoon. I so present.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also rise today to present a petition in support of my colleague from Cumberland, and in support of the fine people of Pelican Narrows:

The petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to pave the 7 kilometres of Highway 135 through the community of Pelican Narrows, as committed to on August 24, 2007 [Mr. Speaker].

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

And, Mr. Speaker, this petition was signed by the many good folks of Pelican Narrows and area. And I so present.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling for wage equity for CBO [community-based organization] workers, and we know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that research demonstrates that Saskatchewan

citizens who work for community-based organizations are paid often on an average of 8 to \$10 per hour less than employees performing work of equal value in government departments. I'd like to read the prayer, Mr. Deputy Speaker:

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

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

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, these good petitioners come from the 12 ridings in Saskatoon. Thank you very much.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Ms. Morin:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I rise today to present a petition on behalf of rural residents of Saskatchewan who question why the Sask Party government is leaving them behind with respect to providing safe and affordable water. And the prayer reads as follows:

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And these petitions, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are signed by the good residents of Beardy's First Nation, Duck Lake, and Rosthern, Saskatchewan. I so present. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the individuals who signed this petition are students here in Saskatchewan at the University of Regina as well as the University of Saskatchewan. I so present.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Cumberland. River.

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the petition is signed by the good people of La Ronge and area. I so present.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[13:45]

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

#### Earth Day

**Ms. Morin:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, Earth Day is celebrated on April 22 around the globe to inspire appreciation for our natural environment and to bring awareness of environmental challenges that place the health of our planet at risk. Climate change is a challenge unlike any other the human family has faced, and requires us to work together to restore the health of our planet.

Saskatchewan generates a significant amount of greenhouse gases. These are contributing to warming in our Prairie region occurring at a faster rate compared to the rest of Canada. Mr. Speaker, much more must be done to reduce greenhouse gas emissions which lead to more drought, declining surface water levels, increased number of forest fires, and more severe weather like tornadoes and floods.

Unfortunately this Sask Party government will not keep its commitment to Saskatchewan people to take action on climate change. On Monday, the Environment minister conceded that the Sask Party will not even try to meet the carbon emission reduction targets they adopted during the 2007 election. Instead they will adopt less stringent targets. From the biased nuclear power process to funding cuts to climate change plans to the abandonment of their election promise to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the Sask Party government already has a dismal record on the environment.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan cannot be a responsible global citizen if the Sask Party government chooses to be a laggard on the environment. This Earth Day, we must resolve to do more for our environment, Mr. Speaker, not less.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Wood

#### Support Our Troops

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this morning I had the honour of participating in the launch of the new Support Our Troops decals for government vehicles. Although this is just a small gesture, it represents a larger effort of our government to keep the selfless sacrifice of Canada's women and men in uniform top of mind, lest we forget that they serve in our name for our freedom.

We hope that these small stickers summon us to remember those from Saskatchewan who have given their lives for Canada, and continue to pay with their lives during the current mission in Afghanistan: Master Corporal Jeffrey Walsh of Regina, Corporal Bryce Keller of Regina, Corporal David Braun of Raymore, Corporal Brendan Downey of Saskatoon, Master Corporal Josh Roberts of Saskatoon, Corporal Dustin Wasden of Spiritwood, Sergeant Prescott Shipway of Esterhazy, Corporal Shane Keating of Dalmeny. These eight soldiers died in Afghanistan serving us. These eight soldiers and the troops that continue to put themselves in harm's way for us should be remembered, not just on anniversaries, not just on Remembrance Day, but every day.

The vehicle decals unveiled this morning are just one small, everyday reminder. We hope that they remind others to honour our troops and call attention to the disproportionate burden our soldiers and their families bear serving our country. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

#### Administrative Professionals Day

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, today is Administrative Professionals Day, a day set aside to express our gratitude for the hard work and invaluable contributions that administrative professionals provide on a daily basis.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, behind every successful office there's an efficient and dedicated administrative support staff. In today's high-speed, demanding, and technical world, the role of the administrative professional is ever-changing and becoming increasingly dynamic. Aside from handling the mail, answering telephones, writing letters, and sending emails and faxes, administrative professionals play an essential role in public relations.

Whether they're greeting our constituents over the phone or in person or maintaining a solid working relationship with our colleagues and the various organizations and institutions, our administrative professionals are the backbone of our offices. They ensure that the day-to-day business runs smoothly, and quite frankly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we couldn't function without them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, on behalf of my colleagues, I take this opportunity to acknowledge the hard work of all administrative professionals throughout the province and commend them for

their tireless efforts and commitment. Today to all of our constituency assistants in my office, Tracy, and the administrative professionals in our office, Jannet, Val, Jane, and Gail, thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Yorkton.

### Earth Day

**Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm pleased today to rise to speak about a very important day, Earth Day. Earth Day is the largest, most celebrated environmental event worldwide. It was designed to inspire awareness and appreciation for the environment.

Saskatchewan people care about the environment and want to better understand how they can do their part in their day-to-day lives. The Government of Saskatchewan is committed to helping Saskatchewan people make informed choices and to help residents, businesses, and communities benefit from greener technologies and practices. Our government is providing \$70 million over the next four years to the Go Green Fund to support innovative activities and projects in such areas as climate change and water quality and conservation.

The Ministry of Environment works year-round to develop and support initiatives that reduce our province's environmental footprint, such as recycling and hazardous waste management programs, energy efficiency and renewable energy programs, and water quality and natural resource management initiatives.

Today also marks the one-year anniversary of the NDP [New Democratic Party] Environment critic's request that we adopt the federal government's greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets. I ask all members to join with us today in celebrating Earth Day and the fact that on this important issue of climate change our government and the opposition have placed partisanship aside and found common ground on the targets we should be setting. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

### Prince Albert Team Wins Girls' Provincial Hockey Championship

**Mr. Furber:** — Mr. Speaker, two years ago, hockey fans in Prince Albert celebrated the Mintos' back-to-back national titles. This year we have new champions to be proud of. The A&W Bears are the 2009 provincial midget girls' hockey champions.

Mr. Speaker, the A&W Bears had to work hard for their trophy. They overcame a two games to none deficit in a best of five series and it was against the regular season champions. In their last three games, they faced a do-or-die situation. Playing under that pressure in three successive games, they showed everyone what real guts and determination do, showed everybody what

it's like to be from Prince Albert, and won the provincial championship.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan midget girls' program is still in its infancy, but as the P.A. [Prince Albert] Bears proved, the sport is growing. The advancement of the women's game cannot happen without the growth of the game at the entry level and Prince Albert is proud that our players are leading the way.

The Saskatchewan midget program is allowing many young women to pursue a high level of hockey. There was a time not so long ago where these young women would have had no choice but to suit up for a boys' team or not play organized hockey at all. Thankfully those days are long gone and these young Prince Albert women have shown that they have what it takes to play great hockey and provide a great showcase for so many.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members join with me in congratulating the Prince Albert A&W Bears, the coaches, parents, fans, and organizers in winning the 2009 provincial girls' midget championship. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Batoche.

### Administrative Professionals Day

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. On behalf of the government I would like to congratulate the administrative professionals, where we take time to show our gratitude and appreciation for the hardest working people in our workplace. These valuable co-workers do so much to make our office run smoothly and efficiently and brighten up our day with their positive attitudes. Without them we would truly be at a loss.

Mr. Speaker, there are almost a half million persons employed as administrative professionals across our country. These people are an integral part of any organization, whether it is public or private sector.

But I now would like to take this opportunity to mention a few of these important individuals who are closer to home for me. In our government caucus office here at the Legislative Building, we are lucky to have Marianne Hoffart and Brooklyn Elhard, who both demonstrate the best qualities of administrative professionals and make our lives so much easier. At my Batoche constituency office, I have Mary Anne Telfer who keeps my life in order and running smoothly. These ladies bring a level of enthusiasm and dedication to their profession that is certainly admirable and greatly appreciated.

I would ask that all members join me in recognizing the administrative professionals in their lives and take a moment to let them know how much they are appreciated today. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

### Earth Day

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As we've noted, today is Earth Day, a day celebrated around the world to increase environmental awareness.

I had the wonderful opportunity to spend the beginning of Earth Day with students at Bedford Road Collegiate this morning. Hosted by a class of innovative grade 12 students who are showing real leadership and citizenship, this Earth Day event saw numerous groups from high schools, elementary schools, and community organizations coming together to celebrate sustainability.

Students came to see displays with the intention to get ideas and inspiration for future work — there were earth balloons, great earth cookies, giant earth balls, and an earth display, plus face painting, a video, and an Eco-quest trivia contest along with a trade show.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also want to make note of two special groups that I met today, the Earth Keepers from Aden Bowman Collegiate and Eco-quest, a special grade 8 program dedicated to environmental education in Saskatoon. And they're just doing great work.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the Bedford students began this work earlier in the year by hosting a sustainability conference at the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] in November. They focused on three pillars of sustainability — social, economic, and environmental. They work to raise awareness, but more importantly, they want to see some action. People have to put theory into practice, Mr. Speaker.

Well every day should be Earth Day, and I ask all members to join me in wishing the students at Bedford and right across this globe as they celebrate this very important day. And we too should include their three pillars of sustainability into our everyday lives. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

### QUESTION PERIOD

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

### Women's Issues

**Ms. Higgins:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, earlier this week the Premier wrote to the Prime Minister encouraging him to ensure the advancement of human rights, justice, and equality for the women of Afghanistan. And while we strongly support the Premier's sentiment, the plight of Afghan women reminds us all that we have work to do ourselves in Canada and in Saskatchewan. The work of advancing women's equality is not yet complete.

My question is to the Premier: will he assign a minister specifically responsible for the status of women and raise the profile of the office to deal effectively with women's issues still outstanding in Saskatchewan?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity to speak to such an important issue. And it's an issue that was raised recently during the federal-provincial meetings on the status of women. It was a time where in fact there was a clear consensus around the table regarding the sentiments that our Premier has expressed this week regarding Afghanistan. Obviously the discussions went well beyond that focus, Mr. Speaker. The discussion ensured that there was a tight focus on issues of empowerment; issues of skills training, education, and employment. Mr. Speaker, obviously there was a special focus on issues of security which means so much today, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this is an administrative and organizational legacy that is left from the previous government and, Mr. Speaker, this government is dedicated to working forward on behalf of all the people within Saskatchewan — men and women, Mr. Speaker — to ensure that they are able to reach their full potential. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Ms. Higgins:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, the reality is that government decisions affect men and women differently. Investments in infrastructure, for example, tend to create jobs for tradespeople, which the majority of whom are men. Investments in child care, on the other hand, are critical to women's participation in the work force. In order to approach equality, governments need to look at how their decisions affect women when crafting budgets and government policy.

Mr. Speaker, to the Premier: will he commit today to reinstate the full force and responsibility of the Status of Women office, and visibly commit to the equitable treatment of Saskatchewan women?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Employment and Labour.

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Mr. Speaker, as we have highlighted previously, and I'll do it again, the opportunities available for both men and women in Saskatchewan are growing. Mr. Speaker, for employment records for March 2009, we can focus on the 8,900 new employment opportunities for women in this province. I think that's reflective of the opportunities that are on the rise for women in this province.

There's certainly more to do. Just last week, I was actually in La Ronge and I went to the women's shelter in La Ronge, and that was a very humbling experience, Mr. Speaker. There's obviously more to do to help protect families in need.

Mr. Speaker, as we look at weekly earnings, for the first time in Saskatchewan's history, we see that they are up over \$800 per



week, Mr. Speaker, and this is very, very important. It's reflective that we're doing our best to ensure the benefits of the growth that are under way are being shared with the people of this province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Ms. Higgins:** — Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's surprising that the minister would use employment numbers when we're talking about equity and equality. The average woman in Saskatchewan gets paid 84 per cent of the wage of an average man. And this disparity is somewhat narrower in the public sector because of the former government's commitment to the pay equity policy . . .

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[14:00]

**Ms. Higgins:** — But in the private sector, the gap widens. Many Saskatchewan women believe that the success of pay equity in the public sector means that the time has come to introduce pay equity province-wide legislation.

So my question is to the Premier: will the Premier commit to introducing provincial pay equity legislation?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Employment and Labour.

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Mr. Speaker, it's obvious there's a lot of work to do. I can think about the research that's been done by Professor Eric Howe. And a few years ago, he came out with a report that talked about the need for increased skills training and education. And, Mr. Speaker, it's an obligation and an imperative that we all share because his research showed that statistically for First Nation and Métis women without grade 12, they are likely to earn less than \$100,000 in their life.

I don't think the members opposite want to stand on their laurels to talk about the progress that's been made. We all know there's a lot of work to do, Mr. Speaker, and on that we remain committed.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Moose Jaw Wakamow.

**Ms. Higgins:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, in a Saskatchewan report it states that for every dollar earned by an Aboriginal woman, a non-Aboriginal man earns \$2.34. And that's appalling.

Mr. Speaker, there have been a number of sobering reminders that violence against women is a problem right here at home. There is simply too many missing women in our province, too many women living in abusive situations without any options at all, too many transition houses struggling to keep their doors

open, and too many rural communities without supports for women living in family violence.

To the Premier: will he commit today to adequate funding and support to address these issues facing Saskatchewan women?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Social Services and Housing.

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite was not aware that was a campaign promise of the Saskatchewan Party government; and it was a promise made, promise kept.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — We increased in our very first budget — which was only months after forming government, Mr. Deputy Speaker — we increased the budget for sexual assault centres and transition houses by \$1.1 million, Mr. Speaker. That is along with, they also will have received since we formed government the 12.3 per cent increases that all the other CBOs received.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

### Federal Transfer Payments

**Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Mr. Speaker, last fall I tabled *The Reporting of Federal Transfers Act*. The entire point of this Act was to make public the dollars that the people of Saskatchewan were receiving from their federal government compared to other provinces — and in my view, not an unreasonable request, Mr. Speaker. And yet the government members voted against the Bill in this Assembly.

To the Minister of Finance: can he provide clear reasons for not telling the people of Saskatchewan how much money the federal government gives them, as compared to Canadians in other provinces?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Mr. Gantefer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to the member, we have taken the time in the Ministry of Finance to look very carefully at the proposal that the member implied in his private members' proposed legislation. And quite frankly, it was deemed that, by the ministry officials, that this was impractical and unworkable from a common sense approach.

There is, as the member should know, federal transfers to provinces occur on a number of different levels. They occur multi-year, some of the provinces can take several years of transfers into one year with a commitment to allocate them over time . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Mr. Gantefer:** — There are issues of privacy and willingness of other provinces to disclose what their transfers from the federal government may well be. And so from all of these aspects, the intended suggestion by the member is impractical and unworkable.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Mr. Speaker, every penny, every penny that is spent by the federal government is reported in the federal public accounts. It's not a major undertaking for finance officials to determine how much it is that the people of Saskatchewan are receiving from their federal government through the federal public accounts, as compared to the expenditures that are made in other provinces, Mr. Speaker.

So a simple question, Mr. Speaker: why won't the minister share that information with the people of Saskatchewan?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Mr. Gantefer:** — Well, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if that member is so knowledgeable about how the federal transfers are reported, I would invite him to go to the federal public accounts and look at the numbers at his leisure.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, the intent of the Bill as I understand it was to make comparisons between provinces, to ensure that Saskatchewan was being reasonably treated in comparison to other jurisdictions. That indeed is a worthwhile exercise to have happen in terms of relationships between the province and the Government of Canada. The practical reality of the legislation that was proposed is unworkable and impractical because there is no meaningful way to get absolute comparisons in every given year for these transfers.

And so while it's an interesting academic exercise, our government and our ministry are working on an ongoing basis with the federal government to ensure that we qualify for each and every program that is an entitlement of the province of Saskatchewan, and we'll continue to do that.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Van Mulligen:** — So as I understand it, Mr. Speaker, listening to the Minister of Finance, what he is saying is that if the people of Saskatchewan want this information they should go get the federal public accounts, they should figure out for themselves, they should figure out for themselves what it is that the people of Saskatchewan are getting compared to other provinces, that they should do that kind of analysis.

My position is that is the responsibility of the provincial

government to provide that kind of information.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Why is the Minister of Finance afraid of letting us know what it is that the federal government is spending here as opposed to other provinces, Mr. Speaker?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Mr. Gantefer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to refer the member to the secret document called the Estimates of the province of Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, in this secret document on page 14, it illustrates transfers from the Government of Canada — Canada Health transfer, social transfer, and other transfers. They are reported each and every year in this secret document, and I would invite the member to look at this document and documents across Canada if he wants to see what's transferred to other provinces.

And I would recognize that these numbers can be somewhat misleading because several years and several plans may be lumped together . . .

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Mr. Speaker, I guess the point is that it was this government and this Premier that has been going around the province and saying that Saskatchewan people are doing better with the federal government than ever before. That's been their point of view, Mr. Speaker. They even dropped the equalization lawsuit saying that it wasn't needed any more and that we're doing great under Stephen Harper. But when we give them a chance to prove it, they say no, we don't want to do that.

So, Mr. Speaker, will the Premier admit that his giving peace a chance plan with the federal government is just more exaggerated rhetoric? And will he relaunch the equalization lawsuit so that the people of Saskatchewan get what it is that they are entitled to, Mr. Speaker?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Mr. Gantefer:** — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to point out to the member opposite one of the founding principles of the Saskatchewan Party is that we would deal professionally and responsibly with any federal government that was elected in the country.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Gantefer:** — And, Mr. Speaker, we intend to keep that promise and that commitment to the founding principles of our party because in order to maximize the benefit to any

individual province, it needs a provincial government that'll act responsibly, act professionally, and lobby aggressively on behalf of our citizens.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Members allowed the question to be asked, I would ask the members that they be able to hear the answer. The Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can report to the Assembly that this government is doing its job in terms of lobbying the federal government to ensuring that there is no dollar left on the table in relationships with the federal government. We have done that. We will continue to do it. And we'll do it into the future.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

### Storage of Nuclear Waste

**Mr. Furber:** — Mr. Speaker, the UDP [Uranium Development Partnership] report recommended that Saskatchewan be open to the idea of nuclear waste storage. It recommends to the province, in addition to that, support any community that's willing to come forward to store nuclear waste. Simple question to the minister: under his government will nuclear waste be stored in Saskatchewan?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question. The UDP was developed and tasked with examining all elements of nuclear power, the whole cycle. We're talking about refining. We're talking about enhancement. We're talking about enhanced mining, as I've said before. There's a concern in this province about Saskatchewan losing their pre-eminence as the number one miner in the world of uranium. We're also going to look at medical isotopes and what research and innovation can be done in Saskatchewan.

And yes, we're going to look at storage. Storage is something that the experts are looking at. We're wanting to hear what Saskatchewan residents have to say about that, and that's what the consultation process is for. And we'll be hearing much more about the consultation process later today.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Furber:** — Mr. Speaker, there's a fundamental reason why people in Saskatchewan don't trust these guys with this file. You've got him saying nuclear storage is on the table. The Premier said we have a moral and ethical responsibility to store it, and the minister responsible says there's no possible way it's going to be done. So which is it? They get the same page on at

least one of these issues.

**Mr. Speaker,** nuclear reactors create nuclear waste. The waste needs to be managed. Simple question again to the minister: what will his government do with nuclear waste stored, the nuclear waste produced at a power facility?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well the people of Saskatchewan have been clear to this point that they're not wanting to go down the path of examination of storage. UDP has looked at the proposal. They'll be consulting further with Saskatchewan people; we want to hear what they have to say. But there's many other areas where we have to look, and areas of much more importance to Saskatchewan residents.

I know that members opposite agree because I know that their leader said on November 2, 2005 — it was a trip to Asia — and I quote, "Calvert said the province would consider any business case to establish a reactor or nuclear waste storage facility in the province . . ." Well if that was a priority then, I'm sure that it is consistent right now.

But what we're going to look at is hear more from Saskatchewan people. But we've heard them up until this point, and they're not interested in storage.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Furber:** — Well once again, the duplicity, Mr. Speaker. First there's no government money involved in this process; and then the minister said that government money is on the table. We're going to have a decision this year, says the Premier; the minister says the decision is a few years away. The Premier says we have a moral and ethical obligation to store waste; the minister says there's no way we're going to store waste.

And now it's back on the table. How can they be trusted at all? Mr. Speaker, to the minister: will he admit today that nuclear waste will be stored in this province?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — What will happen very shortly is we will have the most extensive consultation with people of Saskatchewan to talk about the Uranium Development Partnership. We've asked Mr. Perrins to be the Chair, an individual who is well respected by all members of this Assembly and most people in Saskatchewan that know him, and all people of Saskatchewan, I believe. So he will undertake that.

We will look at everything. But what has been very clear — and

the minister has said that, and I say that here today — that Saskatchewan residents up until this point have been clear that storage is not an area that they want to pursue.

Yes, we want to hear more of what Saskatchewan people have to say; that's what will happen here. And we always look forward to that input. I said yesterday, whether it's the Green Party, whether it's the NDP Party, or even more so the people of Saskatchewan, we want to hear what they have to say.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Leader of the Official Opposition.

### Consultation Regarding Nuclear Power

**Mr. Calvert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a very simple question, either for the minister or the Premier, whoever wants to speak on behalf of government. Does this government believe that the people of Saskatchewan ought to have as much information at their disposal as is possible before they are asked to make a decision about a nuclear reactor and the future of electrical generation in this province? Do they believe that the people of Saskatchewan deserve as much information as possible?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[14:15]

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Crown Corporations.

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — It's very clear. People want to have this debate. They want to educate themselves. And that's why they're encouraged by this government undertaking the most extensive consultation ever in the history of our province on this particular topic. That's why there will be consultations across the province. That's why a person of Mr. Perrins's stature has been asked to serve this province and to take on this responsibility.

We look forward to that debate. And people across Saskatchewan look forward to educating themselves and learning more from the process. What could possibly be wrong with that?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Leader of the Official Opposition.

**Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, whether this is the most extensive consultation or not is a very debatable point. Mr. Deputy Speaker, what is not debatable is this: the people of Saskatchewan do not have the information they need to make an informed decision.

Even this government cannot answer questions about a reactor. They cannot answer the questions where would power be exported to. They cannot answer the questions about waste which are asked today. They cannot answer the questions about

infrastructure necessity. They cannot answer the questions about cost and feasibility.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, will the Premier commit to provide to the people of Saskatchewan a process that gives them much, much more information before they are asked to make a decision?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, it's been very interesting to see that member and members opposite criticize the consultation process. It is the most extensive consultation process the province will have ever undertaken on the issue. Not that other governments, previous NDP governments, have avoided decisions on nuclear power, we know that they have made decisions.

We know that secretly they commissioned studies by SaskPower on nuclear power, Mr. Speaker. We know that that member, when he was the Premier, went to Asia to promote potentially nuclear power. We know that he came back and said, and I quote from the *Leader-Post* “[Calvert] said the province would consider any business case to establish a reactor or nuclear waste storage facility in the province [of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker].”

I would say this, Mr. Speaker, it's hard for the people of the province, members on this side of the House or others, to take any advice or lectures from that member and that party on engaging Saskatchewan people on this issue, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Leader of the Official Opposition.

### Consultation Regarding Energy Sources

**Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I invite the Premier to consult the archivists at the *Leader-Post* to check the headlines in the *Leader-Post* the day after the article he quotes. He ought to just check the headlines because, you know what, Mr. Speaker, on that very same day, this Premier, this Premier said he would have nothing to do with waste in Saskatchewan. Now he goes about the province saying, well he has a moral responsibility to it.

He has a UDP that recommends fundamentally three things: the repository for waste, expansion of mining, and the creation of a nuclear reactor. That's what the UDP says. It says, on a medical isotope facility or a small reactor, well that's a big maybe. An even bigger maybe is this enrichment facility. And the UDP says, forget refining; that's gone somewhere else — forget refining.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, yesterday this official opposition laid out a very reasonable proposal to provide opportunity for Saskatchewan people to become fully informed about choices they are asked to make about the future of their electrical generation, a reasonable proposal. Why, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will the Premier and his government not accept this reasonable

proposal?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, you know it is absolutely true, it is a matter of the record, notwithstanding the correction or the flip-flop on the waste issue, that the members opposite have investigated secretly the option for nuclear power. At least they wouldn't make the reports public.

Neither did, when the then premier came back from Asia to say that he supported potentially a business case for nuclear power, neither did he engage in any consultation at all, Mr. Speaker — not single public meeting, not a website, not any kind of a forum at all. So that's why people have problems I think taking the member seriously on this line of questioning.

But I will say this, I think the suggestion from the NDP earlier this week has some merit. There are two issues here: one is uranium value-added. That's much bigger than electricity, Mr. Speaker. Electricity may be part of it, but the UDP is much bigger than that. So that's one process, and that we want members opposite and the people of Saskatchewan to be engaged in.

But we would also welcome all members of this Assembly to engage in a process on the exploration of a bigger question, and that is how will we generate affordable, safe power for a growing economy years into the future.

I think members opposite are going to have a chance to vote on how serious they are about what I think was the constructive spirit of their proposal earlier this week, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Leader of the Official Opposition.

**Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is exactly why yesterday we unveiled a proposal for a very reasonable approach to providing information to the people of Saskatchewan — not alone on the nuclear option, but on a carbon-based option, on alternate renewable energy options, on demand management, and conservation options, Mr. Speaker — a reasonable proposal. And all this proposal would do, will give credibility to the minister responsible for this file who says a decision is months, years away — contrary to what the Premier said it would be made by the end of the year.

So let's go with the minister's approach. Let's understand this decision is several years away and let's take the time at the beginning to inform the people of Saskatchewan. I ask the Premier again, will he accept the proposal we made yesterday? Will he give the people of Saskatchewan a real opportunity to become informed before they're asked to make a decision?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, the vast majority of the proposal, the principle of the proposal we heard from the NDP, we do accept, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We said that yesterday. The minister responsible said we believe it is important. And I think about a week ago I invited that hon. member to also consider the all-party committee of this legislature to engage in precisely what that party over there has now proposed, Mr. Speaker.

That proposal, that offer remains today. In fact I think we'll take the next step. At some point I think we should be able to have this Assembly consider a resolution that would direct all members of that committee — there are New Democrats obviously on that committee — to undertake exactly what the hon. member is talking about and what I spoke about about a week and a half ago.

Mr. Speaker, we encourage, we encourage the members opposite to carefully consider this idea so that we can provide affordable, safe power into the future for Canada's fastest growing economy, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

#### PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Chair of Crown and Central Agencies.

##### Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

**Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report Bill No. 87, *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2009* without amendment.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — When shall this Bill be considered in Committee of the Whole? I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Mr. Gantefer:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this Bill and that the Bill be now read the third time.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Minister of Finance has requested leave to waive consideration in the Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 87, *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2009* without amendment and that the Bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried. The minister may proceed to third readings.

#### THIRD READINGS

##### Bill No. 87 — *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2009*

**Hon. Mr. Gantefer:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move that this Bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 87, *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2009*

without amendment be now read the third time and passed under the title. 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:** — Third reading of this Bill.

#### PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the chairman of the Crown and Central Agencies.

##### Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

**Mr. Duncan:** — Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report Bill No. 88, *The Corporation Capital Tax Amendment Act, 2009* without amendment.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — When shall this Bill be considered in Committee of the Whole? I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Mr. Gantfoer:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this Bill, and that the Bill be now read the third time.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Minister of Finance has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 88, *The Corporation Capital Tax Amendment Act, 2009* without amendment, and the Bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried. The minister may move to proceed to third reading.

#### THIRD READINGS

##### Bill No. 88 — *The Corporation Capital Tax Amendment Act, 2009*

**Hon. Mr. Gantfoer:** — I move that this Bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 88, *The Corporation Capital Tax Amendment Act, 2009* without amendment be now read the third time and passed under its title. 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:** — Third reading of this Bill.

#### PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Deputy Chair of the Standing Committee on House Services.

##### Standing Committee on House Services

**Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on House Services to report Bill No. 59, *The Election Amendment Act, 2008* without amendment.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — When shall this Bill be considered in Committee of the Whole? I recognize the Minister of Justice.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this Bill, and that the Bill now be read the third time.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Minister of Justice has requested leave to waive consideration of Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 59, *The Election Amendment Act, 2008* without amendment, and that the Bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The minister may proceed to move third reading.

#### THIRD READINGS

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — I move that this Bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 59, *The Election Amendment Act, 2008* without amendment be now read the third time and passed under its title. 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:** — Third reading of this Bill.

**PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING  
AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Deputy Chair of House Services.

**Standing Committee on House Services**

**Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am instructed by the Standing Committee on House Services to report Bill No. 60, *The Senate Nominee Election Act* without amendment.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — When shall this Bill be considered in Committee of the Whole? I recognize the Minister of Justice.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this Bill, and that the Bill be now read the third time.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Minister of Justice has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 60, *The Senate Nominee Election Act* without amendment and the Bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The minister may proceed to third readings.

**THIRD READINGS**

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move that this Bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 60, *The Senate Nominee Election Act* without amendment be now read the third time and passed under its title. 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:** — Third reading of this Bill.

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

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Deputy Speaker, thank you very much. Asking leave for the introduction of a guest.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Minister of Labour has asked leave for introduction of guests. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried. I recognize the minister.

**INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — To you and through you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to introduce Ms. Kelly Kozak. She is a representative of the University of Saskatchewan here today. She's part of the delegation that has been working with our special guests from Vietnam looking to enhance ways to help facilitate and ensure increased co-operation with that country and communities in that country.

As well she serves on the Saskatoon school board, and has distinguished herself both across campus and across our community. Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I would ask that all members of the Assembly welcome Ms. Kozak to her Assembly.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**TABLING OF REPORTS**

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Hon. members, before orders of the day, I lay before the Assembly, pursuant to section 14.1 of *The Provincial Auditor Act*, report to the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan on the financial statements of the Crown agencies for year ending the 2008 calendar year and a report to the Legislative Assembly on the 2008 financial statements of the CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan] Crown corporations and related entities.

**ORDERS OF THE DAY**

**WRITTEN QUESTIONS**

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Whip.

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I wish to table the answer to questions 343 and 344.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Government Whip has moved to table questions no. 343 and no. 344.

**An Hon. Member:** — Point of order.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

[14:30]

**POINT OF ORDER**

**Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today on a point of order concerning remarks made by the Minister of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour on Monday in the Assembly, Mr. Speaker. This is the first opportunity I've had to rise on this matter.

In response to a series of questions, the Minister of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour directly calls into question the integrity of the member from Saskatoon Massey Place. And I quote from page 2768 of the Saskatchewan *Hansard*, “. . . I'm happy to talk about the lack of integrity regarding those

questions, Mr. Speaker.” The quote was clearly intended to demean the integrity of the questioner, the member from Saskatoon Massey Place.

I draw Mr. Speaker’s attention to page 525 of Marleau and Montpetit in which it is stated, and I quote:

The proceedings of the House are based on a long-standing tradition of respect for the integrity of Members. Thus, the use of offensive, provocative or threatening language in the House is strictly forbidden. Personal attacks, insults and obscene language or words are not in order.

Mr. Speaker, not only are the remarks of the member a personal attack, Mr. Speaker, but it directly contravenes the tradition of respect and integrity of the members. Mr. Speaker, I ask for an apology from the Minister of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak to the substance of the motion.

I think it’s very clear that there’s a fundamental difference between commenting on the integrity of a statement that’s made by someone and that individual’s personal integrity. A world of difference, and I think that for the Opposition House Leader to be trying to draw that connection is simply frivolous and out of order.

Mr. Speaker, members in this House do have respect for each other as individuals and as persons, but we do take umbrance at many occasions with the statements that we make and we take exception to statements we make and there’s a very important and fundamental distinction between the two.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Since this event took place on Monday, I will have to review *Hansard* and discuss that and come back with a ruling on it.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

### ADJOURNED DEBATES

#### SECOND READINGS

##### Bill No. 73

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Norris that **Bill No. 73 — *The University of Saskatchewan Amendment Act, 2008*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It’s a pleasure to stand this afternoon and speak to Bill 73, *The University of Saskatchewan Amendment Act* — an amendment to an Act, Mr. Speaker, that has a fairly high degree of significance for one of the most important institutions here in Saskatchewan, in our province, the University of Saskatchewan.

Of course everyone in the province, Mr. Speaker, has I think a deep affection for the University of Saskatchewan. Individuals in government, outside of government, and truly individuals outside of our provincial boundaries and outside of our national boundaries recognize the University of Saskatchewan as a truly important institution that does cutting-edge research and, of course, serves the needs of Saskatchewan people very well. On a personal level, having completed a degree at the University of Saskatchewan and as a member of convocation, I of course have many fond memories of my time at the U of S and enjoy any opportunity I have to return to the university.

Mr. Speaker, the amendments that are put forward in Bill 73, *The University of Saskatchewan Amendment Act*, as stated in comments earlier on in this legislature by the minister, these requests have been made by university administration as a means as what they would see as an opportunity to modernize and an opportunity to ensure that some of the structures in place on campus are as responsive and as effective as they need to be, that the structures in place on campus match up with the expectations that we have for the university and the important role and the important function that it has in this modern age that we live in now.

Mr. Speaker, there’s three general areas that these amendments are concerning. The one area, Mr. Speaker, the first area would be looking at eliminating the role of visitor which has traditionally been filled by the Lieutenant Governor. That’s the one area. The second area is extending the term limits for board members, and the third area has to do with changes to how the chancellor is selected for the University of Saskatchewan. And I’d like to make a few comments about these three areas, Mr. Speaker.

The first area with eliminating the role of visitor, I would agree, Mr. Speaker, that as our democracy evolves and that as our democracy progresses there are structures in place, Mr. Speaker. There are approaches if someone does feel like they have a problem or have not been treated fairly. There are mechanisms within the university structure that are avenues of appeal for those individuals, and of course there are opportunities outside of the university’s structure. On this aspect, Mr. Speaker, I would see this as an appropriate step in a sense of bringing a more modern approach to how the university needs to operate, Mr. Speaker.

The second area that was addressed, Mr. Speaker, was extending the term limits of board members from two to three. And I think for members in this Assembly who have had the opportunity to sit on a board or be involved in any type of organization, whether that be paid or volunteer, clearly the longer one stays involved in that organization the more experience they have, the more knowledge they have about the ins and outs of the organization, and the more they are able to contribute.



Of course that needs to be balanced with the realization that sometimes in any organization individuals can maybe stay a little longer than would be appropriate in order to ensure that there is a turnover of people and new ideas are brought in, and that the mandate or the actions of the organization stays fresh.

But there would be best practices, Mr. Speaker, that suggest that this move of moving from two to three terms is, in fact, an appropriate one, and that this could improve the effectiveness of how the board operates in the years going ahead, Mr. Speaker.

The first area was discussing the elimination of the role of visitor. The second one was extending the term limits and, Mr. Speaker, the third area was how the chancellor is selected.

Traditionally, Mr. Speaker, this has been done through a process of voting where anyone who is a member of convocation, anyone who has graduated from the University of Saskatchewan has the opportunity to have their say, has the opportunity to vote and say who they would like to be the chancellor of the university.

And what this request from the University of Saskatchewan administration is asking, Mr. Speaker, is that no longer would there be an election or a vote that is held by convocation, but instead it would be a decision or a recommendation that would be put forth by a group involving members from the board of governors as well as members from the senate who are elected representatives to the university, Mr. Speaker.

And I think most likely I would expect, Mr. Speaker, the rationale for this choice would be that, with a fairly low level of voter turnout in these elections there's a degree of effort and a degree of expense, Mr. Speaker, that perhaps the selection of chancellor could be done in a more effective way that could serve the needs of the university, Mr. Speaker.

On a personal level, Mr. Speaker, I do see the merit of this approach in terms of how the chancellor would be selected, but that is not to say I have not received feedback from other individuals, whether that be from the public, the university community, or some other members of caucus as well, Mr. Speaker, who do have perhaps some concerns that this might be a way that individuals who have had a particular involvement and who have a deep affection for the University of Saskatchewan, that perhaps this is decreasing their level of involvement with the institution once they complete their training and join convocation, Mr. Speaker.

So on a personal level, I do see the merit in these three changes that have been requested in this amendment that has been brought forward, but I'm also cognizant and I do not want to dismiss the concerns that I have heard from individuals in this Assembly and outside of this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. So I do look forward to have the opportunity to ask a few questions, Mr. Speaker, in committee on this Bill, some questions concerning how, with these changes, the university is ensuring, how these legislation changes would still allow individuals to participate in the institution that they care so much about and still have a say with how the governance occurs at the University of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

So I'll voice my support for these amendments, but do look

forward to the chance to ask some questions on these amendments, Mr. Speaker. So with that I would conclude my remarks.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the Minister of Advanced Education and Labour that Bill No. 73, *The University of Saskatchewan Amendment Act, 2008* be now read a second time. 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 House Leader.

**Hon. Mr. Gantefoer:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

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

### Bill No. 68

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Tell that **Bill No. 68** — *The Arts Professions Act/Loi sur les professions artistiques* be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill 68, *The Arts Professions Act*. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the artists of our province are an extremely important part of how we feel about ourselves, about how we tell the stories about ourselves, and about how we present ourselves to the world. And they're important because this place that we live in is important to us. And so this particular legislation today is an attempt to show the importance that the government places on this particular profession.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to start off my discussion this afternoon with a reading of a poem by Andrew Suknaski, and it's called, "Indian Rings on the Edge of Tonita Pasture." And as many people know, Andy Suknaski is from southern Saskatchewan and I think he now lives in Moose Jaw. But this poem goes as follows:

the meadow lark's song proclaiming spring  
waters lazily flowing from wood mountain peat moss  
springs  
becoming five mile creek running north  
through this coulee  
where i caught fish and swam in boyhood unaware  
of three indian rings that nearly vanished  
beneath dust from a field  
lee soparlo's father worked  
trying to feed his family in the thirties — this

and standing here now in this great centre ring  
 where something holds  
 me around the heart the way  
 the wired stone anchors a cornerpost of the nearby fence  
 stretching north  
 and west to the village where i grew up — i claim these  
 things  
 my ancestral space to move through and beyond  
 chronicling the meaning of these vast plains  
 in a geography of blood  
 and failure  
 making them live.

That's Mr. Suknaski's poem. And it talks about something that I think all of us who are from Saskatchewan feel, is that this is our ancestral place and that we have a role in telling the stories about this place, so that we can chronicle the meaning of the plains in the geography of blood and failure.

And, Mr. Speaker, the role of doing that over the last 100 years plus of our province has been reflected in each generation of people retelling the story and how they connect.

I think what's quite interesting about Mr. Suknaski's poem is that it was written in the '70s when people were starting to try to make the connections between the settlers and the people who had been here first — our First Nations and then the Métis people. And what happens is that artist, that poet, is in a position of talking about and dealing with some of these currents that are part of our lives.

Many of us who are in this Chamber have strong roots in the land. Our families, our parents and grandparents and great-grandparents were part of the farmer group that came to Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, sometimes we don't always value the artists like the poets or the painters or the musicians in as great a way as we should. Now, Mr. Speaker, that's what this particular Bill is about.

Now unfortunately we as Saskatchewan people are similar to other Canadians in how we value our artists. And part of the goal that I think that our government should aspire to is to be better than the rest of Canada as it relates the artists of our province.

[14:45]

Now just last month there was an article in *The Globe and Mail* which talked about the number of artists in Canada. And basically there've been a number of articles over the last year that have been based on work done related to the 2006 census of Canada, but the story on Thursday, March 5 in *The Globe and Mail* on page R3 basically has a headline, "Artists decline as percentage of work force." And basically the study that was released by a company called Hill Strategies that had done the work on behalf of a number of agencies in Canada which included the Canada Council for the Arts, the Department of Canadian Heritage, and the Ontario Arts Council, basically Hill Strategies said that looking at the 2006 data, the number of artists had decreased and that the average earnings had also been taking a hit.

Now that was based on 2006 information. We're now in the

year 2009 and we know that there are even greater pressures on all members of our community. Another part of the Hill Strategies work for some of our national arts agencies related to some key facts that they were able to report about the working lives of artists in Canada.

And I think it's important that we put this information on the record here as we lay the groundwork for a discussion about *The Arts Professions Act*. A report released by Hill Strategies on February 4, 2008, was called *A Statistical Profile of Artists in Canada* based on the 2006 census, and it shows in that year there were 140,000 artists in Canada who spent more time at their art than at any other occupation as of May 2006. Now artists include actors, authors, choreographers, craftspeople, composers, conductors, dancers, directors, musicians, producers, singers, and visual artists.

Now that number — 140,000 — was slightly higher in May 2006 than the number of people employed in the automobile industry in Canada, which was 135,000. As we know, that number has been reduced substantially over the last couple of years.

This report also identified the fact that the broader cultural sector in Canada had about 609,000 workers and that these workers actually comprised 3.3 per cent of the overall labour force in Canada. So that's one in every 30 people in Canada have a job in a cultural occupation. That's double the number involved in the forest industry and double the number that's involved in the banking industries.

But with that positive news, there's also some things that are disturbing. The first point is the average earnings of artists are very low. The average earnings of artists in Canada are \$22,700, compared to an average of all Canadian workers of \$36,300. So there's a gap of about 37 per cent between the average earnings of workers in Canada and artists. They're in that bottom group.

The average earning of artists is only about 9 per cent higher than Statistic Canada's low-income cut-off for a single person living in a community of 500,000 people or more. So six of the nine arts occupations have average earnings that are less than that of the low-income cut-off for Statistics Canada. So basically the point is that artists' earnings are very low in our Canadian society.

Second point is a typical artist in Canada earns less than half the typical earnings of all Canadian workers. So for artists, the median earnings are only about \$12,900, and that's about half of the median earnings of Canadians, which is \$26,900. So once again a comparison shows that the artists are in a low, low income area.

But six of these arts occupations, the median earnings of an artist are less than or equal to \$10,000, and that means that a typical actor, artisan, dancer, musician or singer, other performer, or visual artist earns only about \$10,000 or less. I remind everybody this information comes from the review of the information provided to Statistics Canada.

Now the other sobering factor, as we look at artists' earnings, is that before the current recession started, the average earnings of

artists were decreasing already. So between the year 1990 and 2005, the averaging earnings of artists decreased by 11 per cent, even after adjusting for inflation. Compared to the overall labour force, the average earnings for the whole labour force grew about 9 per cent during the same time frame. So we actually have artists' earnings going down in the last number of years since 1990. And basically the earnings gap between artists and the overall labour force has gone from 23 per cent in 1990 to 37 per cent in 2005.

Another fact that this Hill Strategies report laid out was the fact that there are more female than male artists, but the women artists earn much less than men. So there are about 74,000 female artists, which is about 53 per cent of the artists, compared to an overall workforce number of 48 per cent of the workers being women. And these female artists still end up earning less than their male counterparts.

Another factor is that Aboriginal and visible minority artists have particularly low earnings. The Aboriginal artists have a particularly low average earnings of about \$15,900, which is a 39 per cent gap when compared with all Aboriginal workers in the Canadian labour force. So these earnings for Aboriginal artists are about 30 per cent lower than the average for all artists. Visible minority artists are in a similar category, and their earnings are 38 per cent less than the average earnings.

Now a sixth point that this study makes is that the economic returns to higher education are much lower for artists than for other workers. Basically university educated artists earn 38 per cent more than artists with a high school education. This is compared to the overall situation in the workforces where a university education shows a doubling of the earnings, compared to those people with just a high school education. The number of artists with at least a bachelor's degree of university education is nearly double the rate in the overall labour force. The numbers of artists is about 39 per cent versus 21 per cent in the overall labour force.

Another factor is that many artists are self-employed. So in the overall workforce in the country, about 7 per cent of the people are self-employed. As it relates to artists, 42 per cent are self-employed, and the self-employed artists are earning substantially less than the earnings of other self-employed workers in Canada.

An eighth point that this Hill Strategies report set out was that there are relatively few opportunities for full-time work in the arts, so nearly twice as many artists as other workers indicated that they worked part-time in 2005. So about 42 per cent of the artists in Canada worked part-time versus 22 per cent of the overall workforce. Basically this is also reflected in the fact that many artists are employed fewer weeks in a year than other workers. This also clearly affects the overall income for artists.

Now one point that this report brought out which was interesting and, I think, positive was that there's been a substantial growth in the number of artists since 1971. And so there was a fairly dramatic increase of the number of artists as part of the overall labour force in Canada between 1971 and 2006. But basically in the last number of years that growth rate has started to level off, and that ends up being a concern as well.

Another, I think, positive point, but also one that causes some reflection — and that's the tenth and final point in this summary of this report — was that artists as a group are becoming more diverse, older, and better educated. And so between the years '91 and 2006, there's many more visible minority groups who are artists. Artists who are 45 and older have more than doubled in number. There's 90 per cent more artists with university certificate, diploma, or degree in 2006 than there were in 1991. And basically the overall labour force as it relates to artists is well trained and well experienced.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I've spent a little bit of time laying out some of this information about artists because the goal of this legislation is to improve the lot of artists in Saskatchewan. And this is the latest version, the version brought forward by this government, to deal with the arts profession. And we know that there were previous versions of this legislation, both initially and in 2002, and it was based on work done over, I guess, almost two decades now with government policy officials and with the artists in a broad sense in Saskatchewan.

In the year 2002, there was a proposal that was going to deal with some of the status of the artist work. And this was subsequently introduced in the year 2006 as Bill 68, status of the . . . well I'm not sure if it was Bill . . . but there was a Bill introduced in that year.

And that particular legislation was quite interesting and actually caused a fair amount of discussion because it involved a number of things that had come from within the artist community. And I think if I just even outline a few of the areas that were listed in that particular legislation, it'll allow me to make some comparisons with the legislation that was proposed in '06-07, which ultimately wasn't passed, and the present Bill that was introduced in 2008.

[15:00]

Basically that legislation had a part 2 which was about recognition of artists, and I think it ended up having some of the same substances as what is in this particular legislation.

But part 3 of that 2006-2007 Bill was called professional relations. And basically the Bill was an attempt to set out a process of negotiation and bargaining within the artistic sector to allow for some standards around compensation, around a number of the typical employment issues that relate to people who are doing work that is of benefit to society or to particular institutions.

And much of the legislation had been developed over a number of years working together with both employers, people who were going to hire artists of various kinds, and the different groups of artists. And this was both individual artists, but also the various professional groups that represent different segments within the whole field of artists. And the goal was to end up having agreements that would set the employment terms and the scales of payment right across different sectors that were being bargained for.

And this ended up being a work that had many, many hours of thinking and policy development behind it. Now ultimately it ended up not making it through the legislative process. And

unfortunately in the election there was an indication from the present government that they were going to bring forward legislation as it related to the arts professions, and so we were hopeful that they would bring forward something that would be similar to the work that had been developed before.

But when Bill 68 arrived last fall, what we've found out was that anything that related to the bargaining or setting scale agreements or negotiation or dealing with unfair practices, those kinds of things, all of that kind of work was removed from the legislation. And what we got was the legislation that we have here today, which has some positive things in it, but it's missing the big chunk of the Act that would actually benefit the wages of artists in general.

Now let me talk briefly, or well maybe not so briefly, but in a form that's understandable around the things that are in this particular legislation that basically comes from the work that was done before. And where I will go is to say that in this legislation, the definition of artist is helpful. It sets out who would be included under this legislation, and it does that in a comprehensive way. And I think that's important that it does it that way.

But one place that is lacking, it relates to the whole area of multi-media arts and Internet arts. And as we know, this is a growing field. It's where there's much money. All you have to do is travel to Vancouver or even to parts of Regina where the number of people involved as multi-media artists or Internet artists is expanding. And as we know it's an area where many of the younger people are being trained, and they're actually finding very good jobs. None of that is included in this particular Act.

Now there is a provision, which is section 2(e), which allows for other fields, artistic fields to be added by regulation. That's an option here. I think it would be helpful if we actually knew . . . And maybe we'll find out some of this information when this Bill gets to committee. But the important part is that there's a whole area of the Internet arts, multi-media arts, which isn't included in this particular legislation.

Now the next point in this legislation, and once again we're still in section 2, relates to artists' associations. And because they've totally removed any of the issues as it relates to the employee-employer relationship and anything that hints at something close to the use of the Labour Relations Board, there had to be some changes. And we see some of those as we look at some of the definitions in section 2.

Now when you go to the definition of a professional artist, and that's also in section 2, that definition is pretty similar to what had been there in the previous legislation, except it's added one clause which is the very last clause in that definition. And that basically says that people have to have a business licence if they're carrying on artistic activity and if they want to get included in this particular Act, and that's I guess something that's there. We'll find out the rationale for that, I think, when we get to committee.

Now when we get to the recognition of the artist section, which is section 4 of the new legislation, it's interesting to note the addition that's made in that particular section in the definition,

which is to basically say, instead of emphasizing the importance to artists of being fairly compensated for the creation and use of their professional works, it adds the word — professional. So in other words, this is not going to protect the ideas and brilliance of some of our Saskatchewan people who are artists but they don't fit into that whole professional artist category, and I think that's a little bit offside with a recognition of the people who are going to do this kind of work. But we'll have a chance, I think, to find out more about why that change is there.

We see the similar emphasis on professional artists when you get to section 6, which is headed, the policy respecting artists. And this is once again a shift in this protection of artists to something that is defined in another place. I'm not sure what the full effect or intent is of the government as it relates to this, but it's the kind of thing that we'll need to ask some very good questions about when it does get into the committee.

Now the next section is section 7. It's got the same heading. It says, the undertaking of the government. And let me just read the section 7 that was there in the '06-07 Act:

7 The Government of Saskatchewan undertakes to do the following:

(a) to promote and protect the status of the artist by considering artistic work, including innovation and research, as a public good and service to the community;

(b) to promote within government the working conditions of artists.

The new Act, section 7, says:

7 The Government of Saskatchewan undertakes [and then it puts a big condition] as far as it considers it reasonable and appropriate, to do the following:

(a) [And then it goes into talking about promoting] . . . artistic work, including innovation and creativity, as a public good and service the community;

(b) to respect the working conditions of . . . artists.

So that section 7(b) is basically one line to say, well we respect the working conditions without having all of the protections that were in the previous legislation. So they've encapsulated pages and pages of protection for artists with this one line about respect. And then once again, it designates professional artists as opposed to artists.

And so we end up having a much watered down, much weakened Bill that builds on some of the work that was done there before. Now if we put the best construction on this, we can see it as a step towards getting better protection for artists and the arts professions. But practically it's a fair step back from the kind of work that was there just, you know, a couple of years ago.

Now the next section in this legislation relates to an advisory committee to the minister. And that concept continues and it's possible that out of the work there that some of the protections and some of the important clauses that had been developed

previously may resurface. And that's why I say there are some possibilities of moving this forward, but once again it leaves much to the discretion of the minister.

And I think the key line basically in the whole Act is to say, the Government of Saskatchewan undertakes "as far as it considers it reasonable and appropriate, to do . . ." whatever's in this legislation. So it continually has, rather than a legislative directive, it has this huge hole that allows for the government to do what it thinks is appropriate no matter what the legislation says.

Now the final section of this new legislation, and in many ways the most substantial part of this particular legislation, relates to the individual contracts — goods and services from professional artists. And effectively what this does is it sets out the conditions that should be present in any kind of a contract where you secure goods or services from an artist.

This is good work. It's got good clauses in it. It deals with many of the issues that professional artists have encountered over the years. And so I think that that particular area, we may have some questions about it as we move forward into committee, but there are basically the main points that you would want in any contract of engagement of an artist.

Now I would point out though that the regulatory power which is given in a subsequent clause, which is clause 10 in the regulations, effectively allows the Lieutenant Governor in Council to exempt ". . . engagers, professional artists or transactions or classes of engagers, professional artists or transactions from the requirement to have a written contract . . ." which is the main clause in section 9(1).

So you have given a strong statement about the fact that you should have contracts for professional artists, but right in the next clause it allows for regulations to remove whole areas of artistic endeavour from the provisions of this particular legislation. I think we need to get on the record in committee what the minister intends to do as it relates to regulations in this area. It's unfortunate that it couldn't have been clearer in the legislation itself what kinds of areas are, you know, the plans are there to exempt because in many ways the whole legislation will be quite useless if the areas where the most problems have arisen are not included.

[15:15]

So this legislation is a faint shadow of the work that was done previously, but it is a shadow. It does reflect some of the things that were there in previous versions of the legislation, and it does have some things that we will want to make sure are substantial and allow us to provide protection for the artists in our community, but it only is a small step in that direction.

Now I encourage the government to continue to work in this area, work with the various groups that are involved and make sure that as we go forward we in Saskatchewan can end up having the best protections possible for our artists. Because once again I return to the fact that the artists of Saskatchewan, whether visual artists or musicians or the Internet people, multimedia people or the writers and storytellers, all of these people are the ones that reflect our sense of place, our

understanding of how we live and how we operate on the earth in Saskatchewan. And it's important that we give these people not only short-term protection and words like respect, but that we also set up a system to fairly compensate these people and make sure that they can end up with a good living doing the work that we all want them to do.

And this legislation is a step along that road to the proper respect which includes proper compensation. But unfortunately it doesn't go the full mile, and we need to keep working at that.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would say that this legislation should now go to committee so that we can ask questions about a number of the issues that I've raised today. And I will end my remarks there. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is Bill No. 68, the arts professional Act. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — To which committee shall this Bill be referred? I recognize the Government House Leader.

**Hon. Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We would refer this to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

**The Speaker:** — The Bill stands referred to the Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

### Bill No. 85

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Hutchinson that **Bill No. 85 — *The Municipal Grants Act*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in his second reading remarks in explaining the Bill, the minister tells us that the government is implementing a new municipal operating grants program. And the idea is that this particular program will provide predictable funding to support municipal operating expenditures. We'll see whether that is the case as we go down the years here, Mr. Speaker.

It has been a tradition of Saskatchewan governments — and I don't how far back it goes but certainly of the governments that I'm aware of — for provincial governments to provide funds to municipalities to assist those municipalities with their operating programs, that the municipality should not rely solely on the property tax base to fund all of the programs that they need to carry out but that there is a responsibility for the provincial government.

After all, the municipalities are a creation of the province. They are in effect administrative units of the provincial government to enable municipal works be carried out on a local basis, subject to the direction of councils elected by people in those municipalities. And so there's a degree of independence.

Nevertheless municipalities are a responsibility of the provincial government.

Now the minister tells us it replaces — this new Bill, this new program, operating grants program — replaces *The Municipal Revenue Sharing Act* and provides then a new legal framework for the government to implement the new program.

He says that the municipal operating grants will grow based on the growth in the provincial sales tax. This year the municipal operating grant is proposed to be 90 per cent — 90 per cent of 1 per cent point of the PST [provincial sales tax]. So that's how it's proposed to be calculated this year. And he indicates that in the following year, 2010, 2011, and then in each following year, 1 full percentage point of the PST will be provided to municipalities for operating expenditures. So the idea is that as the value of the PST, the provincial sales tax, increases, so then will the value of the amount of funds set aside by the provincial government to provide to municipalities for their operating grants.

That's the theory behind the Bill. That's how it's proposed to be operated. We've always, I think if memory serves me correctly, have seen an increase in the value of the provincial sales tax, some years more so than others. And that's one of the issues that I will deal with, that we need to concern ourselves with, because sometimes the amount of money that the provincial government will take in under one point of the provincial sales tax can be changed because of changes that the provincial government is making to the sales tax itself. So again the principle is that as the value of the PST increases, so will the grants.

The minister tells us that this Bill, once it received the assent of the Lieutenant Governor, it'll come into force retroactively April 1, the very first day of the current fiscal year.

With many different interests involved and stakeholders involved, making changes to revenue sharing is a very complicated process, Mr. Speaker. You can imagine that not only do you have the two cities of Regina and Saskatoon, but you have the other cities in Saskatchewan, each that has a different perspective on its needs and what kind of support it needs from the provincial government.

And then of course you have towns and villages. And all of these municipalities may be in different states of development. Some municipalities may, because of economic development activities within their borders, may see an increase in assessment growth within their boundaries and therefore will be able to get more money from the interests and citizens within their boundaries because of this increase in assessment growth without increasing the rate for people as opposed to other municipalities.

We all know that in Saskatchewan that some municipalities have seen more of an increase in population than other municipalities. Bedroom communities, so-called, Mr. Speaker, those communities that are or have been established in the areas close to major cities, especially Saskatoon and Regina, have seen a very significant growth over the years reflecting a desire by people to build and have homes in those communities.

So those communities have seen very rapid growth, and it also means that those communities have seen a very rapid demand for services in those communities to be able to accommodate that growth, whereas other communities that don't have that kind of influence and may see and are pure service centres for the agricultural sector. And what we know in terms of increasing farm sizes, fewer farms, therefore fewer people living on the farms, larger farms going to larger centres to secure the supplies, provisions, the machinery that they need to carry out their farms bypassing some of those communities.

We know that some rural communities have struggled over the years, so we see great disparities in state of development between communities in Saskatchewan. Complicating the issue and pointing out there are different interests, not only do we have so-called urban communities of cities, towns, and villages, we also have northern communities, Mr. Speaker, which are in a class by themselves, have far different ability to generate their own revenue compared to southern communities because in the main these are communities that are located in isolation of each other, in isolation of surrounding countryside that might provide the basis for services and the basis for businesses that need to provide services to the surrounding countryside.

So we have great disparity between northern communities and southern communities and that too is then a consideration when it comes to the process of making changes to the grants that should be going to municipalities.

Further complicating this is the question of rural municipalities and how they should be treated. Historically, rural municipalities . . . Well, not historically I guess. At least for the last 10, 15 years or so if my reckoning is correct, rural municipalities have received funds from the provincial government — to be sure out of the municipal revenue sharing — but their distribution had been based on the number of kilometres of grid roads that they had within their municipalities as opposed to population. So in terms of revenue sharing compared to urban municipalities, those rural municipalities have always had roughly speaking a certain percentage of the overall pot so to speak that is then distributed, and we'll have to keep an eye on that. But that's certainly a further complication in terms of the process of defining what it is that should be received by municipalities in Saskatchewan.

So discussions on those changes started to take place in 2006, 2007 — I might say before the change in government in 2007, Mr. Speaker — when the municipalities sat down with the provincial government to determine how it is that the question of revenue sharing should be approached. The process that was established, at least with the urban municipalities, was to try and define what kinds of activities it was that should be the responsibility of property tax payers, what kinds of things is it that the property tax payer should be paying for as opposed to something that the provincial government should be paying for.

As an example, you know, work that's done for residential streets as opposed to streets that might form part of a provincial road network, but say residential streets, sewer and water, those are really the responsibilities of the local citizens as opposed to the provincial government which has clear responsibilities when it comes to health, education, and also provide services in our municipalities. So the question was, what is it that the local

taxpayers are responsible for as opposed to what it is that the provincial government was responsible for and as opposed to what might be seen to be a joint responsibility of both local taxpayers and the provincial government.

So it was a complicated process. I'm not sure the process is yet fully completed, even though we do have this proposal for a point of the sales tax to become the basis for future municipal operating grants. I'm not sure that process is yet completed, but that was the idea when we sat down with municipalities to try and determine out of that process what is it that municipalities are responsible for, what is it that is 100 per cent provincial responsibility, what is it that is a joint responsibility. And then when you know that, then you're in a position to be able to calculate what it is that municipalities need in terms of operating grants from the provincial government to reflect something that is, strictly speaking, a provincial responsibility and something that is a joint responsibility or a joint undertaking of the provincial government and municipalities.

[15:30]

Mr. Speaker, I think it's fair to say that the budget provisions this year for revenue sharing, the 90 per cent of one point of the provincial sales tax, have been generally received well by the municipal sector, again because they feel that they've been part of the creation of the program and the legislation itself. But everyone knows that this process began some years ago and long before the members opposite were elected.

I might say that there are reservations because there are people in the municipal sector who say that, how can you determine that it is one point of the sales tax which is required to fully support municipalities in Saskatchewan? Should it be a point of the sales tax or should it be something greater in today's terms? Should it be a point and one-quarter or should it be one and a half points of the sales tax that is the right amount of funds that should be provided to municipalities in the form of operating grants?

And so I look forward to asking the government at some point how the process of consultation with municipalities . . . to try and determine what it is that municipalities are responsible for, what it is that the provincial government is responsible for, what is a joint responsibility, what the analysis is as to what kind of funds municipalities should be provided when you do that analysis, and therefore whether it is in fact sufficient to provide municipalities with one point of the PST.

I might say that my own cursory assessment when I was involved in that process would seem to suggest that municipalities, if the provincial government is to provide 100 per cent of the funding for provincial responsibilities in municipalities and their share of joint responsibilities, that perhaps the amount of funds that should be provided to municipalities on an ongoing basis would likely be larger than one point of the PST.

Mr. Speaker, I might say that one of the concerns I have with the legislation is that it turns what was once a revenue-sharing process in legislation into a grant by and large in regulations. And I might explain for the public that are watching that when you have legislation, the legislation provides a broad outline of

what it is that the Government of Saskatchewan is seeking to do through certain legislation, and then subject to that legislation you may have regulations as to how that legislation is in fact to be played out.

It's not unusual, as an example, for the government, once legislation is passed by the Legislative Assembly, for the responsible officials in the ministries involved to take the time to work with the groups and individuals that might be affected by legislation to develop the regulations pursuant to that.

You know a legislation might, for example, say that there should be stop signs. Legislation might say that, but the regulations might further define as to what's a proper location for a stop sign. I'm not saying that, you know, provincial government prescribes where stop signs will be placed. But I use that as an example that there is a difference between legislation — which has to be passed by the Legislative Assembly, that all of the members of the Legislative Assembly then have a role, potentially a role, in questioning the legislation and how it affects people and interests within Saskatchewan — as opposed to regulations. Regulations that are published by the administration, not subject to review by the Legislative Assembly — although they are subject to review by legislative committee, but is one step further removed from the responsibility of legislators and into the hands of administrators. But we'll have to see how that process works out.

In regulations the minister can have any term, any condition, any prescribed term or condition attached to these grants. It doesn't necessarily need legislation to change that. It's done through regulations versus legislative change every year. And again, although committees of the Legislative Assembly have within their areas of responsibility a review of regulations that are promulgated by the administration pursuant to the framework that is within legislation, it's not the same as the Legislative Assembly itself, for example, saying this is what shall be done.

Historically we, in terms of the so-called municipal revenue-sharing grants, it's been the responsibility of the provincial government through legislation to set forth each year the amount of funds that will go to municipalities. And so every year the provincial government puts a Bill before the legislature and says, this is the Bill that says how much money should be going to municipalities. And then the members of the Legislative Assembly have to vote on that. And now that's going to be done through committee.

And you know, again the primary role of the Legislative Assembly, and why people elect members to the Legislative Assembly, is to pass legislation but also to provide the government with the funds that it needs to operate. And so there's a question here as to whether it is really appropriate for this kind of expenditure to be done through the regulations as opposed to through the legislation.

And I think a committee of the legislature responsible for this will have its work cut out for it to ensure that the regulations that are published and that are provided by the administration are in fact very clear, understandable regulations, not just for members of the Legislative Assembly but also importantly for municipal government.

So, Mr. Speaker, that's an area of concern that I have, specifically because of my interests in municipalities but generally as a Member of the Legislative Assembly — that any time the provincial government takes away from the ability of legislators in the Legislative Assembly to be able to say yea or nay to a proposed expenditure, any time that that kind of power is removed from members of the Legislative Assembly, I take the point of view that's something that really needs to be understood, clarified.

And at the end of the day, I think members should move cautiously whenever they take away powers of the Legislative Assembly because by taking it away from Legislative Assembly, by putting it into regulations, one puts more powers into the hands of the government itself and the administrators of the government. And I'm not saying that's necessarily a bad thing. I'm just saying we do have very clear-cut responsibilities, very clear-cut powers as members of the Legislative Assembly, and we ought not to easily give up those responsibilities, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to go back, when I said at the outset that this legislation will provide predictable funding to support municipal operating expenditures, there's a concern that I have about changes to the PST. When the provincial government says, look, to know how much money you're going to get, just look at the public accounts for a certain year, and see how much money that point in the provincial sales tax raised, and therefore you'll be able to calculate what kind of funds are going to municipalities generally, recognizing that there's further issues in terms of distribution of that money to the cities, towns, villages, rural municipalities, northern municipalities. When you look at that, you also have to recognize that the provincial government is in a position to make changes to the provincial sales tax. And we have seen such changes over time.

I know that the government that I was a member of, a part of, we made changes to the provincial sales tax. And we made some major changes at times to the provincial sales tax, not in terms of the percentage of the provincial sales tax — whether it's 5 per cent or 7 per cent — but also in terms of what kinds of goods in Saskatchewan would be subject to provincial sales tax.

So it stands to reason that if the provincial government makes an arbitrary decision to remove something from the provincial sales tax, to remove, say, an item that is now being taxed on the provincial sales tax . . . Let's take as an example, I understand that health foods are taxable items in health food stores — and I might be wrong on that but let's take that as an example — that if the revenues from that are now included in terms of the provincial sales tax, if the provincial government were to make a decision to not tax those items, then that means that there would be a reduction in the amount of sales tax revenue at one point. So there is a concern here about what process the provincial government will undertake if it proposes to make changes to the provincial sales tax.

What kind of involvement does the provincial government see, for example, if it pursues the musings by the Premier and other cabinet ministers about the provincial government looking perhaps at some future point — no doubt after a future election if they can get away with it, and to avoid scrutiny on that point — but to harmonize the provincial sales tax with the federal

goods and services tax? That's an issue that the federal government has been actively pursuing, has so for a number of years, was able to conclude such an arrangement with some of the Maritime provinces where they now have a sales tax. They've given up their own sales tax to harmonize completely with the federal goods and services tax, the federal sales tax if you like. The province of Ontario has indicated that it's now looking to harmonize its Ontario provincial sales tax with the federal goods and services tax.

Well what happened in Saskatchewan? What kind of consultation, discussion will there be with municipalities who are now a partner in this sales tax? What kind of discussion will there be with municipalities if the provincial government moves forward? And, reading between the lines, it certainly seems that provincial government is desirous of moving forward on harmonizing our provincial sales tax with the goods and services tax. What kind of consultation does the provincial government foresee when it comes to that eventuality?

And mark my words, Mr. Speaker, that is a direction that the current government wants to go down. You read between the lines — they say not now, maybe at some future time. And those are buzz words for yes, we will consider that.

But the question then is, how does that affect municipalities? What kind of role do they see for municipalities in all those discussions? Because provincial government is saying with this legislation that sales tax is no longer simply a provincial government source of revenue, it is now also a municipal source of revenue.

So if you then take the point of view that it's a joint source of revenue, not just for the provincial government but also for municipalities, and having spelled it out in legislation, then it follows that before there can be any changes to the nature of that tax, that there should be very clear rules of engagement, if you like, or involving the municipalities in Saskatchewan, their organizations, in discussions about any changes to the PST.

That is a very considerable concern I have as to how the provincial government move forward. And I know people say, well you can just take the revenues that you have and calculate that as a percentage of some new sales tax figure and provide municipalities to that. But that then becomes less than clear for municipalities, and that's the kind of thing that ultimately becomes a subject for abuse by governments that are not well-intentioned.

So I have that very considerable concern, Mr. Speaker, as to whether or not the government clearly knows what the process will be if there are to be changes to the provincial sales tax.

[15:45]

Mr. Speaker, another concern I have with this legislation is the distribution of the new operating grants for urban municipalities. Again recognizing that when you take the money that the government says that this grant that's being set aside being calculated as a percentage of the PST this year, being calculated as 100 per cent of the PST next year and future years, that then provides a pot of money. That pot of money then has to be distributed to the northern municipalities, the



rural municipalities, and the urban municipalities.

Now for the urban municipalities, the government is saying that these funds will be distributed on a per capita basis based on the previous Canada-wide census. And you know, that sounds good but that creates very, I think, challenging situations for some communities in Saskatchewan.

As I indicated earlier, some communities in Saskatchewan are very high growth communities, especially the bedroom communities around our major cities. They see tremendous growth, therefore they need more operating funds to be able to provide the goods and services to keep up with that growth. And to have a situation where those grants are then calculated on census figures that at some point will be five years old does not provide, I think, ease of mind for some of the mayors and councillors of those bedroom communities, knowing that they may have had very rapid growth over a period of five years, but, you know, the provincial government's grants are five years out of date.

So I think that is a concern. I think the government needs to address that issue. I think the government needs to look at models both in Alberta and British Columbia for a more rapid calculation, an annual calculation on population figures upon which the revenue sharing might be determined.

I know that Saskatchewan for example had a computer model back in the 1970s that had as its basis the census Canada figures, then tracked changes in hospitalization registrations for certain areas and therefore came to conclusions about what the municipal census figure might be within municipalities, and therefore on an annual basis was able to provide more accurate grants based on population growth in the communities in Saskatchewan. And that's an issue that I think the provincial government really needs to turn its attention to. I know that we've asked questions about that but I'm not particularly, how shall I say, comforted by the government's response on this.

So for high growth communities in Saskatchewan there are concerns here. The New North, the northern communities, have concerns. They have concerns about the northern municipal trust account and how this will affect them. I suspect that rural municipalities will have concern about the percentage of the overall pool of money, the 1 per cent of the PST. Their share of that, will that share change as population figures change? How will municipalities, rural municipalities, be affected by this? That is a considerable concern that I have, Mr. Speaker.

We look forward, Mr. Speaker, to asking very specific, pointed questions to the minister about the process for consultation. Should there be changes in the PST? That's more than a hypothetical question. I think that's a realistic question I guess, given the history of Saskatchewan where there have been changes to the PST. In fact the government itself and the government members will be applauding that one of their first acts as a government was to change the PST on used vehicles.

So, Mr. Speaker, you see from my comments that the notion that there will be changes to the PST is a realistic notion, and that we ought to address that point and to provide some comfort of mind to municipal leaders that their points of view will be taken into account when the provincial government looks to

make changes.

We also will have questions about the process of regulation versus legislative change, questions about the distribution of these funds to municipalities to take into account; varying rates of growth in municipalities, to ensure that's recognized, Mr. Speaker; and to ensure that the needs of northern municipalities, which I indicated earlier are very special, are also taken into account.

And, Mr. Speaker, having said that, I look forward to the opportunity along with my colleagues to raise these questions in committee. Thank you very much.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is the motion that Bill No. 85, *The Municipal Grants Act* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Agreed. Carried.

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

**The Speaker:** — To which committee shall this Bill be referred?

**Hon. Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

**The Speaker:** — This Bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

### Bill No. 89

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Krawetz that **Bill No. 89** — *The Education Amendment Act, 2009 (No. 3)/Loi n° 3 de 2009 modifiant la Loi de 1995 sur l'éducation* be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise in debate of Bill 89 here today. Specifically Bill 89, *The Education Amendment Act (No. 3)*.

This Bill is simply attached to the way that education is financed in this province, the changes that were brought forward in this past recent budget, and directs how the change in education funding is going to take place and specifically what that impact will be on education in Saskatchewan and how we deliver education in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. It's part of the legislation that abolishes the ability of local school boards to raise dollars for their local needs, to provide for their local needs, and certainly it could be characterized very accurately as the Act to centralize education here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

The Act, if you look at piece after piece of this legislation, it has sweeping powers to the Education minister; provides and centralizes power that was once belonged to local communities through their school boards, have now been transferred to the Education minister.

Under this Act, the minister's directives that any particular minister or government chose to take would take precedence over locally elected school board decisions or in fact local communities' decisions, Mr. Speaker. Under this Act the minister can now direct and change boards' plans, their budgets, their expenditures — a very profound and direct influence into something that has been managed and negotiated and influenced locally through our history, Mr. Speaker.

For an example, I guess the minister's approval is now needed, Mr. Speaker, for many pieces that in the past have been the responsibility of local school boards and local communities. That's being taken away from local communities across our vast and large province, Mr. Speaker. And if we're talking about those specific pieces, we're talking about the actual plans, the future plans of school boards, Mr. Speaker, the budgets of school boards, expenditures, how a school board might, how their plans might be created, any sale of assets or divestment of assets and needing permission, and the minister to be able to potentially plan to borrow any sort of money. So we see a very limited role left for school boards locally and a very large directed role from the minister's office as we go forward.

Under this Act and the changes to education financing, school boards certainly lose their autonomy and their ability to respond to their local needs, their communities' needs, their students' needs. And this is something vital to quality education, Mr. Speaker, responsive education. We have a large province with many, many communities and spread across rural and urban circumstances. And we now need a minister . . . It's going to be important for that minister to be able to understand every last local need across our province.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we know that local people know their needs best, Mr. Speaker. They know their needs best. These truly are sweeping changes that have been made by the Sask Party and, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, made without consultation — and this has been well reported on — but really concerning, Mr. Speaker, when we see, I guess, a government that has such a penchant to legislate first, consult later.

And to do this within a policy environment within education that has been so well served, Mr. Speaker, by a strong group of well-defined stakeholders, sector partners — the Saskatchewan School Boards Association; the STF [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation]; LEADS [League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents], our educational administrators; our business officials in SASBO [Saskatchewan Association of School Business Officials] — and for these kind of changes to have been brought forward and for that consultation to have not occurred, for straight talk to not have occurred with those sector partners, it's a shame, Mr. Speaker.

And I've shared this before in committee, and I share it here in the House, is that certainly we're well aware that forming policy out of consensus isn't the goal, Mr. Speaker. But to be straight and to understand and to hear the perspective of

stakeholders in a sector such as education is absolutely crucial, Mr. Speaker. To have a budget day announcement that pulls the rug right out from underneath the feet of school boards in how we deliver education in this province, without any sort of consultation, is a shame.

I think there's questions, Mr. Speaker, as to whether or not this is a sign of things to come for local governments across Saskatchewan. Certainly the Sask Party here in this case was very willing to go after a local level of government, that being school boards, and to eliminate their authority, to eliminate their autonomy, and to eliminate their ability to respond to the people for whom they've been elected by, the people who should and could be directly influencing the education within their communities.

And it's concerning as we look ahead, what direction in Saskatchewan's education sector, what sort of fundamental change could occur. A minister at this point in time, any one minister — and of course this legislation is in place for ministers beyond the one sitting opposite — one minister could drive profound change in education and, Mr. Speaker, that's concerning. It's concerning that one minister or one government could look at education in Saskatchewan and say, well you want to go this way; we're driving you that way. And this is a concern, Mr. Speaker.

Here in Saskatchewan we've long been proud of an innovative education climate, of progressive education, of education that balances achievement results that we're working towards and achieving, and the whole needs, whole child needs of students and the whole needs of communities. A very progressive climate, and that's the ability for local boards and for the sector partners to influence this change has really, really been hampered. In fact it's been taken away by this legislation, Mr. Speaker.

Boards, students, teachers, communities are now subject to every whim and whimsy of any particular Education minister, and it goes far beyond this Education minister opposite. Every Education minister to come, of any political stripe, can simply grab the wheel to education and dictate what's going to go on in this province.

It certainly raises concern about what it could mean. Cumbersome reporting and accounting processes for education systems, for teachers, for communities. Strained resources, Mr. Speaker, and a deflection of focus on students' needs and progressive innovative education, as I've mentioned, Mr. Speaker.

I worry about taking away from our empowered teaching profession and inundating them with reporting that may not best serve education in our province, and it's all as a result of the new dictatorial environment that the Sask Party has chosen to deliver in their budgetary changes, Mr. Speaker.

[16:00]

The Bill certainly raises concerns for teachers who already, Mr. Speaker, are working in so many ways to meet the needs of their students. We worry about bogging them down with reporting mechanisms that may not be best serving education.

The Minister of Education looks at me in sort of an inquisitive way, and I guess I go back to the fact that there's different philosophies and approaches as to how to best serve education. Now we have one individual, the Minister of Education, and it will certainly be ministers beyond this Minister of Education, who at any given time can take forward their philosophy and to say to the education sector, this is how it's going to be.

This is a concern, Mr. Speaker, a large concern. We look at broader implications that could occur, and we look to our western province, British Columbia, which recently put forward a budget that cut education funding. They have already taken away the board's ability to access the property tax base, as this minister just has done. And what we saw is because of that budgetary cut, Mr. Speaker, we see every single school division across British Columbia right now cutting programs and services. And many of those programs and services, I know, are being argued by communities that they're vital to the needs of their students and the needs of their communities. Well this is a shame, Mr. Speaker, and I guess it's a bit of a foreshadowing of concerns that can come within the education sector.

Specifically, Mr. Speaker, it's a concern with the lack of a plan that's in place to address the funding needs of school divisions, Mr. Speaker. This isn't a plan that was developed through a lot of policy work within the Ministry of Education, Mr. Speaker. This was one that was sprung upon the ministry and said, this is where we're going, and we're going to quickly have to figure out a plan to respond to divisions' needs. And those needs are vast, Mr. Speaker.

The new process right now, boards really are really anxious, they're concerned, and they're still shocked and surprised with the changes. And they're not certain of what their financial futures are, Mr. Speaker. And we talk about financial futures, we need to understand what we're talking about for boards. When they don't know what their revenues or their resources are for an upcoming year, it severely hampers their ability to plan for the future and for the needs of their students.

We right now have a process going on that's taken shape where the Ministry of Education has gone out and met with each of the school divisions to talk about what kind of needs they have. Well this is absolutely something that needs to happen, Mr. Speaker. But quite frankly, I'm very concerned about the ability for the Ministry of Education to actually fulfill on what is a very vast activity, to conduct those meetings and make sure that school boards are able to be heard, and that a balance is struck in finding the right financing needs.

The process that's been defined — and as I say, it really does lack clarity; it really does lack planning and this is part of the concern — but certainly it completely lacks transparency, and arguably, objectivity. It seems to be potentially an arbitrary process. I know school boards and communities and parents and teachers are concerned about that right now. It boils down to what school boards or an individual is best able to sell or advocate their financing needs to the Minister of Education.

There's concerns that those that are closest to the Minister of Education may be best served. This is a shame, Mr. Speaker. We need equity in our province. We need fairness, and we need our education partners and our school boards to be able to

respond to the needs that they've been sent to represent. It's a very significant centralization of education in our province, a very dictatorial environment.

And where we're concerned as an opposition, we believe that this is all about some short-term benefit but with many, many negative implications that will be realized as this string plays out for many, many years to come, Mr. Speaker. And here as an opposition, we'll be here to raise those concerns as those strings play out. Right now we're very focused on making sure that in the immediate that school boards are going to be treated fairly, that they're going to get the dollars that they need so that the children and that the students and that the parents within communities are treated fairly and that their programs and services are respected.

We see a process that's laid out that is a large, vast, arduous task that's upon the Minister of Education, and it's incumbent that he ensure that his ministry is ready to ensure fair and equitable funding. And this process is going to be a very taxing activity on this ministry.

I'm concerned when I look into the budget. I don't see a significant change in full-time equivalents. I'm worried how much this activity itself is going to take from the provincial ministry. Do they have the people that are there? Who else have they brought into the fold? Where have they found these individuals? Are they going to drain from other initiatives within the Ministry of Education? Because of course we do have many, many goals here for education in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. At this point we have more questions certainly that we will direct in committee. We know that there's a lot of concern in communities with parents, with teachers, with the sector partners, with school boards. And we want to make sure that those concerns can be brought to light. Certainly we'll endeavour to do so thoughtfully through committee.

And in just a very sincere way, Mr. Speaker, I really, really call upon this minister to ensure that the process before him — meeting the financial needs of school boards which means meeting the needs of communities and students — I call on him to make sure he's up for the task, to make sure that his ministry is up for the task, and to make sure all of the resources are there to make sure that nothing else within education suffers as a result of this brash, quick, short-sighted decision.

At this point, I refer this Bill to committee, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The question before the committee is the motion put forward by the Minister of Education that Bill No. 89, *The Education Amendment Act, 2009 (No. 3)* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Agreed. Carried.

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

**The Speaker:** — To which committee shall this Bill be referred? I recognize the Government House Leader.

**Hon. Mr. Gantfoer:** — Mr. Speaker, to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

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

I recognize the Minister Responsible for CIC.

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I'm on my feet to request leave to introduce a motion of referral to the Crown Corporations Committee regarding an analysis and proposed hearings outlining all types of power generation in the province of Saskatchewan.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Minister of Crown Corporations has asked for leave to address a motion of referral. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — No.

**The Speaker:** — Leave is not granted.

#### Bill No. 90

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Krawetz that **Bill No. 90 — *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Education Property Tax) Repeal and Amendment Act, 2009*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again it's my pleasure to rise and debate the discussion of Bill 90, the miscellaneous statutes Act as it pertains to education property tax in our province, specifically the repeal and amendment Act.

This Bill is simply a consequence of the budgetary decision or the education financing decision to remove the ability from school boards to respond to local needs of their communities, their children, their students, their teachers. So this is simply a consequence of that. There needs to be long-term certainty in education financing for school boards, for teachers, for students, for children, for communities. And they need to have the confidence that the funding of education will be adequate to meet the needs of every local community within this province. And of course, Mr. Speaker, the needs of our province are diverse in this vast province.

And now in the new centralization of education, where the Minister of Education dictates how education operates in this province, it's incumbent on that minister to understand every local need in every one of those local communities. And we as elected members know that that's a difficult task to do, and that's why we elect local people to represent those local needs. And here we have a group of school board members who have been elected by local communities to represent the local needs of their communities, of their constituents, and here they've completely had the rug — as I've mentioned — pulled right out from underneath their feet.

There's a concern that the removal of the board's access to the property tax base will result in the inability to respond to these local needs. And there's concern that funding provided will be inadequate to meet the needs of students. And this is a large concern for this opposition, the New Democrats. Education is so vital to the future of our province, and to start sacrificing addressing local needs within our province is of large and grave concern.

We can certainly look to other places, Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned just moments before in speaking to Bill 89, but as we look to a province such as British Columbia, Mr. Speaker, who recently in their budget just a short month ago introduced cuts to education, and they have a similar education environment — a constrained one similar to what the Minister of Education has changed our education climate to, Mr. Speaker.

And when they introduce a cut, what that means is that every division within the province needs to impose cuts on programs and services that directly affect communities, teachers, and children, Mr. Speaker; directly affects the ability of that education system to effect the kind of positive change and outcomes that are desired by that system.

And, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan we're very proud of a progressive, innovative education system that represents local needs and that in many ways has led the nation and North America in some very significant innovation, Mr. Speaker. To see that all being put at risk is a concern.

We again look at this process and we know that there was no consultation, a complete failure to consult on something that has historic and profound implications on education in Saskatchewan. As the president of the Saskatchewan School Boards Association put it, a profound change on education in our province.

The concern from this opposition is for the long term, as education needs to be supported by various Education ministers and governments that will come following this Education minister. Right now the Education minister truly does have the ability to drive a very direct agenda upon the people of Saskatchewan. This is a concern.

But we're also concerned that on the short term, Mr. Speaker, on the immediate task, and that's making sure that local communities and students and teachers, school boards are provided the dollars they need to operate and address the needs within their communities. We need to make sure that this occurs. The task of ensuring this happens after this minister has taken away the process to how education is funded, it's of large concern. We're concerned that this minister and the ministry isn't ready for the task, Mr. Speaker. And I push and push and push the importance of this, Mr. Speaker, that we need to be able to respond to the needs of these school boards, subsequently the needs of communities, of schools and communities.

Well I guess there's one other thought around this education financing, and that's that not too long ago the minister was talking about infrastructure investment that is needed within Saskatchewan. And he sold it at one point into what he called a

booster shot for the economy, Mr. Speaker. And we know now, as we've discussed and talked about why, that that was really just some fancy language to make it look like they were responding to sort of world pressures, but really more just sort of the way they were spinning what they were doing.

But the concern is that if this truly was supposed to be a booster shot, Mr. Speaker, we're concerned now about how school divisions are going to be able to deliver on the infrastructure capital plans that they've been given the opportunity to do so, Mr. Speaker. And the reason I say that is right now we have around 20 school divisions that are working on delivering education capital, building new schools or significant renovations in our province, Mr. Speaker. We know that about half of those don't have the 35 per cent reserve in place to be able to see that project go forward.

Now by taking away the ability of those school boards to go about accessing some other revenues, they're completely bound. And we see a booster shot that's been sold has seems to have come to a bit of a stall, and it's important that the minister figure out a plan into how he's going to be able to assist those school boards that don't have reserve dollars in place to make sure that the schools that they're entitled to can be put forward.

It has profound implications on teacher local level negotiations, on provincial education workers' local level negotiations, and many other concerns that we'll continue to highlight in committee and that we have been highlighting in committee. We have a lot more consultation to do, Mr. Speaker, because there's a lot of concern out there in communities — with families, with teachers, within the education sector, and with all of the stakeholders. And we'll endeavour to collect that information, those concerns, bring those perspectives to committee and be part of the constructive thought that occurs. At this point, I'm going to refer Bill 90 to committee. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[16:15]

**The Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is a motion presented by the Minister of Education that Bill No. 90, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Education Property Tax) Repeal and Amendment Act, 2009* be now read the second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Agreed.

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

**The Speaker:** — To which committee shall this Bill be referred? I recognize the Government House Leader.

**Hon. Mr. Gantfoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Standing Committee on Human Services.

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

## Bill No. 84

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Stewart that **Bill No. 84 — *The Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Amendment Act, 2009*** be now read a second time.]

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Nutana.

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to be able to enter into the second reading debate regarding changes to the labour-sponsored venture capital amendment Act. Mr. Speaker, as I understand it, what this particular piece of legislation does is it now recognizes the federally registered labour-sponsored venture capital corporations and that they will be able to move from 15 per cent to 20 per cent on the first \$5,000 invested — and this is an increase, I understand, from 3,500 — for a maximum tax credit of about \$1,000.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is the only province in this country that presently favours provincial funds over national funds, and we've been able to do that by enhancing the tax credits that are available to locally operated LSVCCs [labour-sponsored venture capital corporation] in our province.

We know that there are other provinces in Canada that specifically prohibit national funds from being registered in their province, and I'm thinking particularly of Manitoba, British Columbia, Quebec, and PEI [Prince Edward Island]. And as I understand it, Alberta doesn't have any labour-sponsored venture capital corporation program in their province.

Mr. Speaker, at issue here really is whether or not our existing provincial funds will be able to withstand the competition from a national labour-sponsored venture capital corporation, particularly now that there will certainly be a neutral tax environment.

As I recall the debate — and we certainly had lobbying efforts done by a national LSVCC in the past — but as I understand it, provincial funds argued that the proposed change that the Sask Party government has introduced would really reduce their ability to deal with upcoming redemptions and still achieve adequate returns for provincial investors, while national funds believe that adequate investor demand does present itself in our province and it would give them access to those funds.

Mr. Speaker, I think that with this amendment to the legislation, I think it creates some real difficulties. And I'll be interested to know in committee what our two labour-sponsored venture capital funds have to say about this. Because certainly in the past, provincially registered fund managers have been opposed to equalizing the tax credits, and they've been able to articulate a number of major concerns. And those concerns are the following.

The provincially registered funds are locally based and have a much better investment track record than any of the nationally registered funds. The provincially registered funds have built up offices and staff that are all located in Saskatchewan and they

dedicate their resources to our province.

The nationally registered funds are generally larger and much more diversified. And the argument is from the two provincial funds that they will have a competitive advantage over the provincially registered funds, and investment advisers and brokers may promote the nationally registered funds over the provincially registered funds due to these particular circumstances.

As well, provincially registered funds don't believe at the moment that there's any concrete evidence to suggest that equalizing the tax credits will expand the market as opposed to fragmenting it. And a fragmented market would be detrimental to the existing provincially registered funds.

In addition the provincially registered funds have argued that if the province, if the government, if the Sask Party government wants to expand the amount of venture capital available for Saskatchewan businesses, that the best alternative would be to increase the individual investor limits from the current \$5,000 to \$10,000. And, Mr. Speaker, as members will know the \$5,000 limit was set in the 1980s and it hasn't changed or been adjusted to respond to inflation.

So, Mr. Speaker, we will be very curious to understand from the Government of Saskatchewan why they believe that now is the time to allow nationally registered funds to have the same advantage that Saskatchewan registered — the two Saskatchewan funds — presently have in our province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think what the public needs to know is that these two funds or the policy was initiated in 1992. It's been successful in developing a viable provincial venture capital sector. There are two funds that have, as I understand, over 20 professional staff and they have close to \$180 million in provincial business investment.

Now, Mr. Speaker, just up until recently this national fund was in our province, was attracting investment in our province, and yet up until recently they did not invest those funds in our province. And we know with our two provincial funds that they are in fact investing in our companies, in jobs, in our communities here in Saskatchewan. So, Mr. Speaker, I think that the province is going to need to articulate very clearly to Golden Opportunities . . .

**The Speaker:** — Excuse me. Why is the member from Yorkton on his feet?

**Mr. Ottenbreit:** — For leave to introduce guests.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Yorkton.

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and to all members of the Assembly in your gallery I'd like to introduce

some very special friends of mine. On the far right is James Wilson, a good friend from Yorkton, a SaskTel manager. Directly next to him is Randy King. He's a fabricator, a musician, and the president of Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship in Yorkton and here for the banquet today. Beside him is his wife Cherie and then next to them is Bryce and Lorna Sherring, two very good friends of mine from Yorkton as well who have Sherring Gold among other business interests in Yorkton. And next to them doesn't need an introduction but my lovely wife, Leone, who is here for the banquet as well and is celebrating a birthday tomorrow. So thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would ask all members to welcome them.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

#### ADJOURNED DEBATES

#### SECOND READINGS

#### **Bill No. 84 — *The Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Amendment Act, 2009*** (continued)

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated, Golden Opportunities is presently a provincially registered fund in our province. It began raising capital in 1998. And SaskWorks, which was formerly Crown Ventures Fund, it began raising capital in 2000.

And, Mr. Speaker, we know that these two provincially registered funds have been very successful in increasing the amount of funds coming to our province through their work. And they've been able to raise money in our province to support various companies in our province and they've been able to do that much more substantially than other funds.

So, Mr. Speaker, the argument that the fund managers have certainly presented is that they believe that these large national funds are going to create a competitive disadvantage for our funds. The national funds, up until recently, did not have a terrific track record in terms of investing in companies in our province. And in fact more money was being raised here than was being invested, even though they had a responsibility to invest those funds.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think one of the concerns is that, given that these funds have been around for at least seven or eight years, that we may now start seeing funds that had been invested in those two provincially registered funds being cashed in and being transferred to the nationally registered fund.

Mr. Speaker, we have many questions that we'll want to pursue, particularly in committee, but at this time I'd like to move adjournment of this debate.

**The Speaker:** — The member for Saskatoon Nutana has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 84. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Agreed. Carried.

**Bill No. 71**

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Stewart that **Bill No. 71 — *The Innovation Saskatchewan Act*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to stand today and speak to Bill 71, *The Innovation Saskatchewan Act* before the day adjourns here, Mr. Speaker.

The province of Saskatchewan, the history that we have in this province is a very rich one and a very proud one, Mr. Speaker. When we look at the many examples of innovation, from the time that people have been here on the Prairies — whether it was the First Peoples, Mr. Speaker, or whether it was the pioneers who came and settled in this area as well — what we see, Mr. Speaker, is a beautiful track record of innovation as people here in the province have done their best to make life better for each generation, have done their best to seek out new ways, different ways of doing things in order to ensure that this province is as strong and as prosperous as it can and as it truly should be, Mr. Speaker.

And that's why it is indeed a pleasure to speak on *The Innovation Saskatchewan Act*, Mr. Speaker, because it is on the topic of innovation and it is about what is the best path forward for our province when we look at an agenda of innovation. Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to speak to this. Not because, Mr. Speaker, I agree with so much of what is in this Bill but because of the subject because it allows us to pause for a moment and think of the track record that is here in Saskatchewan when it comes to doing innovative things.

There are many proud examples that we have in the province of inventions of actual items, of materials that people have put together through their ingenuity and their hard work, but also innovation that we've seen in our system of government and what the province of Saskatchewan, what the Government of Saskatchewan has been able to do in co-operation with the people that live here and work here, Mr. Speaker.

We can think of some of the most obvious examples, Mr. Speaker, are examples of our health care system. How the innovation that occurred here in the province through the leadership of past governments with the co-operation and the hard work of Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker, that we were able to see the advent of medicare here in the province, the introduction of medicare which of course, Mr. Speaker, was what many view in the country as a gift to the rest of the country and as a proud heritage that we have here in the province.

Of course another area, Mr. Speaker, where we've seen a great deal of innovation is in the area of Crown corporations — Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker, created through the leadership of past governments and the co-operation of Saskatchewan people who realized that through working together, through pooling our resources, through taking

collective action, that indeed the future could be better, realizing that by putting our resources together, by having a strategic focus, through leadership by government with co-operation of people, that many great things could be done for this province. Whether it's looking at the track record of SaskTel and the service that has been provided throughout the province from all of our four borders, whether it is the track record of SaskPower and the good work that it has done, Mr. Speaker, in rural electrification, we see many fine examples of innovation.

Ironically, Mr. Speaker, when we see the Sask Party government bringing forward Bill 71, *The Innovation Saskatchewan Act*, on so many issues in the past, Mr. Speaker, the political predecessors of this current government, Mr. Speaker, they've been on the wrong side of so many innovation items that have come forward in the province. If we look at examples of medicare, if we look at a strong and vibrant role for Crown corporations here in the province, sadly the members opposite, their political predecessors have been on what I think is the wrong side of the issue on so many of these important topics.

[16:30]

And I think that's an issue that many people do recognize in this province, and we can see that with many of the polling that does now occur in Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan people across the spectrum, I think, recognize the important role that Crown corporations have in the province and do support the good work that has occurred.

As a member of the NDP and as the official opposition, Mr. Speaker, we as a party are proud of the role that we have had in the area of innovation over the previous years, and we're happy to continue to support much of the good work that is currently going on in the province. There are many examples of where initiatives that have been supported by the NDP government, where we've seen true fruit from those investments and that leadership.

There are many examples that we can think of: the priority that was placed on the synchrotron, the Petroleum Technology Research Centre, the Innovation and Science Fund to leverage funding from the federal government and other national bodies. Clearly, this side of the House, we've been in favour of innovative projects where the well-being of Saskatchewan has indeed been furthered.

We can also think of focus and an emphasis on funding for the Saskatchewan Research Council. Realizing that in our post-secondary institutions here and in our business community there's a great deal of knowledge, and an ability to come up with unique solutions, Saskatchewan solutions to problems here at home, but global problems as well. And clearly we've supported the Saskatchewan Research Council for some time and see that as a good example of where government can show leadership by supporting an institution that encourages innovation.

This new entity, Innovation Saskatchewan, is in some ways the establishment of a new Crown corporation, Mr. Speaker. It takes the activities that have been occurring in many different

departments or ministries and putting them into one group. The difference, Mr. Speaker, as to how this entity would be different from a traditional Crown corporation would be that the Chair of this Crown corporation would be the minister, Mr. Speaker. So there is not the same level of arms-length separation that would be traditional in a Crown corporation. Also, the representation of the board would vary differently as well.

With this change, Mr. Speaker, we also see a change in how the financial reporting occurs through this Assembly. And this is one of the more troubling aspects of Bill 71 as I see it, Mr. Speaker, because we see a decrease in transparency and accountability — something that's very important. I know all members in this House would agree that transparency and accountability is very important for the work that occurs through this Legislative Assembly.

What we see now, if this legislation is put in place and the changes occur, what we see now is that there'll be single-line item for Innovation Saskatchewan. The activities would have traditionally occurred in many different departments and areas where there's a greater degree of accountability, a greater degree of transparency. What we'll now see is single-line item. And, Mr. Speaker, this raises some problems. And I think this is going counter to what we've seen in many other parts of the country and in North America where the public has demanded a higher level of transparency, a higher level of accountability.

So when it comes to financial reporting we see this decrease, and I know that's alarming for many people. It's a greater degree of control, which does not necessarily mean that individuals in the province will have a greater degree of understanding of where money is going, how it is being spent, and whether or not the way it's been spent is appropriate.

This tendency, Mr. Speaker, for decreased transparency, decreased accountability that we see with this proposed legislation, is quite consistent with other aspects or other events we've been seeing in a national context with the Harper Conservatives. And, Mr. Speaker, a few moments ago I was speaking about the predecessors of the Sask Party, how they were opposed to many of the innovation items we've seen in the province. The one example that I gave was medicare, how their predecessors would not be in favour of that. We also see, not their predecessors but current federal cousins, Mr. Speaker, where we've seen an agenda of decreased transparency and decreased accountability.

In previous debates here in the legislature, it's been well-documented the connections that the current Sask Party has to the current federal Conservative Party. A good number of the Sask Party MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] are card-carrying members of the federal party. And there'll be few who say, oh no, hold on, I'm a Liberal, I'm not . . . I don't have any connections to the federal Tories. But in truth there are many who do have strong connections, Mr. Speaker, and because of those strong connections we've seen many similarities in the approach of government, the means by which government carries out its agenda and what it wants to do. And sadly, Mr. Speaker, on this issue of transparency and accountability, I think most Canadians now would agree that the Harper Conservatives do not support this.

And I'm afraid, Mr. Speaker, here in Bill 71, *The Innovation Saskatchewan Act* this too feeds into a larger example of behaviour that we're seeing in the national context of decreased transparency. And I'm saying that's occurring, Mr. Speaker, or would occur through by all the expenditures through Innovation Saskatchewan being reduced to a single line and not having the same degree of transparency that would occur normally through this House through the normal reporting mechanisms.

This type of approach, Mr. Speaker, it's ironic as well. In reading some of the previous speeches that members on this side and the government side have made on Innovation Saskatchewan, a number of examples, especially that our Finance critic identified, a number of cases where the current Sask Party government, when in opposition, was very critical of many of the actions by the NDP government which were promoting innovation and which would now in fact fall under or be in a similar type of action as what we would see under *The Innovation Saskatchewan Act*. And it's an interesting retreat from many of the principles, Mr. Speaker, that the Sask Party has traditionally stood by and has traditionally supported.

Actually this has a parallel to some of my earlier comments about the Harper Conservatives. When we talk about abandoning principles, when we talk about no longer standing for the things that you've always stood for, now that's been very evident in the federal scene, but perhaps to a lesser degree, but a degree nonetheless, Mr. Speaker. In this *Innovation Saskatchewan Act*, we see the Sask Party promoting the types of investments by government in innovation that they have traditionally stood up against, that they traditionally have not supported. It's just another example, Mr. Speaker, where we see the current Sask Party government not being consistent with the approach that it had took while it was in opposition, where they have admitted that they said anything they wanted for many years, Mr. Speaker.

If we look at the most recent provincial budget where we saw an increase of spending — I believe it was 12 per cent and the previous increase the year before of 10 per cent — another example of retreating from long-held principles that they felt were important and now doing what is convenient in the short term, not necessarily staying true to the principles that they have always held.

We also see, Mr. Speaker, through this Innovation Saskatchewan Act, many of the same concerns we've seen with Enterprise Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, with Enterprise Saskatchewan I've had the opportunity to speak on that bit of legislation as well. And the concern with Enterprise Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker — and we see a similar concern with this bit of legislation with Innovation Saskatchewan — is that it puts a structure in place that makes it convenient for the government to dodge accountability on certain issues and to pretend, or to put up a facade of arm's-length when in fact that is not the case.

With Enterprise Saskatchewan, you know, there was originally the commitment by the government that cabinet ministers would not be taking part; this would be removing the politics from the decision-making process. But just as we saw with some other instances that I mentioned where we see a retreat from long-held principles, once the Sask Party was in, what did



we see with Enterprise Saskatchewan? Well we actually saw cabinet ministers being appointed to Enterprise Saskatchewan — I believe it's the Minister of Enterprise and Innovation; I think the Minister of First Nations Métis Relations on Enterprise Saskatchewan — where we now see what looks like arm's-length but in reality is direct government involvement. And that creates a situation where it might be convenient for them to say that they're not attached to these decisions, but in reality it's clear that they are in fact attached.

And the argument I made with Enterprise Saskatchewan was that elected officials are elected for a reason. They're elected to make decisions and to be accountable for those decisions. So when the structure of the board is not set up in that way, it creates the potential for problems down the road.

In the same way with Enterprise Saskatchewan, there is a concern about decisions around innovation, around science, around technology, around research. It's important that this be done on the merit of individual decisions of the individual cases and the individual decisions that need to be made. And so how that will occur within Innovation Saskatchewan does raise some flags for some of us as to how arm's-length this would be and how much political involvement there can be with the decisions.

In terms of innovation, Mr. Speaker, and funding used for innovation, it also reminds me of what we saw I guess two budgets ago when the Sask Party first came in and the elimination of the Green Future Fund, of the \$320 million to be used for innovation, Mr. Speaker. With the scrapping of that, again it's getting back to the issue of the single-line item that is reviewed by this Assembly for funding. It does not provide the same degree of transparency and perhaps the same degree of focus that has been the tradition.

So as I wrap up my comments, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to state that those of us on opposition in the New Democratic Party, we're proud of our history of looking for innovative solutions with Saskatchewan people to the issues that matter here at home and to the problems on a global scale. So we're very proud of that and we certainly support Innovation Saskatchewan . . . we certainly support innovation in Saskatchewan for the good work that many people and many different research bodies and groups have been doing for some time.

And it's been sad to see, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite on so many issues, when they were in opposition, oppose innovation and oppose many of the actions of government in the way it was spending and many of the actions in a historical context that they have not agreed with.

We're concerned with this legislation because it affects transparency and accountability, we think, in a negative way. It does not enhance transparency and accountability, but it decreases transparency and accountability — a pattern that we've seen in the federal context with the Harper Conservatives where there are well-documented connections between the members opposite and the federal Conservatives, Mr. Speaker.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I would conclude my remarks and I am pleased to adjourn debate on Bill 71, *The Innovation Saskatchewan Act*.

**The Speaker:** — The member for Saskatoon Massey Place has moved the adjournment of debate on Bill No. 71, *The Innovation Saskatchewan Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Agreed. Carried.

#### Bill No. 80

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by Hon. Mr. Norris that **Bill No. 80** — *The Construction Industry Labour Relations Amendment Act, 2009* be now read a second time.]

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

**Ms. Morin:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak against the proposed Bill 80 because it represents a continuation of the eroding of the rights of Saskatchewan citizens who have a proud and vital tradition of making this the best place to live for its working people.

Mr. Speaker, it is incomprehensible why this government chooses to continue its assault on the human rights of unions and union members. Just like the former Bill 5 and Bill 6, this proposed legislation was not asked for by unions or union members. Just like the former Bill 5 and Bill 6, this government consulted with not one single representative of the unions and the union members affected prior to introducing such dramatic and significant intrusion to their human rights.

Just like the former Bill 5 and Bill 6, this legislation reveals this government's unfortunate, and in my respectful opinion, contemptuous disregard for the value to our province of the labour movement and its members. Choosing to attack labour and engage in a confrontational and provocative approach, rather than sitting down with the labour movement to identify what the concerns are and adopt a collective and good faith approach to governing, is an affront to the principles of a free and democratic society.

[16:45]

As you may know, Mr. Speaker, craft associations were granted legal recognition over 500 years ago. For more than 400 years, guilds — the precursor to today's trade unions — had jurisdiction over the designation of master craftsmen and apprentices. Craft unions in North America have been involved with skills development and apprenticeship training from their inception over 100 years ago.

While on-the-job training comprises approximately 85 per cent of an apprentice's indentureship to an employer, formal classroom training has always complemented skills development. Each craft sets limits on the number of apprentices to each journeyman, usually about three or four. Adherence to apprenticeship ratios is a quality measure and legacy that dates back to the guilds.

Mr. Speaker, across Canada and the USA [United States of

America], statistics show that over 80 per cent of the construction industry apprentices who successfully complete their requirements for trades qualification certificates are sponsored by joint apprenticeship training boards. In Saskatchewan the construction unions are the keepers of this quality control and have been since they first came here in the beginning of the last century.

Mr. Speaker, did you know that some of the trades provide over 90 training courses over and above the courses offered through SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology]? Did you know that these courses are designed to ensure that the highest level of skill is brought to every construction site, to every construction project, and to every workplace in this province? Did you know that these courses ensure the highest level of workplace health and safety for every young person who seeks to enter the proud and centuries-old tradition of becoming a skilled journeyman?

Did you know that the work in this industry is some of the most dangerous work in our society and that young people get killed on these jobs each and every year because of its intrinsic danger? Did you know that the construction trade unions in this province provide the highest level of training to protect the lives of our young people offered anywhere in this province? Mr. Speaker, did you know these training programs are offered as the result of collective bargaining arrangements negotiated with the employer councils in the construction industry? That's right, Mr. Speaker, they and the employers recognize the value and importance of this additional training and have worked out co-operative joint training programs.

The jobs in the trades require extensive and ongoing skill and safety training to be able to build and maintain the massive projects we come to rely upon to provide our citizens with such necessities as heat, electricity, power, and water. As technologies advance, as new and more advanced processes are developed, new and more advanced skills are required. And the construction unions have been there to provide such skills.

Bill 80 would move this historical and necessary apprenticeship and skills training backwards, Mr. Speaker. Why would any government do anything which could lead to the lowering of skills and the lowering of safety standards which the construction trades offer?

Does this government's ideological opposition to the labour movement reach so deep that it will not or perhaps cannot see the value in at least examining the impact of such legislation before introducing it in this legislature? As we have seen from its approach to the former Bill 5 and Bill 6, this government, Mr. Speaker, seems to be unwilling to changes its laws to address the concerns of the labour movement once it has introduced them.

And we know, Mr. Speaker, that the government did not consult with the unions and its members affected because the assistant deputy minister admitted such. In fact the assistant deputy minister admitted that the only group that asked for this legislation was a group called CLAC [Christian Labour Association of Canada], which stands for the Christian Labour Association. Did you know, Mr. Speaker, that CLAC was also a supporter of the Saskatchewan Party and told its members to

vote for them in anticipation of getting a law that would support them? Mr. Speaker, that should concern this legislature and the citizens of this province.

Mr. Speaker, can this government demonstrate that allowing CLAC and the employers who support them to enter our economy will enhance the safety training and protection of our young people who choose the trades and their profession by offering more extensive and more thorough training than that historically provided by our construction trade unions? Can this government demonstrate that allowing CLAC and the employers who support them to enter our economy will increase the training levels and skill development now provided through our construction trade unions in Saskatchewan?

Mr. Speaker, can this government demonstrate that allowing CLAC and the employers who support them to enter our economy will actually increase the level of wages and benefits that our young people are insured, that our journeymen are insured through the collective agreements negotiated by the trade unions in Saskatchewan? Mr. Speaker, doesn't the Sask Party government believe that the people in this province are entitled to improve their wages and benefits and to improve their working conditions?

Mr. Speaker, did you know that the building trades unions contribute to the improvement of society for many citizens who suffer from poverty or illness or disease, and citizens who need their help? Mr. Speaker, one could go on and on about the contributions of the construction trades to our society over the past several decades. One could go into almost every community in this province and see an example of the work and contribution of the construction trades. It concerns me deeply that this government never had the respect to spend a single second of time to meet with the representatives of these unions, to ask them how these proposed changes to a law which has worked so well would impact them. It's shameful, Mr. Speaker.

And given that the Sask Party government is getting quite upset by what I've said so far, I'm going to provide another contribution which the construction trades industry provides that most people wouldn't even realize. And I quite frankly didn't either, until I did some research, and it's a contribution of poetry.

And I'd like to read one such poem to exhibit the sentimentality of some of these wonderful people that are in the construction trades and the services they provide to us. This poem is called "Slab on Grade" and it reads as such:

At dawn the concrete trucks are already there revving their engines  
Rumbling and throbbing one by one manoeuvring into position  
Enormous insects on command  
They ooze from their huge revolving abdomens a thick grey slime  
Insects attending to insects  
The crew fusses over them, nursing wet concrete into the forms  
Someone to handle the chute, a couple labourers mucking  
One pulling mesh and two finishers working the screed rod

This is called pouring slab on grade  
 What could be flatter or more nondescript than a concrete slab  
 For years people will walk on it  
 Hardly considering that it was put there on purpose  
 On a Thursday in August by men on their knees.

This poem was written by Clem Starck. He's a journeyman carpenter for more than 20 years and is a member of the Carpenters Local 1065. And I found that to be quite moving for me when I was doing the research for this Bill, and it brought to light to me the contributions that these construction workers and these trades workers provide to our society that go far beyond the concrete buildings and the maintenance of such as well.

There was a very powerful, powerful letter that was written by a member of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, Local 1985. He is an organizer for this union. His name is Kerry Westcott, and with his permission I'd now like to read into the record some of the items that he has . . . Let's put it this way, the overview that he sees with respect to Bill 80. And quite frankly he has first-hand knowledge of this because he is in the trade, and he certainly knows about how this Bill 80 came about with respect to the processes that were undertaken by the Sask Party:

The Construction Industry Labour Relations Act (1992) sets out a system of collective bargaining in the construction industry on a province-wide basis between employers' organizations and trade unions.

Unionized contractors elect leaders to bargain province-wide collective agreements with the elected leaders of building trades unions, trade by trade. Six employers' organizations bargain collective agreements with 12 construction trade unions covering 24 of Saskatchewan's apprenticeable trades.

Construction projects have been organized on a trade basis since craft guilds built gothic cathedrals. There are several good reasons why Saskatchewan, and nearly all of the industrialized nations, bargain provincial construction agreements this way.

Prior to the . . . [construction industrial labour relations Act] every contractor had a different agreement with a different expiry date. It was very chaotic and de-stabilizing for the industry. Contractors crave certainty and in fact petitioned for the system originally.

So, Mr. Speaker, we can see that the reason that the construction industrial labour relations Act came about originally was that the contractors themselves were petitioning for it for the reason of stabilization.

It's interesting now that we have a minister who, when was introducing this Bill in the House — and I'd like to quote from *Hansard* from March 16, 2009 — the minister responsible said, "Last week, Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to announce the government is moving to ensure Saskatchewan's construction industry operates under fair, flexible, and effective labour laws."

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Ms. Morin:** — Well this Bill 80 is anything but fair. It is clearly not fair. It doesn't take into account at all the opinions of the front-line workers. It doesn't take into account at all the organizations that represent those front-line workers, and the assistant deputy minister has admitted as much by saying that they were not consulted in this process. So clearly, Mr. Speaker, it is clearly not fair.

Now let's go to flexible. Sure there is a whole bunch of flexibility. There's a whole bunch of flexibility to make sure that the wages aren't going to be as good as they were, Mr. Speaker, that there may not be any contributions for instance to benefit plans or for instance to pension plans. Those are all things that came to fruition under the protection of *The Construction Industry Labour Relations Act*. So we have it, Mr. Speaker, so there is definitely going to be flexibility, but it will not be to the advantage of the workers, that's for sure.

And as far as effective labour laws, well one has to wonder as to who . . .

**The Speaker:** — Being the hour of adjournment, the Assembly stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 10 a.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 17:00.]

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