



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

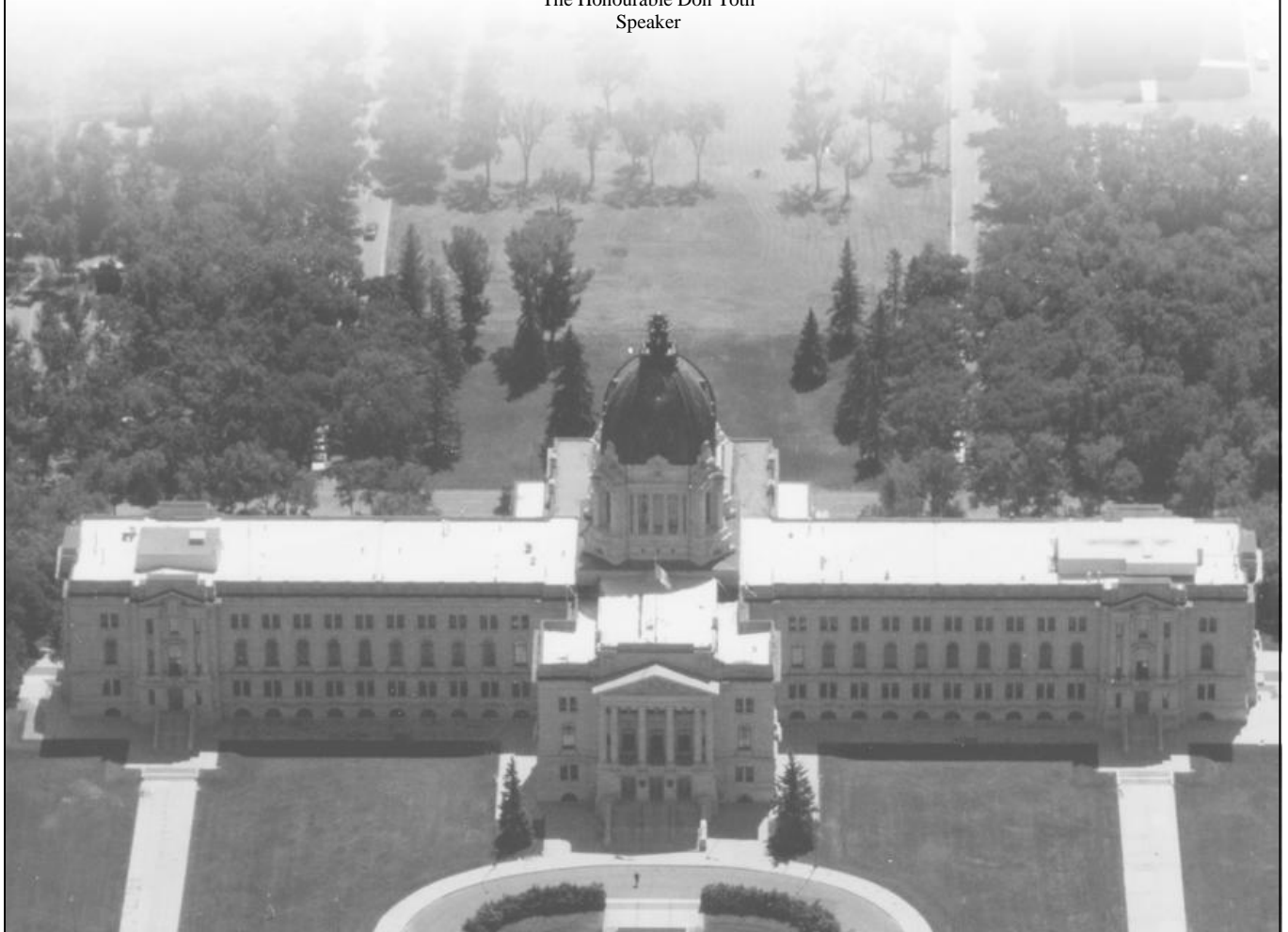
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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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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 — Dwain Lingenfelter

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

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's truly an honour for me today to stand and introduce someone in the west gallery who is no stranger to this Assembly. He is presently a city councillor in the city of Saskatoon, but he used to be the Social Services minister for the province of Saskatchewan. I would like everybody to join me in welcoming Mr. Bob Pringle back to his Assembly.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to join the minister in welcoming Mr. Bob Pringle to the legislature today. There was a big announcement, and I'm sure he's here to hear more about that. And I would ask all members on the opposition and throughout the House to join in welcoming him here. Thank you.

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

**Mr. LeClerc:** — Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to this Assembly, I'd like to welcome my CA [constituency assistant], my right arm who helps me run our constituency office in Saskatoon Northwest, and his girlfriend of a famous name. Her last name is Hutchison; her first name is Stephanie. And I'd like to welcome both of them to their Assembly today to watch us in action.

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

**Ms. Morin:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker:

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

So I would like to ask all of my colleagues to welcome Olga and her family to Canada, to Regina, and in particular to welcome Olga to the legislature today. She's here to witness a members' statement about the fall of the Berlin Wall, which of course is an important occasion for all Germans everywhere in the world. And Olga is going to be hopefully partaking in one of the parties to celebrate the fall of the Berlin Wall that are happening all over Saskatchewan today.

So I'll ask all my colleagues to welcome her heartily to the legislature today. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Rosetown-Elrose, the Minister of Highways.

**Hon. Mr. Reiter:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to this Assembly, I'd like to introduce in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, some good friends of mine. I'd ask them to just give a quick wave when I introduce them.

The young lady, Michelle McQueen, she's my former assistant at the RM [rural municipality] of Marriott and Pleasant Valley in Rosetown and now is a very able administrator. And with her are my former employers, Councillors Glen McNally and Byron Siemens and Reeve Blake Jeffries. And they're here for the SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] mid-term convention, Mr. Speaker, which I look forward to speaking to later today. And I'd ask all members to please give them a warm welcome.

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Mr. Harper:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today to present a petition on behalf of concerned citizens of Saskatchewan who are concerned over the condition of Highway 310. The petition states that Highway 310 has significantly deteriorated and that the condition of the highway is a potential safety hazard for the residents who drive on this highway each and every day. Mr. Speaker, I'll read the prayer.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the Sask Party government to commit to providing the repairs to Highway 310 that the people of Saskatchewan need.

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

And Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the good folks from Ituna, Foam Lake, and West Bend, Saskatchewan. I so present.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling for wage equity for CBO [community-based organization] workers. And we know that workers in community-based organizations have traditionally been underpaid, continue to earn poverty-level wages. And this results in high staff turnover and the subsequent lack of caregiver continuity. It has a negative impact on the quality of care clients receive.

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

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

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

And, Mr. Speaker, these folks come from Prince Albert. Thank you very much.

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. Order. Order. There's just too much debate, especially too close to the Speaker, to hear the presenter. I recognize the member from Cumberland.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition in support of maintaining quality health care services. Mr. Speaker, we all hope that the Saskatchewan government realizes that in terms of addressing retention and recruitment issues that the best way to achieve this is its commitment of adequate funding and installation of good faith at the provincial bargaining process. And the prayer reads as follows:

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

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

And the petitions are signed by people from Govan, Nokomis, Semans, Rosetown, and Saskatoon. I so present.

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

**Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition in support of affordable rents and housing in The Battlefords. Mr. Speaker, the residents who have signed the petition note that rent increases of 40 per cent are outrageous and the vacancy rate for rental accommodations is very low. The prayer reads as follows:

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

Mr. Speaker, the petition is signed by residents of North Battleford, Cochin, Delmas, and Glenbush. I so present, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

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

These petitions are signed by concerned citizens of Regina and

North Battleford, Mr. Speaker. I so present.

### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

#### 20th Anniversary of the Fall of the Berlin Wall

**Ms. Morin:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker:

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

Mr. Speaker, the 20th anniversary of the peaceful revolution and the fall of the Berlin Wall are significant events that triggered drastic changes around the world, marking the end of the Cold War. For Berliners in particular, November 9th, 1989 will remain the happiest day in their recent history. Finally what belonged together could grow together.

In the summer of 1961, the stream of refugees leaving East Germany had grown to proportions that threatened the very survival of East Germany. On August 13th, 1961 East Germany's leaders closed the border to West Berlin. The Berlin Wall was the symbol of Germany's division and the East German leadership's disregard for human rights and basic freedoms. It is estimated that hundreds of people were killed while trying to cross the border, and I've seen the monuments in Berlin that were erected in honour of those that were known of.

Mr. Speaker, one of the features of the Festival of Freedom celebrating the fall of the Berlin Wall will be over 1,000 plastic foam dominoes which were painted by pupils from Berlin schools, which will be set up along the route where the Berlin Wall once stood. They will be knocked down to mark the 20th anniversary of the crumbling of the Cold War barrier.

Mr. Speaker, sections of the Berlin Wall are now on display at various points along the 160 kilometres of the former border. They are beautiful works of art that are appreciated much more now that they are cause to bring individuals together to reflect, to give thanks, and to admire their powerful statements.

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

Thank you.

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

**Mr. Weekes:** — Mr. Speaker, today, November 9, 2009 marks 20 years since the fall of the Berlin Wall and the beginning of the fall of the Soviet Union. From 1961 to 1989, the city of Berlin was divided into East and West Berlin, and literally divided friends and families from each other throughout the city. This symbol of oppression pitted Europe against itself and came to represent much of what the Cold War was about. People literally gave up their lives attempting to cross over from East to West Berlin, and this wall came to be known as the death strip.

When news broke that the East German government would allow its citizens to visit West Berlin and West Germany,

millions of East Germans rushed the barriers that previously separated them from freedom and liberty.

Mr. Speaker, let us commemorate this important date in our shared history. The collapse of the Berlin Wall paved the way to German unification, as well as the collapse of the Soviet Union. Now freedom and prosperity reigns supreme in Germany. This anniversary offers hope to all those desiring life and liberty. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### McNab Community Association

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's with great pride that I recognize the good work of the McNab Community Association. The association offers family, adult, and children's programs and social events to a small community located within my constituency. Its Chair, Ms. Hazel Whipple, their board, and volunteers work hard to bring the community together.

The McNab Community Association has been working with the city of Regina to revitalize McNab Park. The association has been instrumental in planting 31 new trees in the park. Dundee Developments graciously donated 20 trees. The city of Regina planted seven spruce trees and residents paid for four memorial trees. Families in the community have lauded the improvements to the park, Mr. Speaker, and more and more families can be seen playing on the swings and the playground equipment.

Mr. Cliff and Mrs. Marie Just had an important graffiti cleanup program that ensures graffiti in the community is cleaned up as soon as possible. The community association is reaching out to its community partners — among them Pioneer Village, Luther high school, and Gateway Christian Fellowship church — to provide positive programs in the community.

[13:45]

I'm extremely proud of the McNab Community Association and its partners. I ask all members of this Assembly to join with me to extend our gratitude to this community association and its partners for the meaningful work within our community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### The Significance of November 7th

**Ms. Wilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Pacific NorthWest Economic Region, or PNWER, held a leadership forum last week in Regina. The topics discussed included global competition, responsible development of energy resources, agriculture, and innovation. The delegates from PNWER were also able to take in the Roughriders' game on Saturday. And it was an amazing game, and everyone had a great time. And it was wonderful to see our guys come out on top and finish in first place.

So, Mr. Speaker, Saturday's Riders' win is just one more reason to celebrate November 7th. It was on November 7th, 2007 that

the reign of the tired, old NDP [New Democratic Party] came to an end.

The people of Saskatchewan believed that it was time this province started moving forward and fulfilling its potential. Fast forward to November 7th, 2009 when the Riders won the first CFL [Canadian Football League] West Division championship in 33 years. And if the members on this side of the House continue to work hard for the people of Saskatchewan, we will be celebrating yet another November 7th, Mr. Speaker, in 2011. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Moose Jaw Prepares for Olympic Torch Run**

**Ms. Higgins:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Moose Jaw's 2010 Olympic torch runner will be Diane Therrien — local business owner, founder of Moose Jaw's Relay for Life, and now the main force behind the Cause for a Walk.

To help the city prepare and get motivated for the January 10th relay, the organizing committee has planned five events. The first was a barbecue held in September and featured Moose Jaw's own Lisa Franks, Paralympian and multiple gold medal winner. Lisa said she believes that the torch coming through Moose Jaw will spark an excitement and desire in the city's youth that will push them to strive for Olympic gold.

Four more events are slated including Be an Olympian Day, where families have the opportunity to enjoy free swimming, skating, and a number of other activities. December 10th will be the day where school children from all over the city will participate in their own torch run. The event organizers have worked towards the involvement of local organizations in all of their planning.

It truly is a privilege for Moose Jaw to be part of the torch run. Being a celebration community is an honour and the whole city will be able to be proud of and benefit from.

Mr. Speaker, I will ask that all members join me in congratulating the organizers, supporters, and participants of Moose Jaw's 2010 Olympic torch run and those being held right across our fine province. And I would also like to extend my best wishes to all of our Canadian athletes in preparation for the games.

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

#### **Results of Recent Polls**

**Mr. LeClerc:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's hard to believe just how out of touch with Saskatchewan the Leader of the Opposition became while he was living in Calgary. When he got back to Regina, the first thing he told us is that our economy is in freefall. Saskatchewan people are grumpy, and the reason they're grumpy is because they're mad at the Premier.

Mr. Speaker, wrong, wrong, and wrong. According to two recent polls, Saskatchewan people are actually feeling pretty good. They think our province is on the right track. They're feeling positive about the economy, and they really like our Premier. Now that doesn't sound like a grumpy province to me, Mr. Speaker. In fact, it seems the only person who's grumpy these days is the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, this is not the same Saskatchewan the Leader of the Opposition saw in his rear-view mirror when he went to Alberta a decade ago. Saskatchewan today is a vibrant, confident, and optimistic place. I invite the Leader of the Opposition to stop living in the past, join us in the new Saskatchewan, and turn that frown upside down.

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

#### **Men's Cancer Month**

**Ms. Junor:** — Mr. Speaker, the Cancer Society, Livestrong, and the Midtown mall in Saskatoon partnered for the giant colon event this past September, which was Men's Cancer Month. They displayed a giant colon that visitors could actually walk through. As a nurse, I am familiar with colons, but I have never seen one this big. The display certainly brought this area of the body into sharp focus and provided the community with information and an opportunity to ask questions.

Mr. Speaker, colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer in both men and women and is curable with early diagnosis. However simple embarrassment often stops patients from asking or seeking screening, and this is because people see this as involving functions in areas of the body that are considered private. This event illustrated we can and should take an active role in maintaining our health.

There are simple lifestyle changes we can make to lessen our chances of developing this disease, like stopping smoking, cut back on drinking alcohol, and exercise regularly. We do not have to be ruled by fear or shyness. Knowledge is power and the more comfortable we are with and understand all parts of our body, the more control we have.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the Cancer Society and Livestrong for this impressive display. It was a clever and memorable way of providing information to the community. Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

#### **QUESTION PERIOD**

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

#### **Public Safety Procedures**

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister for Corrections, Public Safety and Policing has admitted that there was a dangerous sex offender that was released three months early without the public being made aware of it, Mr. Speaker. And he's undertaken to do a review of the system to find out what happened.

To the minister: has his deputy minister identified what has

happened and who was responsible for this release? And when will he be letting us know?

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

**Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, in fact the deputy minister is conducting an investigation. The investigation is ongoing and as of yet we have no results of the investigation. We will be looking at the results when the investigation comes back from the deputy minister.

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

**Mr. Yates:** — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This should be a relatively simple issue to investigate what happened as pertaining to the actual release, Mr. Speaker. But instead we have the minister and his officials doing a witch hunt to find out who released the information to the public and informed the public about this dangerous offender being at large.

My question to the minister, Mr. Speaker, is this: will he undertake the resources he has on his witch hunt, looking for who may have made the public aware of this information, and turn it to finding out what really happened and fix the problem?

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

**Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Mr. Speaker, as part of the investigation being conducted by the deputy minister, it's looking into all aspects of what transpired during this time frame. One is the error that was found out on the 26th of October, as to how the mistake was made and just entered on the 26th.

The other very important question that the deputy minister is looking into is the disclosure of confidential, sensitive documents and how those confidential, sensitive documents arrived in the hands of a member of the opposition. That would be part of the investigation as to how those documents were released from the correction facility. So that will be part of the investigation that is ongoing right now.

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

#### Severance of Public Servants

**Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The other day the government tried to hide the fact that it had wasted millions of dollars more than previously admitted on severance payments to fired professional and career public servants.

In May the government admitted it had paid 10.7 million in severance to about 70 public servants, but the total did not include severance payments that were being negotiated with another 16 public servants. And last week the government said perhaps it has settled with all but one of those 16.

Mr. Speaker, a simple question: how much in additional severance has been paid to these former public servants?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, I had indicated to the member opposite last week that we were going to review the information and provide it in due course. I expect we will have it in the very near future. Mr. Speaker, it was the intention of this government and always will be the intention of the government to treat outplaced employees with the utmost in dignity and respect.

The members opposite in 1992 terminated well in excess of 200 people. Mr. Speaker, our government terminated far less people with that and we have, I understand, settled with all but one of those people, Mr. Speaker. And we will continue to deal with this matter in an appropriate, fair, and compassionate manner.

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

**Mr. Taylor:** — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. The government total also ignores another \$1.2 million paid to nine former public servants fired without cause at Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority and 340,000 in legal fees, paid to law firms that donated money to the Saskatchewan Party, to negotiate those severances.

Mr. Speaker, will the government now admit that in the midst of a budget crisis it has spent more than \$14 million dismissing more than 100 professional and career public servants without cause?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, we indicated last week and we indicated in the spring session there was approximately 60 employees that had been terminated. That includes the employees that were employees at Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is duplicating numbers. We indicated that we would get to him and get to him in the very near future with an accurate, up-to-date list to ensure that there isn't confusion or other things that are wrong or out of place.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the members opposite that their transition to government in 1992 resulted in over 300 dismissals without cause. The current Leader of the Opposition called this, and I quote, he was looking for "... people who better reflect the needs of the government."

Mr. Speaker, in 1992 there was no compassion; there was no warmth. The members opposite treated them in a cruel, callous, cold-hearted way and cost the province of Saskatchewan many millions of dollars that were unnecessary. We have approached this in a different manner, Mr. Speaker. We have approached this with care, caution, and compassion. We have not indulged in anything that was unnecessary or inappropriate, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### Workplace Safety Issues

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Mr. Speaker, last week the minister

dismissed my suggestion that an unsafe, uncertified crane had been allowed to operate for months at a construction site at the Regina perishable distribution centre. The minister told this House that, “Two highly experienced occupational health and safety officers have inspected the crane in the last 24 hours. And we confirm that the crane is safely operating.”

Mr. Speaker, those were the words of the minister in this Assembly last Wednesday. Can the minister confirm that the very next day the crane was found to be in contravention of the law for failure to provide certification and was removed from the construction site?

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

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to provide an update. Mr. Speaker, there is a stop-work order as it pertains to this crane. The crane has been inspected and certified as safe by a Saskatchewan registered engineer. It’s been inspected by Klondike inspections and we’ve utilized a Saskatchewan registered engineer, Mr. Speaker. That being said, there are a number of outstanding questions that still need to be addressed and, Mr. Speaker, those questions are being investigated.

Mr. Speaker, the question really is for the member opposite. When did he come into possession of the document that he presented in this House, Mr. Speaker?

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

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Mr. Speaker, we know that minister knew about three weeks before he replied. But I would just ask him this, Mr. Speaker, a straightforward question to the minister: if this crane was safe all along, why is it now gone?

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

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Mr. Speaker, as I’ve just said, the crane has been inspected and certified as safe by a Saskatchewan registered engineer, Mr. Speaker. There are questions, Mr. Speaker, that we continue to investigate as part of our due diligence. We do that as part of our commitment to occupational health and safety, Mr. Speaker. That’s a commitment that we can demonstrate.

We’ve been improving since we’ve been in government. Is there room for more work? Yes, Mr. Speaker, and the investigation that’s under way just reinforces our commitment to occupational health and safety. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[14:00]

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

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, it is clear that this minister and this government have zero commitment to the health and safety of Saskatchewan workers on the job site.

Mr. Speaker, if this issue had not been raised in this legislature and the department shamed into doing its job, this unsafe, uncertified crane would still be lifting tonnes of steel over the heads of Saskatchewan workers.

Mr. Speaker, through his words and through his actions, isn’t the minister telling Saskatchewan employers, you only have to worry about following occupational health and safety laws if they get caught?

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

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite has raised the issue of occupational health and safety and this government’s commitment to occupational health and safety. Work stop orders, Mr. Speaker, have gone up by 269 per cent, Mr. Speaker.

As it pertains to the crane that has been mentioned specifically, there are a number of outstanding questions. That investigation is under way, Mr. Speaker. The crane has been deemed safe. That being said, we will continue with our investigation to ensure that we understand the full implications of occupational health and safety.

Mr. Speaker, our record stands for itself. We stand with the workers of this province.

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

### Health Care Resources

**Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. How quickly things change. Three years ago the then Health critic and now Health minister characterized the doctor shortage and temporary closures of hospitals and services in rural Saskatchewan as “. . . pretty scary if it happens all the time.” A year later he said hospital closures in rural Saskatchewan were “absolutely appalling.”

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Medical Association questioned the minister on Saturday about doctor shortages and hospital closures in rural Saskatchewan and the minister said:

Can I ensure there will be a doctor in every community like there used to be? You know, we just can’t do that. The system is changing.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: are doctor shortages and hospital closures in rural Saskatchewan still absolutely appalling today under his watch?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, we certainly know that there is a doctor shortage not only in small towns but some of the larger communities. Even in Regina and Saskatoon, we have a lower than national average amount of GPs [general practitioner] and specialists, Mr. Speaker.

But unlike the former government that refused to admit there



was a problem, we know there's a problem and we're taking actions. I find it interesting that the opposition would take about hospital closures. It seems to me that there was 52 hospitals closed . . .

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. Order. Order. I know the minister's voice carries but it's becoming somewhat difficult, especially out of the left ear, to hear what's happening. So I invite the minister to complete his comments.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — I think I was talking about how many hospitals closed under the NDP when they were in government: 52 hospitals closed under their watch, Mr. Speaker. And we know at that time health care professionals left the province in droves because of the NDP and the whole hospital closures under their watch.

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

**Ms. Junor:** — Mr. Speaker, what's appalling is that the minister still is hiding behind what we did or didn't do; has no answer for himself and what his government is going to do. He's using doctor shortages and hospital closures in Saskatchewan for political gain, as usual. In opposition the minister said he had a plan. Today he says he has nothing.

On Saturday doctors made it clear to the minister that there were not enough doctors in rural Saskatchewan and the ones that are there are severely overworked. Practices are failing out in rural Saskatchewan. And how does the minister respond? He says:

We haven't solved the problem and I don't think we'll have it solved by next year, or the year after, or the year after. It's going to be an ongoing issue.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister is this: why is he putting all of rural Saskatchewan on a four-year wait-list?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, we know that there is a doctor shortage, and that's why our government has acted and acted decisively. Mr. Speaker, this year the intake at the College of Medicine was 84 students from Saskatchewan. We have 108 residency positions in our province. That's up from the 60 medical seats under their watch. One hundred and eight residency positions is up from the 60 that was under their watch, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, and this is what — just in the dying days of that old NDP government — this is what the president of the SMA [Saskatchewan Medical Association] had to say:

. . . we are disappointed that the expansion of the College of Medicine falls far short of what this province needs. We will still not be able to train enough physicians to meet our own needs and that should be our goal.

Mr. Speaker, that was Vito Padayachee about the NDP

government. We've expanded the number of seats in the College of Medicine and residency, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Junor:** — Mr. Speaker, the minister's rants are cold comfort to the residents of Lestock who've been without a full-time doctor for months, or the people living in Maple Creek, Arcola, and Kamsack, just to name a few. They've had to suffer through the suspension of emergency health services and hospital closures due to doctor shortages.

Mr. Speaker, in opposition that member called doctor shortages and hospital closures appalling, and he said he had a plan to fix the problem. On Saturday the minister said his biggest challenge when he meets with groups from small towns is to "change their expectations of how health services are delivered."

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: how does he square raising expectations in rural Saskatchewan when he was in opposition, and now under his watch telling rural Saskatchewan to lower their expectations and accept less services?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, the reality is things have changed in Saskatchewan. There's a positive attitude that we've never seen before in this province, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when it comes to health care, we're using nurse practitioners, and utilization of nurse practitioners is far greater now than it ever has been, Mr. Speaker. There is a changing environment, Mr. Speaker, in the province of Saskatchewan.

We are taking this subject very, very seriously. We're attracting physicians from out of country. We're going to be putting forward a physician recruitment strategy that, Mr. Speaker, will address the problem. But the fix isn't done in one year, two years, and three years because it was created over 16 years of NDP government.

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

### Management of Provincial Economy

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunate economic statistics are announced on an ongoing basis of late. A provincial economy that was growing not long ago is shrinking, is under contraction under the Sask Party.

Everyone knows there's a recession. Just ask the 1,100 recently laid off workers from PCS [Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan Inc.] and CNH [Case New Holland]. But the Finance minister says, I quote, "We sort of largely bypassed the recession."

To the Minister of Finance: why is he the only person in Saskatchewan that does not know there's a recession going on?

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

**Hon. Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to stand up in this House and talk about the strength of Saskatchewan's economy.

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that there has been an unprecedented economic slowdown, not only in Canada, not only in North America, but in indeed the entire world. And through it all, Saskatchewan has done relatively better than any other jurisdiction in that same environment.

Mr. Speaker, granted that the rate of growth predicted currently for Saskatchewan's economy is very, very small. But even that small amount in 2009 is the highest number in the country of Canada and is higher than most jurisdictions. And so we do have some satisfaction in those numbers, Mr. Speaker. In addition to that, almost every forecaster looking forward to 2010 is predicting that Saskatchewan will again lead the nation in economic activity and growth going forward.

Mr. Speaker, I think those are reasons why the people of Saskatchewan should be very, very proud and very, very optimistic about the future of this province.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, the Finance minister says there's not a recession. But the newly appointed Chair of the Sask Party economy committee, its chief economist, disagrees. From the P.A. *Herald* on October 2nd, and I quote, "Darryl Hickie, Saskatchewan Party MLA from Prince Albert Carlton, said he's focused on pushing the . . . [economy] out of recession . . ."

Now frankly, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure I'd let the member from P.A. Carlton push my truck out of a snowbank, let alone push the economy anywhere. But that's another point. So the top Sask Party . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. We've allowed the use of a name in a quote. But members are to realize that when they're not using the quote, they are to refer to individual members by their seat or riding. I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Right, Mr. Speaker. We don't have much faith in the member from P.A. Carlton. So the top Sask Party economic head thinks there is a recession, but the Finance minister doesn't. To the Minister of Finance: help us all out. Who actually knows what's going on over there?

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

**Hon. Mr. Gantefoer:** — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, the people of the province know what's going on, and that's what's important. Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely amazing how members opposite can be so out of touch with the people of Saskatchewan. Every weekend when we have the opportunity to go home, I'm certainly always encouraged by the attitude and the enthusiasm of people in my constituency and constituencies right across this province.

Mr. Speaker, in polling that has been done, the people of the

province by huge majorities — something in the order of 76 per cent — believe that the economy is strong and the economy is going to move forward. Everyone recognizes that the economies of North America and Canada and Saskatchewan have come through a real battering with the recession that has gone on.

And everyone that is objective about it understands and believes that Saskatchewan is faring better. Are we immune? No, we're not. And we're not going to be immune going forward. We have a huge challenge in potash, and that's going to have an effect and is having an effect on the overall economy, particularly in that sector. But, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is still the place where most people wish they were at, not wish where they were from.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, that's cold comfort for the many, the thousands, that have lost jobs in this province this last year. The Minister of Finance says, don't worry; no recession here. The Chair of the Sask Party economy committee says, we're in a recession. He's going to push us out of here. Why doesn't the right hand know what the far right hand's doing over here, Mr. Speaker?

To the Minister of Finance: how can the people of Saskatchewan trust the Sask Party to manage this economy when they can't even agree on the basic facts?

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

**Hon. Mr. Gantefoer:** — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, the facts of the economic growth in the country are not up for discussion or debate. They are based on economic predictions by independent agencies that predict economic growth, that look at all the factors affecting economy. And they try to make sure that they have accurate predictions of where the economy is going.

And I'd like to stress for the members opposite, they are predictions. They are the best estimates made using a whole range of factors that go into the economic modelling that the Conference Board, the banks, and our own Finance ministry put together in order to give, as best they can, a prediction of the future.

Mr. Speaker, it's an important thing to recognize that the same people that are doing predictions for Saskatchewan now in the Ministry of Finance are the same people who were doing predictions for the former administration in the Ministry of Finance. And they're looking at all of the variables across the country. Mr. Speaker, all of those facts point to the fact that Saskatchewan, while being affected by the recession, is still doing better than other jurisdictions in Canada.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, we're encouraged that the Finance minister is finally talking about private sector forecasters because he wanted nothing to do with them during last budget time. Isn't that interesting?

We're going to continue to talk about the real economy of Saskatchewan. They can talk about what they want, but when the real economy of Saskatchewan . . . I'm talking about massive job loss, a reduction in jobs year over year, a reduction in full-time jobs, a shift to part-time jobs, a massive 6,500-person jump in unemployed individuals in this province this year, huge increases in employment insurance recipients, youth unemployment lower than it has been in years, Mr. Speaker.

Economic stat after economic stat points to decline. Consumer spending is down. Retail sales are down. Wholesale trade down 35 per cent, international trade down 30 per cent, manufacturing trade down 33 per cent. Crops as it relates to price index are down 27 per cent — many of those folks are still toiling in their fields here today as we debate in this legislature — and huge losses for livestock producers.

Mr. Speaker, admitting one has a problem is just the first step. So my question to the Finance minister: when is he going to get real and recognize that we have a problem, and put forward a plan to respond? Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — Before I recognize the Minister of Finance, the last little while we've had a handful of members who have been continually interjecting and taking away from the ability of the ministers to respond. I would ask the members to give the minister the same opportunity to respond as the member had to ask the question. The Minister of Finance.

[14:15]

**Hon. Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't understand why the opposition is so enthusiastic . . .

[Interjections]

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

**Hon. Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can't understand why the opposition is so determined to put a negative spin on what is pretty good numbers for the province of Saskatchewan and what is very good numbers in comparison to other jurisdictions.

Mr. Speaker, I would have the opportunity to go through a whole list of where employment's increased, but we're running short of time and I know I won't have the opportunity to do that.

But, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that this government is optimistic about the future of Saskatchewan. We're optimistic about the fundamentals of the economy. And we're mostly optimistic about the people of Saskatchewan and their desire to move this province forward.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, that's an empty plan. Think good thoughts and buy more pompoms. No way, Mr. Speaker. It doesn't cut it.

Bruce Johnstone from the *Leader Post* says, I quote, "I find the provincial economy has gone to hell in a handcart," Mr. Speaker. Provincial sector forecasters' predictions, if you take the average, are calling for a decline — a shrink in our economy in 2009. If you look at GDP [gross domestic product] for the Conference Board of Canada, they're talking about shrinking at negative 2.7; RBC, negative 1.3; TD [Toronto Dominion], 1 per cent; IHS Global Insight, also a shrinking economy.

When will our Finance minister acquaint himself with the real economic statistics? And when will he plan for what this means for Saskatchewan business, Saskatchewan families, in our already mismanaged treasury?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well you know, it's an interesting debate, Mr. Speaker. There's nobody in this Assembly that would not agree with the notion that this province's economy is not immune to what's going on around the world, to what's going on across the country.

And you know what, Mr. Speaker? As you look at some of the surveys that have come out in the major daily papers, and now a radio network poll that's come out, it appears that there is almost unanimous consensus about something else in the province of Saskatchewan, and that is that the people . . .

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. The member from Athabasca will come to order. And the member who just asked the question will allow the Premier to respond.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — And that is that the people of Saskatchewan understand that it is comparatively better here than almost anywhere else on the planet, Mr. Speaker.

The reason they believe that is that even in the last job numbers, Mr. Speaker, we know this province has the lowest unemployment rate in the country. Saskatoon has the lowest unemployment rate of any city in the country. Regina is number two. Employment insurance claims are down for the last two years. The Dominion Bond Rating agency has upgraded the credit rating of the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

In the midst of a recession, this economy in the province of Saskatchewan continues to lead the country — which is why, Mr. Speaker, which is why the people of this province like what they see in the last number of months from the economy, even in a recession.

They like the plans of the government in infrastructure spending and lower taxes and lower debt to continue that economic momentum. And they can't understand for the life of them why the NDP have nothing to do but point out gloom and doom when they feel very positive about the new Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Order.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

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

### Review of Child Welfare

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the recent Speech from the Throne, our government promised to continue putting vulnerable people in Saskatchewan first. Over the last two years we have made tremendous progress on this front. Our government has made significant investments towards protecting at-risk children and supporting foster families and extended family caregivers.

In the most recent budget, nearly 25 million was set aside to improve the child welfare system. In addition our government will begin implementing a new electronic case management system to provide better monitoring and protection of children and youth in its care. Today Saskatchewan takes another step forward in the battle to protect our most vulnerable citizens.

This morning our government announced the launch of a comprehensive review of child welfare in our province. There is no greater priority than our children, and this wide-ranging child welfare review is intended to help ensure the safety and well-being of all the children in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, this review will go well beyond an examination of the relevant provincial legislation. It will include all aspects of child welfare in Saskatchewan including fostering, adoption, child protection, and the prevention of child abuse and neglect. Extensive consultations with First Nations and Métis people and organizations and with other child welfare stakeholders will be an integral part of the review process.

The stakeholder consultations will begin early next year, will be led by an independent panel chaired by former minister of Social Services and current Saskatoon city councillor and human services consultant, Bob Pringle.

Given his previous experience as a social worker, minister of Social Services, executive director of Habitat for Humanity Saskatoon, CEO [chief executive officer] of the Saskatoon Food Bank, Cosmo Industries, and the Saskatoon Housing Coalition, and more recently as Co-Chair of the province's task force on housing affordability, I am confident that Mr. Pringle is well prepared to chair a review of this magnitude and help our government address the challenges of child welfare in Saskatchewan.

The panel will examine issues ranging from addressing critical issues in child protection to looking at what changes might need to be made regarding adoption to identifying what steps government can take to prevent children from experiencing child abuse and neglect.

Mr. Speaker, my personal commitment is that this review and related stakeholder consultations will provide the foundation for a new direction in child welfare in Saskatchewan. Our government looks forward to the review panel's final report as we continue our efforts to put children first in Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And first I do want to thank the minister for sending over an advance copy of her ministerial statement so I could prepare.

We indeed hope that this is a landmark study and the review, and it actually leads to landmark work. We think this is very, very important. In fact if I could quote Mr. Pringle this morning, I think he said in the news conference that it's important to get this right. And we agree — very, very important to get it right.

We are very glad to hear that it'll go beyond just the legislation, *The Child and Family Services Act*. We hope that that does get a bit of an overhaul, but it's important to go beyond. And that we're also very glad to hear that the emphasis is on prevention. And that it's very important to make good use of the stakeholders. They are, after all, the front lines people who are dealing with this day in and day out so it's important to hear their thoughts, their observations about how we could make this important.

As well we were happy to see the FSIN [Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations] represented this morning and to hear the Vice-chief Lerat's comments. That was very, very important. And we hope that they stay fully engaged in this process because it's so important to the First Nations and the Métis in Saskatchewan.

Of course our job, Mr. Speaker, as opposition, is to ensure fairness, accountability, and transparency, and so my comments will focus on that. I think I have, if I can just say, three concerns, three general concerns. This morning I noted a lack of terms of reference. There is a press release, and I would hope to see, shortly, more information about actually the road map forward. There was some talk about how other provinces are doing, and yet there was no details about that.

And we know, of course, the Children's Advocate did an investigation, a very important one. In fact, one could almost call that was a landmark investigation last February. Breach of trust — how does this tie into that? I think it's important to see how that's done together, particularly around the child-first principles. How are they going to be engaged? How are we going to engage other departments? Very important.

And one that I think is very critical is around accountability and transparency. People are looking for this. They want to make sure that when it comes to children — and I think the government and the minister is right; we all think this is a priority, a huge priority — but we want to make sure things are transparent and that there is a strong sense of accountability. And how will this happen? And well, with the terms of reference, how will stakeholders prepare for meeting with the panel?

The second concern that I have is the time, the time frame that goes along with this. Of course the minister first announced this review in June 2008 in response to the 2007 Children's Advocate report. So we had it first appearing in June 2008. Then we had it appearing last Throne Speech in 2008, October

2008. And this is the third time that it's appeared, this year in the Throne Speech in October. So it's very, very delayed.

She's been talking about two years, but of course it's been a year and a half getting to this point. We would like to see the consultations start as soon as possible. The press release talks about spring. I heard her saying, early 2010. I think the earlier the better because we know that if it goes through 2010, the recommendations come back the fall of 2010, 2011 we have the session in March, but that's it. It could get stalled out there. We would like to see this tied up as much as possible before then. And so, Mr. Speaker, I think if there's a chance for early recommendations, that would be good.

The last part really talks about consultations — very important to engage the stakeholders. We agree with that. But I would also like to see the panel talk to individuals, particularly children. That's very important. Adult survivors — very important — also professionals in the field, particularly social workers. It was good to see the Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers there today.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I have to note that two weeks ago we were reading in the paper about 3,000 women and children turned away from the YW [Young Women's Christian Association] in Saskatoon. We do not have the luxury of time. We do not have two or three years to deal with this. When you have 3,000 children and women turned away from the YW in Saskatoon, the time is now, and the time is now to get it right.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### Bill No. 608 — *The Cadet Instructors Cadre Recognition Day Act*

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

**Mr. Michelson:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 608, *The Cadet Instructors Cadre Recognition Day Act* be now introduced and read for the first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the member from Moose Jaw North that first reading of Bill No. 608, *The Cadet Instructors Cadre Recognition Day Act* be now read the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

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

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

**Mr. Michelson:** — Next sitting of the House.

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

## STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

### Question of Privilege

**The Speaker:** — Before orders of the day, I have a statement in regards to a question that was presented to my office by the member from Regina Dewdney.

On Thursday, November 5th, 2009, the Opposition House Leader raised a question of privilege after having provided notice and written details of his case in accordance with the provisions of rule no. 12.

The Opposition House Leader claims that the Minister of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing made certain remarks in the Assembly that were, and I quote, "... intended to be perceived as threats, and therefore to have discouraged ... [the Opposition House Leader] from the performance of ... [his] duties and the exercise of free speech."

The Opposition House Leader states that the statements, which the minister later confirmed to have said to the media outside the Assembly, constituted a threat of police or legal prosecution if he persisted with his actions in the Assembly, most notably during question period.

Subsequent to receiving the notice of this privilege case, the Minister of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing made an apology in the Assembly for his remarks. On orders of the day, the Opposition House Leader presented the arguments of his case to the Assembly to which the Government House Leader responded.

Having considered the case, heard the apology by the minister and the arguments of both House Leaders, I deferred my ruling until today. This is a serious case that is without exact precedent in this province, so it was necessary for me to consult the parliamentary authorities and precedents in other parliaments. I am now prepared to rule on this case.

First I want to refer members to what the parliamentary texts say about interference with the member's privilege of speech. Maingot's *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada*, 2nd Edition, page 228 states, "... if a Member was threatened for what he said in the House that would amount to a breach of the Member's privilege of speech."

Erskine May *Parliamentary Practice*, 23rd Edition at page 144 states, and I quote, "threatening a Member with the possibility of a trial at some future time for a question asked in the House" has been considered contempt.

It is clear that the perceived threat by one member against another has been the basis for finding contempt in cases at other parliaments in Canada. Both Alberta and Quebec have cases where the circumstances are relevant to the case brought forward by the Opposition House Leader.

[14:30]

In September 1993, a minister in Alberta objected to a line of questioning during estimates review and stated to an opposition member that, and I quote, "I can assure the Honourable Member

across the way that he has lost any road program for the next four years.”

The response was raised as a question of privilege. And the Speaker in making his ruling stated, and I quote:

Threats of this kind are an extremely serious matter. There is no doubt that the implications by a Minister that action might be taken with respect to another Member's words or actions could have the effect of inhibiting freedom of speech.

A withdrawal of the offending remarks closed the matter.

In May 1996, a government member of the Alberta Legislative Assembly asked a minister to respond to a question about a proposed opposition amendment to a Bill before a committee. The question was whether the minister “would confirm that he will not bring forward legislation to protect convicted criminals as suggested by the Liberal Opposition.” The opposition member who proposed the amendments wrote a letter to the member who asked the question. The letter was viewed to imply that civil action would be taken if the government member continued to make defamatory remarks and false and misleading statements.

The Speaker found that the letter constituted a threat and found a *prima facie* case of privilege had been established. The matter was quickly settled when the offending member apologized for his letter.

Similarly in a ruling from the Quebec National Assembly in December 2000, a minister threatened a member for remarks she made in debate saying she, and I quote, “would pay for her remarks.” In this case the Speaker accepted that the minister had made a threat in response to comments made in debate. The question of privilege was resolved when a letter of apology was written by the minister to the member and tabled in the Assembly.

It is clear from the parliamentary authorities and relevant precedents from other jurisdictions that comments made in nature of a threat do constitute contempt of Parliament. Having reviewed the details presented in this case and the admission of the member to have spoken the words, I find that the comments in the nature of a threat are therefore contemptuous.

The Opposition House Leader further directs attention to a letter that he received from the deputy minister of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing. In his case, the Opposition House Leader details that the letter is “most probably not intimidating,” but cites it as evidence that the minister meant his comments as a threat.

I do not find the letter affects the privileges of the member. I refer all members to page 235 of Maingot's *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada*, 2nd Edition where it states:

Accordingly, not every action by an outside body which may influence the conduct of a Member of Parliament as such could now be regarded as a breach of privilege, even if it were calculated and intended to bring pressure on the Member to take or to refrain from taking a particular

course.

I will now address the apology made by the Minister of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing to the Assembly on November 5th. The minister apologized and withdrew the inappropriate remarks.

Erskine May *Parliamentary Practice*, 23rd Edition on page 172 states, in the section proceedings against a member, the following:

When a Member has made an acceptable apology for the offence, the critical motion has sometimes been withdrawn. In two instances, the House condemned the Member's conduct as a breach of privileges, but resolved that in consequence of the full and ample apology [the Member] had offered to the House, or that having regard to his withdrawal of the expressions complained of, it would not proceed any further on the matter.

Similarly, at page 267 of Maingot's *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada*, 2nd Edition, in the section “Where a Member is a subject of a question of privilege,” it is stated “An apology by the offending Member will invariably close the matter without the necessity of putting the motion to a vote.”

In each of the cases cited, an apology ended the matter. This has also been the custom of this and other Assemblies as outlined by the precedent set. In consequence of the apology of the minister, it is my decision that this case need not go further.

I want to make it clear however that if a minister had not apologized, I would have had no other choice but to find the *prima facie* case of privilege. The minister has done the honourable thing, and I must accept his sincerity of the apology just as I accepted the sincerity of the Opposition House Leader's perception that the offending words were meant as a threat.

Before leaving this subject, I would like members to consider the unanticipated consequences of the words they sometimes choose to use in this Assembly. The minister has apologized for words that were perceived by another member as a threat. In the heat of debate, it is sometimes difficult to know where to draw the line with remarks made across the floor.

I want to repeat what was said by the Speaker in Alberta at the closing of one of the rulings I have cited. The Speaker in Alberta said this:

Members are human and subject to all the emotions that come with that territory: anger and pride are two that come to mind. Sometimes this job seems to require that we be superhuman in controlling our anger and our pride and in exercising good judgment and we just have to do it. If we fail, we must make amends.

The minister has done the honourable thing by apologizing. I think there's a lesson for all of us in this case.

And before we move on, when I put my name forward to accept this position as Speaker, chosen, I'd indicated I would treat all sides fairly. And I had also indicated through my own protocol

that, in addressing rules, I would work through the House leaders. And I say thank you to the Opposition House Leader for earlier on, through words to the member regarding rules about speaking through the Speaker and then a letter, that members on the opposition were able to get a greater appreciation for the rules.

In regards to relevance, while I addressed an issue of two ministers in the House, I regret that I didn't previously speak with the Government House Leader and pass on my concerns about the rules and how they were applied. And I will determine in the future to address all members of the Assembly on the rules equally.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

#### SECOND READINGS

##### Bill No. 107 — *The Weed Control Act*

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

**Hon. Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at the end of my remarks I will move second reading of Bill No. 107, *An Act respecting Prohibited, Noxious and Nuisance Weeds and to make a consequential amendment to The Municipal Board Act*.

The new legislation will be referred to as *The Weed Control Act*. This Bill also repeals *The Noxious Weeds Act, 1984*. After consulting with numerous stakeholders, it has been determined that *The Noxious Weeds Act, 1984* is outdated and no longer meets the needs of Saskatchewan residents. The modern approach to weed and invasive plant control applies the strategies of early detection and eradication of new weeds as well as containment and integrated control of locally established weeds to prevent their spread.

The new Act will reflect a more modern approach to weed control legislation by establishing three classes of regulated weeds with varying enforcement levels, increasing the maximum for fines to \$5,000, and increasing the maximum amount that municipalities may recover from a landowner for costs incurred as a result of control measures taken during enforcement. These amounts, however, will not be listed in the Act but set out in the weed control regulations which will be developed subsequently.

Prohibited, noxious, and nuisance weeds will be designated by the minister's order under the new legislation.

The new Act will also contain provisions for an appeal process for routine enforcement. The process will allow a person who disputes a weed inspector's order to appeal that order, first to the municipality and then to the Saskatchewan Municipal Board if they are not satisfied with the municipal decision. In addition, the new Act corrects or clarifies other administrative processes.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Finance has reviewed and analyzed our proposal to repeal and replace *The Noxious Weeds Act, 1984* with *The Weed Control Act* and is satisfied all

financial, accounting, and administrative matters are addressed. I would also like to point out that the proposed Act is consistent with modernized weed control legislation in other jurisdictions in North America.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I move that *An Act respecting Prohibited, Noxious and Nuisance Weeds and to make a consequential amendment to The Municipal Board Act* be read a second time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — The Minister of Agriculture has moved second reading of Bill No. 97, *The Agri-Food Amendment Act, 2009*. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

**Ms. Higgins:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And it's a pleasure to be able to rise this afternoon and make a number of comments on to Bill 107, *An Act respecting Prohibited, Noxious and Nuisance Weeds*. And this also makes consequential amendments to *The Municipal Board Act*.

Mr. Speaker, it's kind of odd that this comes before the House at this point in time, because over the last while I have had a couple of problems that have surfaced at my constituency office where there has been issues over noxious weeds and how they're dealt with. And I have to say it can be a very frustrating problem, not only for the MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] that's trying to help out a constituent and to get some clear information, but also for the producer that's involved.

Now I know that this Act, from the minister's comments — and we had a quick conversation the other day — how it lays out the three classes of noxious weeds. And I don't think any of us would dispute the fact that weeds are an issue, can cause all kinds of problems, not only for oneself but for your neighbours. And it can also mean crops being docked when they are taken in for weed content, and the issue goes on and on. And some are extremely hard to get rid of.

And of course, we have a number of environmental issues with weeds that have been brought in from other places that aren't native to our province. Purple loosestrife pops to mind right away — that is spreading and I have not heard of any way to get rid of it. I know there's been a number of unique trials that have been run around the province trying to get rid of it and trying to control it. But it is a problem that's out there and is continuing to grow, and no pun intended, Mr. Speaker. So I know there has to be particular need and attention paid when it comes to noxious weeds.

But I also remember, Mr. Speaker, I was reading a gardening book one time, and I know producers may not think this is an appropriate analogy, but in this book they were talking about weeds. Weeds are something that grows where it's not wanted. And while the minister has talked about three classes of noxious weeds — which I realize gives it a little more serious of a context — to some people what may be a weed, to others it may not be a problem or may not be something that they take notice.

And that's really the root of what's happened in a couple of the situations that I have run across dealing with noxious weeds,

where the RM has been concerned to the point where they are looking to take action. And the producer who had a disagreement with the RM over the extent of the problem ended up having a fairly lengthy debate and discussion — and not satisfactorily I might add, Mr. Speaker — with the RM.

Now the part that is troubling for me is not that . . . I understand that the RM has the controls, that there needs to be some clear definitions of what their roles and responsibilities are. And that is adequately, or in most cases, adequately laid out within the municipal Act. But when we look in RMs, often this is neighbours. And I need to read the Act again more thoroughly and maybe, in estimates or in committee, be able to ask the minister a few more detailed questions.

But I know the part that was upsetting was that some of the definitions weren't clear enough. There was quite a bit of latitude in the decisions that were made, and when it got down to too much flexibility and a fair bit of misunderstanding in how it was being interpreted . . . or maybe not misunderstanding, but we all have our own understanding and add our own interpretation, especially to legislation, the way it's written.

It was neighbours against neighbours. And that was the most difficult piece of all, I think, for me to deal with and to try and work with, to come to some type of understanding on the issues that we've dealt with. And it has to be hard for the municipalities, for the councillors sitting on the municipalities that they need to deal with their neighbours.

[14:45]

And there's some fairly aggressive steps that can be taken when you are deemed to have noxious weeds and not be looking after them. Your farm land can be removed into control of the rural municipality. They will arrange for that land to be farmed, for the weeds to be addressed in an appropriate manner, and the land to be cropped for a number . . . well, it can be a couple of years is my understanding, until the weeds are brought under control. And what crop is taken off that land or what revenue is seen from this land being farmed by the council ends up, the costs are deducted and dispersed to the municipality or in to whomever is hired to do the actual work on the property. And whatever is left over is then returned to the owner of the land. So it adds a bit of insult to injury, Mr. Speaker, and it does get personal.

And I look forward to having an opportunity to ask the minister how the appeal process works. And I'm glad to see that it goes to the municipal board, the second step of an appeal, and that the producer will have an opportunity and the municipality also have an opportunity to speak to a arm's-length kind of third party board that will be able to settle what disputes may arise.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure actually how often this is used. I've run across it. I have an area south of Moose Jaw that is farm land and ranch land and have run across it a couple of times, not all right within my constituency, but from people south of Moose Jaw. And I don't know how often it's used right across the province, if this is a common problem, if some areas are worse than others.

But I would assume that by the minister updating and

modernizing the language, further defining the terms of an inspector, the processes that have to be taken, and just generally reviewing the legislation, then I would assume that there is enough cases that would have brought this to the minister's attention, and enough cases that would have warranted the legislation being modernized and updated, because it's no small task.

This isn't a huge piece of legislation, but with any good piece of legislation you need to consult with your stakeholders. You need to make sure that there is input into the legislation, that you are addressing the problems that are out there right across the province and not just in one area of the province but right across the province. And that's always the difficulty, that we need to make sure that we take into consideration all those who are affected by the legislation that we put in place.

So with that being said, Mr. Speaker, there is a number of my colleagues, I know, that are looking forward to getting up and speaking on this issue. And I know that I have many more detailed questions that need to be asked when we are in committee, when the Bill finally moves to committee. And at that, Mr. Speaker, I will adjourn debate for today.

**The Speaker:** — The member from Moose Jaw Wakamow has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 107, *The Weed Control Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Agreed. Carried.

## ADJOURNED DEBATES

### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill No. 97

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Bjornerud that **Bill No. 97 — *The Agri-Food Amendment Act, 2009*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Harper:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to join into the debate on this particular Bill, Bill 97. And it, by the looks of it, is a pretty comprehensive Bill because the title is *An Act to amend The Agri-Food Act, 2004, to repeal The Cattle Marketing Deductions Act, 1998 and The Cattle Marketing Deductions Regulations, 2004 and to make consequential amendments to The Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Revitalization Act*.

Well, Mr. Speaker, just based on that title, you can quite quickly see that it's a very wide and comprehensive Bill although perhaps short in size and short in nature. But it seems to cover a wide range and affect a lot of other Bills and a lot of the other operations of various regulations throughout the department. And I was discussing this with my seatmate here, and I said it was certainly a Bill that was treating the deductions



and the regulations like a wide broom making a very wide sweep. His opinion, it was more like a huge vacuum cleaner making a large sucking motion and making a fair amount of changes.

So whichever it is, Mr. Speaker, it's certainly big. And although, like I said earlier, it may be short in nature having only seven clauses to it, but it certainly would, I think, be a lot more than just a normal routine housekeeping Bill that one would expect, this obviously making some significant changes.

Some of those changes — I think as the most evident — is to deal with the collection of the deductions, the levy deductions that have been in place now for a while. This Bill will now allow the Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association to collect both, both the \$1 non-deductible national levy and collect it from the cattle that are sold at the marketplace and the \$2 refundable provincial levy collected for the cattle sold at the marketplace.

And I think, Mr. Speaker . . . I don't think there's too many producers in Saskatchewan that would object to those deductions because the intent of those deductions, as I understand it, is to be used to develop the industry, to develop markets, to enhance the industry in wherever it may be needed. And if there was ever a industry that really needed assistance, Mr. Speaker, at a time like now, it's certainly the cattlemen's industry or the cattle industry in this province because it has been under some horrendous pressure for a number of years, economic pressure to the point where a number of producers are really struggling to continue to survive and continue to exist in the industry.

This summer, I had the opportunity as I travelled throughout the province, the opportunity to talk to several producers. Some of them getting up there in age and probably were looking at the opportunity to retire but were feeling it wasn't the correct time to get out of the industry because they weren't going to get the revenue from the sale of their livestock herd that they had banked on. And quite frankly, that was a very big part of their retirement package was the revenue that they would receive from the sale of their cow herd and the cow herd that many of them had spent a lifetime in building up.

And one that comes to mind, I know that the gentleman is running around 150, 160 cows and has for a while and has taken a great deal of pride in his animals. And he has been breeding them in a manner and shape that he would improve the offsprings, and he would keep, of course, many of the offsprings as heifers and put them back into his cow herd and used his entire lifetime to build his cow herd up. And he has a very attractive and very beautiful herd and good quality animals. There's no doubt about that.

But he also, you know, as most farmers, they use their assets that they build up over the lifetime to constitute their retirement package. And part of it is, particularly in the mixed farming, is not only the grain land and the land that they farm and the land that they use for pasture, the land they may use for production of hay, but it's also their cow herd that make up a very big part of it, very big part of it.

And, Mr. Speaker, prices have plummeted over a number of

years here now. I think that probably the beginning of the downfall was as a result of the mad cow crisis and the closing of the border in the US [United States]. It refused to take Canadian cattle in for the longest of times. And when it did open, it was only opened a short amount or a small amount, and only certain types of cattle could flow through. And that certainly had a big impact upon the industry here.

And that industry had never really fully recovered from that, Mr. Speaker. And it's too bad because we were quite successful for the last number of decades in building a cow herd, an industry in this province, a cow herd in this province that was steadily increasing until the mad cow crisis, until the economic crisis has hit the livestock industry here. And we've seen that now just simply reverse itself. We're seeing the cow herds shrink — disturbingly so.

Because this summer also, one of the opportunities I had was to meet with a young fellow — when I say young fellow, it's comparative to me, young fellow; probably I'd say probably in the early 40s — been in the industry a long time. His parents before him was in the industry. I believe he took over the family farm or a portion of it. I think he may have shared some of that property with other siblings and went into the livestock industry and expanded quite rapidly and is a large operator. And I believe he suggested to me that he was looking at about 800 head all together. That would be of course cows and calves, and that was a large operation.

And he has been struggling for some time to try to stay in the industry, to try to make ends meet, to make pay the bills, and told me this summer that this fall was it. He was done. He was just tired of fighting. He was tired of struggling to stay in the industry and to survive, and had hoped that somewhere along this line the value of the livestock industry, the importance of the livestock industry to our provincial economy but also to our federal economy would have been enough to spur the provincial government at least to open up meaningful dialogue with the federal ministers to put into place a program that would bridge the industry over until such time as the markets recovered. And that he would be able to do what he really wants to do, and that is to get a reasonable profit from the marketplace.

He's not one of these — as most producers and people as far as that goes in Saskatchewan aren't there — just looking for a handout. They're looking for an opportunity to have that hand up in times of need. And they certainly have that times of need now. This has not been a short-term experience. This has been a long term, and it is simply grinding producers down, Mr. Speaker, to the point where many of them are ready to give up.

Compounding that I think, Mr. Speaker, is in fact . . . Just this last weekend I had the opportunity to talk to a young fellow — again, Mr. Speaker, young fellow compared to me — but had been in industry a number of years who tells me that because of the weather conditions this summer, his hay stocks are down. His hay stocks are down to a point where he doesn't have enough hay on hand this year to be able to meet the needs to winter his cow herd that he normally would winter. He's hoping to be able to gather in some additional straw, but as you know, the weather conditions out there are not necessarily always conducive to getting that straw in.

So he's just simply telling me that he's in a quandary because he doesn't want to sell down his cow herd or even sell out his cow herd because, quite frankly, the prices aren't there that he can get a reasonable return for. But at the same time, he hasn't got the feed stocks to be able to support them throughout the winter months. So he's sort of between a rock and a hard place.

And I suggested to him, well I said, yes you know, have you checked the marketplace? Is there hay out there for sale? I mean, there may be those people who have produced hay but don't require it or may be in the business of producing hay for retail. And he says that yes, he's talked to some hay marketers. And they're there telling him that he can expect to pay for a standard bale, a standard round bale of medium quality alfalfa, he can be expecting to pay 50 to \$60 a bale.

Well at that rate, it doesn't take too long for the — as the saying goes in the industry — for the cow to eat herself up. Simply the cost of hay to feed that cow would be probably greater than the value of the cow. So there again, a young fellow that really doesn't know what to do. He's got cows coming in from pasture. He's really got to make a decision here shortly, and whatever decision he makes, it seems like it's going to end up in a loss.

So there's a lot of problems out there, Mr. Speaker, certainly around the livestock industry here. And I would hope that in some manner, shape, or form, some of these changes that the government is proposing here would be able to result in some mechanism that would be able to hand a lifeline to these producers out there because without that lifeline, I'm afraid that these young producers as they leave the industry, they're simply not going to get back into it. The older producers who are about to retire, when they leave the industry, they won't be getting back into it. And there's nobody there to replace them.

I hear of stories from cattle buyers and auction mart operators this fall of hundreds and, in fact I would say, thousands of head of breeding stock, breeding cows — good, firm, quality breeding cows that are going through the market. They're not going back out into the market . . . They're not going back out into the cow herd I mean, Mr. Speaker. They're going from the market; they're going to slaughter.

So what we're seeing is our industry that's really, really under pressure. We're seeing the prime stock being stripped away. And it gets to a point in time when that industry will simply collapse. If there isn't the financial support there to allow producers to be able to survive, then it will simply collapse.

And I would hope, Mr. Speaker, that at some point in time we would be able to see a program here that would provide that assistance because it's just not only the producers that suffer when the industry is in the depth of the depression that it's in, but as the producers get out of the industry, it has a domino effect throughout the economy because it takes that money that would normally be spent on perhaps on haying equipment or on supplies to support a farming operation that has cattle in it. Those expenditures are not made.

[15:00]

That means the local — whether it be hardware store or a local

Co-op lumberyard or somebody selling fence posts and so on and so forth — that market is now not there. And every time you lose a producer, they lose a potential customer. They lose money. And that money is lost; it's out of the market. It's out of the economy. It's not back into the economy again. So it has a domino effect. And when a producer simply leaves, my seatmate here is saying here, when a producer simply leaves, it's lost. That loss is there. And they simply don't get back into the system here.

And these changes the government is proposing, Mr. Speaker, I think is, in all intents and purposes, is probably heading the right direction, but it does raise a lot of questions. We're looking at moving the ability to collect the levies now from what used to be the Department of Agriculture, or Agriculture and Food, and that money was then collected and went into the revenues of the department. That now is going to be in the hands of the Cattlemen's Association.

There may not be anything wrong with that, as long as we can have an assurance that there's going to be a fair and reasonable accounting mechanism to ensure that the funds are being used in the way they were intended to be used, and that they will be used in a way that would benefit the producers, benefit the industry, and perhaps enhance the marketplace, enhance the ability for our product that's being produced here in Saskatchewan to be readily acceptable to the consumers, whether they be locally here or whether they be international.

Again, what mechanism will be in place to assure us that government has actually gone out and done its consulting? Has the government done its consulting, and who has it consulted with? Has it talked to a wide range of the industry, or has it talked to just a few producers? I would like to have some sense of an idea at least of what was the percentage of producers that had been contacted, either directly or through their associations, and what was their reactions.

What has the government done to ensure that producers are aware that these changes are coming? Has there been any type of communication with the producers? Has there been any letter sent out? Has there been any informational meetings held? Has there been an explanation of what these changes are taking place, and how may they affect the producers and the industry? Are the levies the right amount? Has that question been asked? Are the producers satisfied with the levy rate now? Are the producers thinking perhaps it's too high? Are producers thinking that perhaps it's too low and that more money, perhaps in the checkout fund, might be an assistance to being able to establish a program here that would be able to assist the industry?

There are a lot of questions that actually come out of this, what is really a short Bill. And it certainly needs to be looked at carefully. Yes, my seatmate asked me the question here, what mechanism is in place to ensure that these levies may be changed in the future? And if they are, what mechanism is available to ensure that the input from the producers is there, from the cattlemen is there, to ensure that these levies reflect the actual needs, the actual desires for the industry to look at its ability to continue to move forward in a positive way?

Another question I would have is how much, what percentage

of the levies that are being collected by the Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association, what percentage of that levy would go to the day-to-day operation of the association. Will all the money that's collected, will that go into a fund that would be used to enhance the industry, or is a portion of that money going to be set aside to cover the cost, the day-to-day cost of operating the association? Or it just going to be the cost of collecting the fees that come out of the fees themselves?

So there's a lot of questions that come up when we look closely at this. There's a number of . . . Actually I guess, Mr. Speaker, if you look really closely at it — although it's like I said, it's only eight clauses — but if you look closely at it, it raises a lot of questions in regards to the funds themselves being raised and how are they going to be treated and how are they going to be disbursed. And what is the mechanism going to be in place to ensure that the disbursement is going to be that which is going to benefit the producers and benefit the industry?

What we need to do is be able to ask those questions. And first of all, I would like to be able to ask the minister the questions as to what work has he and his department done — or ministry, now it's called — what have they done to ensure that the cattle producers throughout Saskatchewan here have had their input into these changes? Have they been contacted? Has there been a letter sent out? Has there been public meetings held? What type of communications has been used to ensure that the producers have their ample say?

After all it's their livelihood that's at stake. We wouldn't want to see a government making changes to an industry that doesn't reflect the benefit to the livestock industry out there. Because it's these producers, it's their livelihood we're talking about, the very same people who produce the product that we consume each and every day here, Mr. Speaker. They need to know that they have the ability to have their thoughts conveyed to the government to provide the opportunity for the government to take these opinions from right across the industry and to have them applied, I guess you would say, to the changes that the government's proposing in this Act.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's no doubt that this particular Act as you review it certainly, certainly raises a lot of questions. And right now, Mr. Speaker, it raises for me more questions than I have answers for.

So with that, I would certainly like to say that I think, I hope the government has done its consulting. I would hope that it perhaps has consulted other aspects of the agricultural industry, not just the livestock producers, because this will change the governance of the livestock producers and the collection of the levies. But what effect would that have then on other aspects of the agricultural industry such as chicken producers and pork producers and so on and so forth? Would they want to see their mechanism of governance change? Has the government talked to them about that to see if there would be a reflection as to the changes being made here in the livestock industry, how it might reflect on other industry — poultry and livestock industry — throughout this province?

So as you can see, Mr. Speaker, I've just barely touched the surface here, and I've raised for myself a lot more questions than the government had provided answers for. So with that,

Mr. Speaker, I think the opposition here will certainly need to use some time here to consult with the stakeholders of the industry across this great province to first assure that they have had the opportunity to have input into these changes, and if these changes are that that they would see as beneficial to their industry.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, we'll need that time to do that, so we'll be doing that over the next several weeks here. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I'll move adjournment of debate.

**The Speaker:** — The member from Regina Northeast has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 97, *The Agri-Food Amendment Act, 2009*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Agreed. Carried.

### Bill No. 98

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Gantefoer that **Bill No. 98 — *The Municipal Financing Corporation Amendment Act, 2009*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise and join the debate on Bill 98, *An Act to Amend the Municipal Financing Corporation Act*.

Of course this is one of these Bills where the clause being changed is relatively straightforward, but not unlike the tip of the iceberg, it's significant of much, much more, Mr. Speaker. And I'll certainly get into that in my remarks.

The measure being proposed is that under the authority of the Act, that the borrowing limits be changed from 250,000 to, I believe it is, 350,000. Again this refers to *The Municipal Financing Corporation Act* essentially an initiative to provide, to put the borrowing power of the province at the disposal of the municipalities in terms of their very important infrastructure borrowing needs.

Certainly there are things that you can do under the clout or the economic capacity of the province, in terms of not just sharing in terms of revenue or in terms of grants or what have you, but the various partners that we work with, in terms of promoting the well-being of this province.

But in terms of using that borrowing power of the province, this is an initiative that in general we support on the opposition side of the Chamber, Mr. Speaker. But it's one that of course we're interested to see how this is actually carried out and how this authority is exercised. Because of course within the overall fiscal picture of the province, Mr. Speaker, where this current government — we await the mid-term probably in days now, Mr. Speaker, but certainly the first quarter results from the last budget — where there was something like \$1 billion shortfall and where there was one billion three billion projection when it

came to the potash revenues, Mr. Speaker.

Again in principle, this is something that we're very interested in. And we're glad to see that the record to date has been good in terms of uptake from our municipal partners in this province. But again, is this yet another avenue for this government to cause some problems for the finances of the people of Saskatchewan over the long haul? In his remarks to the Assembly, the Finance minister gave a bit of a review of different . . . of the projects that have been supported via this vehicle over the past two years, supporting 64 projects in 53 municipalities. And again, Mr. Speaker, we have no problem with the virtue of those projects, of those initiatives.

Certainly there's a great need in terms of the infrastructure capacity out there in the municipalities. I know in the municipality that I have the honour of residing in, that of Regina, that when it comes to the water, the sewer, the streets, the lighting needs, the different sort of urban development plans that are ongoing for the city of Regina, when it comes to the western transportation hub, the intermodal facility west of Regina — and I believe that's one of the projects that has accessed some funding out of this mechanism — when it comes to the things that make life a bit more enjoyable in terms of the neighbourhoods I represent . . . I think of Maple Leaf Pool or Lawson Aquatic Centre or Dewdney Pool or Regent Pool and the importance of those institutions to the neighbourhoods that they're located in, and the fact that of course it takes municipal dollars to be brought to bear to make those projects go.

And you know, it was certainly in the case of the origin of those projects and the fact that in terms of the upkeep of those very important institutions, those very important facilities in our neighbourhoods, there are dollars required for that as well.

Now again we've seen some positive things from the government in terms of carrying through negotiations that were begun by the then minister, Harry Van Mulligen, in terms of municipal revenue sharing. We're glad to see that the point nine of one per cent of PST [provincial sales tax] was brought forward in the last budget. And again, Mr. Speaker, that defrays the need, those greater own-source revenues on the one hand defray the need for greater reliance on programs such as this, on the other.

You know, increasing the own-source revenues is not in the entire tool box that a province can bring to bear in terms of aiding and supporting important infrastructure initiatives on the part of local communities. But it certainly is very important, and we welcome seeing that go up to point nine per cent in terms of that one point of PST. And there's been a promise to move that up to 1 per cent of PST in the budget to come. And we'll be watching very closely to see whether or not that happens because of course again, Mr. Speaker, these decisions are taken within an overall budgetary context.

[15:15]

And I think last year it was the members opposite declared that we'd arrived in this year country only to find out later in this year that they'd blown the potash projection by \$1.3 billion. It causes a tremendous amount of trouble in the budget. And I guess it's all the more concerning, Mr. Speaker, in the context

of the concerns that were raised by the official opposition at the time of the tabling of that budget, the urging of caution that went unheeded by the members opposite at that time.

So when you make mistakes like that of course, Mr. Speaker, it curtails and constrains the ability of the government to carry through on things like the full increase to 1 per cent of PST and again, getting back to the Bill, how that impacts on the borrowing limit in something like the Municipal Financing Corporation.

Again, in and of itself, not the loan . . . Raising the limit from 250 million to 350 million, not a bad thing. But if again we're going to see a shift in the emphasis being from, you know, greater own-source revenues and greater no strings attached financial help to loans that ultimately have to be repaid, again that has an impact on the municipalities, and it has an impact on the ratepayer. And of course as I'm sure we'll all agree in this House, there is but one Saskatchewan taxpayer and, you know, depending on how they're paying their taxes or which pocket they're coming out of or which . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Bless you, Mr. Speaker. I'm feeling better myself this week, but you know I'm getting blamed for different things over on this side of the House. But I'll try not to engage the Speaker in debate any further.

Anyway in terms of the raising of the limit again, our concern is that the ability of this government to manage the financial resources of this province in terms of being able to manage the books of this province, in terms of being able to fully account for what's going on in this economy and in the province's finances, the more opportunity we see for this government getting into greater and greater debt. That will be something that we follow with very specific interest, Mr. Speaker.

But in terms of the Municipal Financing Corporation, again in and of itself should be a good thing for the municipalities. But if there's too great a reliance placed on it by the province in lieu of coming forward with real financial help in terms of increased revenue sharing and own-source revenues, then again it doesn't do the job by the municipalities that should be done, Mr. Speaker.

Again there are different projects. I think of the intermodal facility in particular — we're glad to see that that's been able to access some of the resources available through the MFC [Municipal Financing Corporation of Saskatchewan] — a critical infrastructure project for the province of Saskatchewan, one that the previous government was very supportive of and one that we're glad to see the current government of the day going forward with. We'll look for more detail in terms of the role that the member from Cypress Hills is playing as the Chair of that vehicle.

And we look with great interest on seeing how the different negotiations carry through in terms of the shift of title with the respective railroads and the different sort of interests that are tied into this project. And we look to see what kind of support is garnered for this critical infrastructure project from the federal government and to watch very closely to see that Saskatchewan gets its fair share, specifically within the context of competition from other, you know, albeit worthy projects, but projects that are outside of the province.

I think of that in the province of Manitoba focused on Winnipeg for example. And we want to make sure that this project is being advanced as it should be and promoted and defended as it should be by the province. And they've got a vaunted relationship that they like to talk about in terms of how they get along with the federal government. And we'll be watching very closely to see that, you know, not that there's unfair treatment but to make sure that Saskatchewan is getting a fair shake in terms of support for a very vital project like the intermodal facility.

In terms of the reporting-out functions of the MFC, again it's subject to the various regulations under the statutes. And again we're glad to see the minister reporting that there have been a number of projects that have accessed the funds available under this corporation — again, 64 projects in 53 municipalities. And the minister in his remarks talked about 2,022 residential lots, five commercial lot projects, three industrial lot projects, and 17 off-site projects being partially or in the main funded by funds accessed under the MFC. Again, different things like the residential and commercial lot development in Weyburn, waste water infrastructure upgrading in Dalmeny, and as I had said, the intermodal facility in Regina.

So again, all of them are worthy projects in their own right. But again, in terms of the different sort of policy tools that you have to select from, Mr. Speaker, that the provincial government has taken on this means of using our borrowing power as a collective to enable and support different projects at the municipal level. Again, in and of itself we don't have a problem with it but just so long as it's part of the overall financial picture and so long as it's being very closely monitored in terms of, you know, are the limits on track? How does this impact the overall fiscal picture of the province? And how this carries forward in the context of a budget where there's a billion dollar shortfall and a potash projection being blown by \$1.3 billion.

I guess one of the other things I'm interested in, Mr. Speaker, is that a number of years ago I can remember a similar instrument being brought forward by the then Finance minister, Eric Cline. And a number of concerns were raised with it at that time, perhaps by the auditor, and how it related to generally acceptable accounting principles, and as well by members of the opposition that of course took every opportunity to criticize anything being done by the then government of the day.

As my understanding of it goes, Mr. Speaker, the MFC is very similar to that instrument. And again in terms of the different things that were spoken out against in opposition by members opposite and that when they come into government suddenly become good ideas, we're interested to see that trend continuing as well, Mr. Speaker.

One of the other things that's interesting in terms of the measures brought forward in the Throne Speech . . . Again, the Throne Speech being entitled "Moving Forward." One of the criticisms we'd raised against the Throne Speech of course is that a lot of it has to do with the reannouncement of different initiatives that have taken place over the past few years.

And I'm noting with interest, Mr. Speaker, that our deputy leader, the member from Wakamow, in her remarks on this — also as Municipal Affairs critic — stated that this was number

46 of the former initiatives that were highlighted in this year's Speech from the Throne.

And again it's significant in that it's a piece of a whole in terms of the initiatives brought forward by this government to date in terms of reannouncements or rehashing or recycling and in terms of how it's indicative of a government that is for the most part . . . The new stuff is gone. This year country, I guess, is this year country, and very soon it'll be last year, at least as discernable from the initiatives of the members opposite and this government of the day. And again in terms of this being an instrument that came forward in a very similar manner under the previous government, derided by the members at that time, and suddenly it's a great thing to utilize on behalf of the municipalities in this province.

So in terms of it being part of, you know, 50-plus former initiatives that were reannounced in the Throne Speech, in terms of it . . . You know we'll see how this matches up with the finances come the mid term. We'll see how this matches up with other initiatives that have a great impact on the provincial ratepayers, on the municipal ratepayers in this province, and whether or not the full point of provincial sales tax is in fact forthcoming in the budget, or whether or not that a good financial situation has been squandered and a great financial opportunity has been missed. And then of course, they'll start retrenching on different of their promises and, you know, cutting back and curtailing and lowering expectations.

So if that is the context as it comes forward in the mid term, if the trajectory that's evident in the first quarter reporting of the finances of the province, if that comes forward, Mr. Speaker, and continues to worsen in the mid term . . . Obviously we know that the members opposite are going through the budget-making exercise right now. At least we hope they are. We hope it's not being written in the back of an envelope somewhere, but some of their projections in last year's of course certainly were a resemblance to that kind of process. We know that the budget is being made at this time. We know that they've got a set of projections that they've got to pull together, and we'll have a clearer picture of that situation come the mid-term report.

So when we come to the budget in the spring, how *The Municipal Financing Corporation Act* fits into that of course is if the revenue-sharing increases isn't there for the municipalities, we still have many vital needs in the sector. Then of course if they haven't got the resources, the revenue sharing, then the rate of uptake on this particular instrument will only increase. And so again that it's been as robust an uptake on it as it has been to date, we look on that with great interest, and we'll certainly be paying close attention to the continued uptake on this.

And we'll be watching of course. If there is yet another move to increase the limit within the near future, what does that mean in terms of the relative debt-carrying capacity of our municipalities? In the history of this province, Mr. Speaker, there have been times when the argument was put to different of our municipalities that there were things you couldn't afford not to do. And in terms of, you know, borrowing positions or projects undertaken, projects that when of course the economy turned, went very hard on different of the municipalities in this

province.

And I know that there are municipalities that made certain decisions in terms of their finances and what they thought they could afford that they wound up paying for over decades, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the inability to borrow, in terms of going bankrupt, and in terms of projects that got half-started and were left incomplete.

So of course again, it's one thing to be optimistic, Mr. Speaker. It's another thing to let optimism carry you far away from the economic resources you have to bring to bear to make things happen so that you're not, you know, mortgaging your future and the children's future and the grandchildren's future in terms of the ability to be able to pay for these things.

You know again, we're optimistic people on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, despite what members opposite might like to tell us. But we're also, I think, in tune with that other Saskatchewan ethos which is, show us the money. Things have to add up. They have to hold water. And in terms of being pay-as-you-go kind of people, I think we're very much in that vein on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker. And you know, maybe that makes us skeptics or . . . The members opposite construe that in different ways.

But we think that in the history of this province, there have been different times when people have been sold a bill of goods that seem to be too good to be true. And I guess in response to those historical lessons and in response to people that would tell us there are things that we just can't afford not to do, I'd say again, Mr. Speaker, show us the money. Make sure that these things add up. Make sure that the books weigh like they should, and they're not being thrown on the barbecue, Mr. Speaker. And make sure that the accounting is first and foremost, not the cheerleading.

[15:30]

So, Mr. Speaker, it's been a pleasure participating in this debate. Certainly our lead on this is the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow, our deputy leader and Municipal Affairs critic for Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition. I know that she's doing some work in terms of reaching out to stakeholders to do that due diligence and that further examination of this measure. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to her findings and the work that will be done with the municipal sector. And with that, I would move to adjourn debate on Bill 98. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — The member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 98, *The Municipal Financing Corporation Amendment Act, 2009*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Agreed. Carried.

### Bill No. 99

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert that **Bill No. 99** — *The*

*Emergency 911 System Amendment Act, 2009* be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Harper:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes it is true, Mr. Speaker. I'm up on my feet the second time this afternoon. Obviously I drew the short straw. So you'll have to bear with me. But truly, Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to enter into this debate, the debate on *An Act to amend The Emergency 911 System Act*. And again, Mr. Speaker, it's a relatively short Act, being of only nine clauses, but it's also a very comprehensive Act as it's certainly making a number of changes in the system that we have here in Saskatchewan.

I want to start out by saying, Mr. Speaker, that I think it's certainly an essential part of our society here in Saskatchewan and that Saskatchewan people need to, you know, be able to have access to emergency assistance no matter where they live in the province. I don't think it's something that should be just isolated to one area or a certain number of communities or a certain size community. I think everybody in Saskatchewan is certainly entitled to have the ability to access emergency services when they need it.

Emergencies aren't limited just to areas of large population. They're not limited to areas of urban or rural. Emergencies happen wherever people are. And certainly you never know when an emergency may come up. I suppose all of us hope that we go throughout life without having to need the emergency services, and hopefully that would be the case. But we never know when an emergency may arise. You never know when you may need those services and it's a comfort to know that those services are available and are at hand if that emergency was to rise.

And this is why we need to ensure that we have the 911 system here, as being proposed by the government — have it operating at its peak efficiency and having it be able to deliver the services that are needed and do so in a comprehensive and quick way.

As you, Mr. Speaker, can understand that this has been a work-in-progress, and certainly there has been a lot of time and effort put into developing the 911 system. And as it expands itself now to incorporate other emergency systems that have been used in the province here in the past, I think it's probably quite well welcomed.

I think we're seeing the FleetNet system being replaced with the 11 system. I think that's what this Act is really headed for. And the FleetNet system has served us in the past and served us well. If you look at what was available when the FleetNet system was first adopted, it was certainly the state of the art. It was a leading mechanism to be able to provide a comfort level or provide a level of emergency response to the people of Saskatchewan.

But as time has gone on, other systems have come along. There have been other developments. And FleetNet is now probably not as efficient and not as effective as it once was, or not as efficient and effective as other systems are today, I guess is a

better way to put that, Mr. Speaker.

So we're seeing the need to enhance the systems that we have and really the desire to have all emergency systems being able to talk to each other — being able to talk to each other very quickly — in those cases when an emergency does happen.

You need to have reliability. There's no question that within our communications systems we need to have the knowledge and the ability to rely on those systems as not letting us down in that time of emergency.

Somebody once said that you never know if a system works or not until you use it. Well when you use it in this case, it's not a system of luxury; it's a system of need because there's an emergency happening of some type, some degree, and that system has to respond to that emergency. And so you certainly need to have a system that is reliable and will not let you down when that occasion does occur. But you need to call on that system, on that emergency system, to be able to address an issue that you may be facing, and that is true right across the province.

And you know, it's easier to deliver those systems in highly populated areas but Saskatchewan is not as a province highly populated. We have slightly over 1 million population spread over a large, large geographic area. And I believe that our goal should be that no matter where you live in Saskatchewan — whether you be in a large city or a small town or a village, whether you be in an urban setting or a rural setting, whether you be in a northern setting or a southern setting — you should be able to have access to good emergency response systems.

And that is what we have to make sure that we get it right. There's no room for error in this process. There's no room for mistakes. We need to ensure that the investment that's being made by the taxpayers of this province is going to result in a system that is effective to those who need it, the time when they need it.

And I know, Mr. Speaker, that there will be those who say, well it's very difficult to provide that level of assurance that every person, no matter where you live in Saskatchewan, has access to good emergency responses. Because we have such a — in some areas — a very sparse population and large distances between communities, and others we have more isolated situations, particularly as I think of northern Saskatchewan in particular.

But, Mr. Speaker, I think that's what makes Saskatchewan unique is that we do have these issues. We do have these problems. These are issues and problems that we have faced in the past with other programs and other delivery systems of services for the people of Saskatchewan. And to the credit of the people we have working for us in the government, to the people we have in this province, period, we have always been able to find a way. We've always been able to find a way to make it work.

It's been innovative, and in a lot of ways Saskatchewan has led the world in being able to identify some of the services and the delivery systems for those services for the people of this province regardless of where they live — north or south, east or

west, urban or rural.

So I think that's something we should be commending Saskatchewan people for because we need to ensure that no matter where you go, we have the consistency of services or we have the availability of those services, and that those services are available in a timely manner. So that when an emergency does arise and somebody in this case uses the 911 and calls the dispatcher, they're able to talk to somebody there that can immediately contact the emergency services that are required.

Now sometimes a situation arises where more than one service is required. It's just not, say, just the police force is required or the ambulance is required. It may be a situation where there may be a need for multi responses to an issue. You may need SaskPower for example to come on the scene because of live power cables. You may need SaskEnergy to show up on the scene because there's a natural gas leak and potential of the problem getting out of hand and even getting larger. You may need the other emergency services, such as ambulance, fire department, and so on and so forth.

So that's why they need to all be on the same page, Mr. Speaker. That's why they all need to have a system of communication that they can all benefit from, all use, talk to each other, and be reliable so that they all know that they have a system there that they can rely on when that emergency does happen and a response is required, that they have a mechanism, a system to communicate with each other, so that they can be there in a timely fashion.

You know, I think it's fair to say that in any response, whether it be a fire or perhaps a police call or anything like that, the quicker that that service is available on the scene, the less likelihood there is to having extensive damage, perhaps being able to . . . I'm thinking of emergency responses as far as ambulance is concerned. Within the medical profession, I've been told that there's a standard. They call it the golden hour, and that is the first hour after a trauma is very important to the victim. The quicker the victim can have services delivered within that hour, the better chance they have of surviving. The better chance they have of being able to lessen the effects the trauma may have had on the individual.

And I know that to some small degree from personal experiences, Mr. Speaker, having had a very close family member a few years back, a number of years back now, suffer a heart attack — and it was my wife — and we were fortunate that we were able to get the services we needed well within the hour. The response system was there. The medicine that was required to relieve the blood clot that was causing the heart problems was administered and it was done within the timely fashion and therefore lessened the effects of the heart attack itself. So I have had personal experience at that situation and from that I've learned that the quicker a response can take place, as far as an emergency is concerned, the better off all are concerned.

I would say that probably the same stands true for a fire department. I think in Regina here, I think the fire department moves, has a rule of thumb that they, from the time of the call comes into the fire hall, they want to be on scene in three minutes or less. And that's their goal. And I think in most cases

if you talk to people in Regina here who had to use that service, they would probably say that yes, it's very, very effective and very timely because they are on the scene as within the time frame.

So I think, Mr. Speaker, it's safe to say that emergency services simply can be made more efficient and more effective if they have a systems of communicating, and communicating as quickly and clearly and as reliably as possible.

So we're hoping, Mr. Speaker, that we will see that come forward as a result of some of these changes. And we're hoping that we would see, no matter where you live, whether you lived in Regina or Assiniboia or Yorkton or La Ronge or wherever, that everybody, everybody living in this great province would have reasonable access to emergency services. And so in a . . . [inaudible] . . . time frame so that they would be able to benefit from that services being there in a timely manner and being able to provide the services that they require.

This has been an ongoing process. I think it's fair to say that we want to take our hats off to the men and women who work for this government who have been assigned to this project and have been working on it for a number of years. I know that this project is not something that's just came about overnight. It's something that's been worked at for a long, long time. It's something that has been first introduced a number of years ago when 911 was first introduced to some communities, and it was slowly spread to other communities and then to the province as a whole.

Then I think there was a need to enhance the communications between emergency responders so that they would be able to talk to each other very clearly and distinctly and reliably. And FleetNet certainly served the purpose at its time. Like anything else, it was good in its day — only difference is its day has sort of passed itself and we're moving forward. And I think with the assistance of some federal departments, I believe the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] as well involved with the expansion of the new systems here, the emergency 911 system, and I think that they looked forward to using that as a mechanism to enhance their ability to communicate.

I didn't know this, Mr. Speaker, until a couple of years ago but the communication mechanisms that the RCMP have today — or at least at that time a few years back — the system that they had in place was wanting, I guess you would say, as far as their needs was concerned because it didn't cover the entire province. There was pockets in the province they could not communicate into.

[15:45]

A lot of time that they would be reliant on their cellphone to be able to call in. In some cases where they didn't have cell coverage and it was in that pocket, they couldn't communicate with . . . An officer going in there on a case or an issue or on a call was probably left very isolated because he didn't have the mechanism to communicate back to, you know, for perhaps backup if it was required or perhaps for other emergency services for an ambulance or fire department. There was no way to communicate, so he'd have to drive out until he got outside the dead spots, as they would refer to it, and be able to phone in

on a cellphone and get help.

So this, I understand, system once it's fully implemented and operating and functioning properly in this province, it will address all those issues. I understand they will be able to communicate. They won't have any dead spots and they will be able to communicate with their own detachment or they'll be able to communicate to other emergency systems or emergency providers to be able to call upon them in a time of need.

And, Mr. Speaker, it should be just standard acceptance in Saskatchewan here that everybody, no matter where you live, has the ability to reach those emergency services when they are required — whether it be the fire or whether it be calling the police for emergency services or an ambulance. I think that's very, very important. And I think particularly the medical side of it, the ambulance response is something that will be muchly appreciated by people, particularly in rural Saskatchewan.

Many of our small towns, Mr. Speaker, as I think you'll agree with me, are populated with many of our seniors — people who have spent their life in this province or working in this province who have sacrificed to build this province. And today they've retired and they're living in their home in a small community. And I think that it's pretty commonplace, pretty common knowledge that the older you get in the tooth here — speaking from one who is certainly getting up there — the more conscious you are of medical services and your distance from those medical services and the ability of those medical services to be there when you need them.

So if we have a system where we can have a quicker response because we have better communication so we can have a quicker response through our ambulance system, and we have people that are confident in these systems in our small towns, I think, makes their life just a little bit better. If they have the knowledge, the comfort, the piece of mind to know that if, if they're called upon, if the emergency should arise, that they would be able to call upon the medical services and that they would be there in a timely fashion because they have the systems to communicate and communicate clearly.

And I think that is without a doubt, Mr. Speaker, brings piece of mind and relief to a lot of our senior citizens who are residents in our small towns and may be a distance, a little distance away from a medical outlet, whether it be a health centre or perhaps a hospital. And I think, you know, when word is out we have emergency systems here that they can talk to each other and can talk to each other clearly, distinctly, with reliability, and with really instantly, then I think that people will understand that, well we're moving in the right direction. And we have a system here that's serving all of Saskatchewan, not just part of Saskatchewan but all of Saskatchewan, regardless of where you live.

I know that there are always issues around a new system. There's always those who will be concerned about whether the system will be able to meet their needs or not. But so far, I would say from my knowledge of this system — which is not extensive by no means — but my knowledge of this is that it certainly is a refined system and one that seems to be working much better than what has been available in the past.



Of course you always raise the questions of cost whenever there's something new being introduced. Whenever there's something new being developed, the question of costs come into mind and who all is basically involved in this process and what is the cost to the taxpayers of Saskatchewan here. What might be the cost to those people who are involved in the system? Those are all the questions that come to mind. And you can't help but think of, you know, who's carrying these costs, how are these costs being divided by those stakeholders involved in the system. whether it be a police force or whether it be medical services or a volunteer fire department.

Is a volunteer fire department going to be expected to carry their fair share of the costs here, or is the government going to step up to the plate here and pony up some dollars to make these things available to those communities out there who have and who basically rely on volunteers — volunteer fire departments that serve them and serve them well. But quite frankly, they have limited funds available to them. They are the ones who really need the system to be able to communicate with.

And is the government going to be introducing a program to allow them to be able to get on to the new system here and buy the equipment that's required in order to properly and fully use the system? Because it's no use having a system that people and organizations and communities can't afford. Having them is one thing. If they can't afford them and can't use them, that's a whole different ball game. So what we need to do is ensure that the government over here understands that they need to be able to be there to support these communities, support these volunteer organizations within the communities to ensure that they are able to utilize the system to the best of their ability.

This really, Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, is not something that just came about overnight. I know that there's been work done on this for a long, long time. I know that this was started under the former government. And it appears to me that this government has pretty well followed the same track that had been set out by the former government in the implementation of the 911 system, and the continued discussions with all those involved in using the system including the federal agency of the RCMP who I know are interested in using the system and being a partner in this.

And I think that the government's probably headed in the right track, being that it was well thought out and it has been long in the process of development. And I would say they've been developed at a pace that would reflect being able to carry out good quality work. It wasn't done in haste. And I think that with that fact, that it wasn't done in haste, then we should be able to — over a period of time here — be able to develop a system that is effective and is efficient, does the job, does it for all people of Saskatchewan, regardless of where you live. And I think it's probably a system that will, I hope, will always be under review and with the goal of improving.

I would hope that, once this system is in place and is running, that the agency looking after it and the government opposite doesn't just say, well there we go; the job is done. The system is in place and we will go on to other things.

I would hope that there would be an aspect here where we

would always be reviewing the system and looking for ways and means to make it more efficient, more effective. I would hope that we'd be looking at new technology as it comes along, being able to be incorporated with the system to improve that system because that should be the goal — to provide people of Saskatchewan the best possible emergency system available.

Because I just simply don't know any finer people than the people of Saskatchewan or anybody more deserving of having a system that they can rely on. A system that they know that if an emergency does arise or a situation does arise, that they can place one call, they can place one call and have the responses that they need, responses that they need — whether it be a police force, whether it be a fire or ambulance or maybe all three, or maybe SaskPower. All of these service providers need to be able to be reached and contacted in a timely fashion to be there to address the emergency as it may arise.

And like I said earlier, it may be a multiple call. I mean it may not be just one agency that can meet the needs of the emergency. It may need more than that. So I would hope that we would have that system in place. And I would hope that the agencies looking after it and the ministry looking after it — and I'm sure they will — will always strive to improve upon that system. The system is a good system, but it's one that I think it could always be improved upon.

Particularly with the world we live in today and the changing technology that's always at hand and how technology is changing so very rapidly, that we should be looking at taking those changes, incorporating those changes within the system so that we have a system that is efficient, effective, responsive to the needs of Saskatchewan people and — that being so — no matter where you live.

Today's world is interesting. Communications has no limit or has no bounds. You can be, quite frankly, here in Regina and quite easily, with our new modern technology, be communicating with somebody half ways around the world.

Twenty or 30 years ago, Mr. Speaker, that would have been a very difficult thing to do. It would have meant at best probably a long-distance telephone call that would have probably taken maybe a long, long time to be able to get through all the international operators and so on and so forth to finally communicate with somebody on the other side of the world. Today that's not the case. That communication is almost instantaneously with the technologies that's now available to us.

So we need to continue to watch the changes in our technology and adapt those changes to our emergency systems here to ensure that we have available to the people of Saskatchewan an emergency system that continues to meet their needs. And I think those needs will change as the economy changes. As the time changes, those needs change. But I think we have to be aware of that. We have to be able to be reflective of those changes and the changing needs out there.

But we also have to be mindful of the changing technology and how we can use that technology to best benefit our needs here and our services here within the province. And I think we owe that, Mr. Speaker. I think that we owe that to the fine people of Saskatchewan because they are the ones that continually

provide, I guess you would say, the pioneering spirit that we have seen move this province forward. That same spirit is alive and well today. It's the willingness to look at new and innovative ways of providing services and new and innovative ways of doing things.

And I think that the people of Saskatchewan, as history has shown — whether it be in many aspects of our society, in many of aspects of our economy — the people of Saskatchewan have led the way on innovation and coming up with new and innovative projects and new and innovative ways of solving problems and providing, I think, improved services. And we certainly look forward to having that continue.

And we certainly hope the government will be aggressive enough, I guess you would say, to want to really ensure that Saskatchewan people have access to the best of emergency systems. We hope that none of us ever have to use those systems. We hope that we never have in our own personal life an opportunity to use an emergency system. We hope that would be the case, but that's not reality. Some of us have already experienced those systems and some of us perhaps will in the future.

But I think it's important for all of us and all the people of Saskatchewan to have the peace of mind to know that if one of those emergencies arise, one of those emergencies arise, they have the ability to make one call and call upon all the services that they need at that time. It's very important to have the ability to know that one call — three numbers — one call will bring about the services that you need at that time. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I say that I have certainly enjoyed the opportunity to add my comments to this debate.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to rise today and speak on Bill 99, *The Emergency 911 System Amendment Act, 2009*. And just listening to my colleague, the MLA from Regina Northeast, I just want to congratulate him on raising a lot of solid points around this issue. A person takes a look at this and thinks there's not much to it. But really, clearly it is an important service that we provide, and he gave an exhaustive review. He was somewhat modest in saying he wasn't an expert, but I sure appreciate the questions that he raised.

As the minister has outlined, there's really two key parts to this legislation, and I'd like to review that. Of course the first one would give the Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing the authority to operate and maintain the emergency 911 system. So that's relatively straightforward. They get the authority.

That's important to establish because in this kind of investment . . . and we understand that there's been significant investments. Actually I understand that the government has put close to \$130 million to date in developing the system, and it's close to being operational in the next year or two. And so it's important to establish the authority because what happens if things go off the track and you have somebody saying, who's responsible? Who's really responsible? And quite often when you have that

kind of investment, it's clear to know where the buck stops. And so that's relatively straightforward.

[16:00]

But the second part really talks about the system itself. And while it's got the acronym the PPSTN . . . and that stands for the Provincial Public Safety Telecommunications Network. I think it's been noted that that's not the catchiest acronym. But it does work. It is exactly what it is, and people who are familiar with it will know exactly what they're talking about.

It's an important network as it replaces the SaskTel FleetNet system, and that one's scheduled to wind down, I understand, at the end of 2010. So as the two systems join together and the old users of FleetNet come over to the provincial public safety telecommunications network, they need to know that it's all ready to go. And it's important to know that it's moving from SaskTel over to Corrections and Public Safety and Policing.

People don't think that's a big deal, but it's important to know who's really in charge because often, especially when you come to emergencies, that people know who's responsible, so when people call 911, they have the confidence that they are talking to somebody in charge and that the system will act consistently under any kind of circumstances. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as we know, in Saskatchewan we have all sorts of challenges here in this province.

And whether it's heat, cold, rain, snow, the system just has to work. It's imperative that the system work. And we also have, in terms of natural disasters or challenges — whether it be blizzards, rainstorms, hailstorms, extreme heat — and of course we also have the forest fires, which are huge. This is important. This is important right through the four corners of our province. As the MLA from Regina Northeast, I think he was talking about Regina, Assiniboia, Yorkton, La Ronge, Wollaston are a few examples where people have to know that when they call in, this system will work.

And in Saskatchewan we have quite a history of systems that can rise to the challenge that our province throws out there. And we've seen that, whether it's the air ambulance . . . And it has quite a history, the Saskatchewan air ambulances. People recognize right throughout North America that we rose to the challenge of how to provide the best medical care that we can possibly provide to 1 million people over such a huge geographical area. I think this is important. We have a history of meeting those challenges, and it's important that we do. And there's just no question about it.

And so on one hand, while this seems like a short Act, and one that maybe just really quickly we can push through, I think it's time that we reflect on it, contemplate the different challenges, and what are the unintended consequences. And I know that we have talked a little bit about that, the unintended consequences. The members before me talked about the billing. Who will pay for this and how will it be paid? And whether or not some of the folks who we expect to use this and have access to it — on both sides of the system, both calling in and also receiving it — what will the bills look like, and will it be fairly apportioned on the usage, but also on the ability to pay?

We depend so much in our province for volunteers, both for wonderful joyous things, like whether we're talking about arts and culture, but also for some of the things that are so much more important — the first responders or the volunteer fire departments.

We have a true, strong history in this province of volunteers stepping up to the plate in all sorts of circumstances. And we certainly don't want to do anything that might discourage people from getting involved, because we know we get excellent value from volunteers. And so this is really important, that there are no unintended consequences in people signing up and oh, I didn't understand this was going to be part of the package when I signed up. And clearly, that needs to be clear. That needs to be clear.

Some of the other unintended consequences . . . You know, Mr. Speaker, I was listening to the radio this morning, but it was such a Canadian moment. And there was an uncle and his nephew caught on an ice floe just off the coast in the North. And they had recovered the uncle, had evacuated him to Churchill for hyperthermia, but they were going out in the morning with the Hercules to rescue the boy. Now I don't know if they found the boy or not, if somebody heard the update. They did find him? But I think this is truly a Canadian story and truly one that we relate to in Saskatchewan, where families are caught in circumstances where they're isolated, and they need to have the best technology available.

And as the member from Regina Northeast was talking, I was thinking about the unintended, he raised the issue around unintended consequences. And one would be in joint services that we have right across the country, and in fact even North America. I can think of firefighters who serve not only in northern Saskatchewan, come into the South if there's fires. We've had that circumstance on grasslands. But also will travel across the country, and in fact I understand that some of them have travelled into parts of United States.

And one of the most unfortunate circumstances we can have is if our technology cannot be coordinated with other technologies that are being used throughout Canada for sure, and particularly our sister provinces of Alberta and Manitoba that we rely on so much, especially along the borders, and up in the Northwest Territories that we have some coordination there. And so we need to have that issue resolved.

And I hope that's been simply resolved. I believe it would be with the kind of money that's been invested already, the \$130 million that the minister's raised, that has said that's been spent to date on this. So I'm sure that some of those things have been taken into account.

But I think it's important, I think it's an important issue that, as we bring people into the province to help with emergency circumstances, we don't have technology from another era, that we have up-to-date technology, that we have stronger technology, that we have technology that can be counted on in any circumstance, in any kind of weather, and any kind of place or, as I say, circumstance. Whether it's a huge rainstorm, windstorm, or fire, those kind of things are important and particularly when it comes to emergency medical assistance.

We have circumstances in our province where we see people . . . And we hope people come out. In fact I'm still waiting for the Minister of Parks and Tourism and Culture to announce the new wilderness parks. And I understand that this is a commitment that this government has made, that there will be new wilderness parks announced in this mandate. And clearly when people come to our province to go into some of the wilderness parks — and I think that the ones that are in existence, Clearwater right now and people have enjoyed the Churchill River — that they know that they can get access quickly to medical assistance.

And so there has to be that confidence, both within the province and outside the borders, that when people come here, whether it's for holidays or whether they're moving or, as the member from Regina Northeast talked about, we find that seniors or people moving back to live in our smaller communities — and we have wonderful communities; and you know, I think of my own hometown, Mortlach that's attracting many people to move back to the community — with the confidence that if there is an emergency things can happen. And it's consistently right across the province, and hopefully fits well with other parts of the country.

And so this legislation appears to be continuing that work that we had started, and that's why we kind of lean towards supporting this Bill. We have some questions, and I'll talk about more about those in a minute, but we kind of, we do lean towards supporting this. Because the 911 system is a strong system, and we think that the integration of the Provincial Public Safety Telecommunications Network or known as PPSTN seems to accomplish that. So we hope that that will be the case.

Now of course we're switching over here from SaskTel, who are the experts in this area, over to Corrections, Public Safety and Policing. We hope that along with that goes the expertise. SaskTel's well known for its technological skills and innovation in the type of things that it's done over the years, over the decades. And SaskTel has a strong, strong history, right from the very beginning days of the telephone system in Saskatchewan to now and the continuation of that.

But I do hope that with the transfer over to Corrections, Public Safety and Policing that there's not a disconnect. The worst case scenario is if there is a disconnect. And that's one thing all people in telephones dread is the disconnect. And so I think that it's important that there's a smooth transition between the two organizations, and I'm assuming that's the case. SaskTel clearly has a historic reputation for ensuring that what it does operate, operates consistently and into the future. So that's hugely important.

And so it will be interesting as we move forward, and how we see the transition next year and into the following year. And clearly we don't want to be reading any stories about things that have gone wrong. Unfortunately sometimes things do, but if there's anything that we can help out right now in terms of making sure the transition is smooth, we want to make sure that we think about it in the next few weeks through discussions like this.

And that's why it's important to stand up and have this, think

about this. Think about how does it work with other telecommunications systems in Canada, particularly Manitoba and Alberta and in the North where there's . . . You know in the South, clearly with our road systems we have a bit of an advantage. But when you get in the North, the telecommunications systems are hugely, hugely more important, particularly in some of the challenges that they face, and whether that's the forest fire season, when we know particularly things become very anxious when things start to dry up and the lightning season starts knocking on the door, and people start to worry about what will happen.

And we need to make sure our emergency systems are top-notch and ready to go, and everybody knows how to operate them. This sounds like it'll be relatively simple. I hope the name is not misleading, because I'm assuming that it is 911. And if it's much more complicated than that, they've given it a fancy name. But it's more complicated than that, then we've got a little problem too. I hope it's not as complicated as its acronym, the provincial public safety telecommunications network.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there's a lot that they can . . . be said about this. It's one though that we'll have a lot of pride if it can work really well, and we do have a lot of confidence.

I have to tell you that the civil service has worked on this, whether they're in the Crowns, like SaskTel, or in Corrections, Public Safety and Policing. I do have a lot of confidence. This has taken a lot of time. As I said, we started working on this ourselves, and so I think that the time seems to be right. It's moving along in an orderly fashion. And still some questions though.

I think we need to know, how does it relate to other provinces and in some of the states that we do a lot of work with? Will we find ourselves isolated because we've got a system that's out of date? I hope that's not the case. I truly hope that's not the case. And so especially with the kind of money that's been invested to date, that would be really unfortunate.

[16:15]

So as I say that's one concern. The other concern is around the billing, what are we going to do, making sure that it's fair and reasonable. Because when systems like this are put into place, there is a cost and somebody does have to pay the bills. And then again the training, making sure it's up and running. And I hope it's simple. I hope it's straightforward because that's the beauty of innovation, making things relatively more straightforward and more simple.

So we will be looking to consult with others on this — emergency service providers and communities. What are their thoughts on it? This is their opportunity to hear, to be heard. So we will be talking to them. And we want to learn a little bit more about what the experiences are in other jurisdictions with this system, and as I said, both inside the province and outside the province, north and south, the four corners of the province.

Well I would think that we are inclined to support this Bill. I can't see any problems. We have seen though — and I do have to raise this flag, Mr. Deputy Speaker — we have seen Bills

that have been brought back because of some of the unintended consequences.

For those reasons then, Mr. Deputy Speaker, then I'd like to adjourn debate on Bill 99, *The Emergency 911 System Amendment Act, 2009*. And I know that many of my colleagues will like to speak on this a little further. Thank you very much.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Saskatoon Centre has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 99, *The Emergency 911 System Amendment Act, 2009*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

### Bill No. 100

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Duncan that **Bill No. 100 — *The Doukhobors of Canada C.C.U.B. Trust Fund Amendment Act, 2009*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure at this time to enter into the debate and get some of my comments on the record on Bill 100, *An Act to transfer the assets and liabilities of the Doukhobors of Canada C.C.U.B. Trust Fund and to repeal The Doukhobors of Canada C.C.U.B. Trust Fund Act*. Short title, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Act may be cited as *The Doukhobors of Canada C.C.U.B. Trust Fund Amendment Act, 2009*.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, very interesting historically, this Act and amendment that is being proposed, and perhaps I would like to just get that in the record. The section that is being added after section 19, the dissolution and winding up section 19.1, which again talks about:

Notwithstanding any provision of this Act, after consulting with recognized Doukhobor societies organized in Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia, the Lieutenant Governor in Council may, by order:

(a) dissolve the body corporate called the Doukhobors of Canada C.C.U.B. Trust Fund Board . . . [(b), Mr. Deputy Speaker, deals with the windup of the fund, the existing fund that was there, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and]

(c) transfer the assets and liabilities of the board and the fund to any person, agency, organization, association, enterprise, institution or body within or outside Saskatchewan that, in the opinion of the Lieutenant Governor in Council, is capable of representing the interests of the Doukhobors of Canada.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, further to that, the addition includes:

(2) In ordering the dissolution, winding up and transfer

mentioned in subsection (1), the Lieutenant Governor in Council may do all or any of the following . . .

And this allows for the dissolution of the property and that is, “In ordering the dissolution, winding up and transfer mentioned in subsection (1), the Lieutenant Governor in Council may do all or any of the following . . .” And it outlines then, Mr. Deputy Speaker, all that can be done. And that’s “impose any terms and conditions with respect to the dissolution, winding up and transfer;” and (b) then — that was (a) — and (b) then, “provide for adjusting and settling the assets and liabilities of the board and the fund,” Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Ending with (c) and (d):

provide for the disposal or destruction of the records of the board and the fund; [and]

(d) order any other matter or thing that the Lieutenant Governor in Council considers necessary for the purpose of dissolution, winding up and transfer”.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in order to properly understand this Act, I would like to talk a bit about the historical, and so that we can get a context, a historical context of how the previous Bill came into existence and why this Bill might be necessary. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we’re doing a careful analysis of this so that we may do the right thing here.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Bill basically, just generally, Bill 100 will allow for the winding down of the C.C.U.B. [Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood] Trust Fund and its replacement with a private organization, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The monies presently in the fund would then be transferred to that organization. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that’s simple enough, but again we have to put this into some sort of context, that being historical, and I think that’s where I would like to just talk briefly about that.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Doukhobors have a long tradition beginning in Russia where they, as we all know, were at odds with the Russian czars and the Russian Orthodox Church, and they emigrated to the Canadian Prairies at the end of the 19th century — coming here as probably a lot of our forefathers had as well, each coming with their own particular reason for coming to Canada. And as I said, they emigrated to the Canadian Prairies at the end of the 19th century, coming and settling.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, historically Doukhobors were communitarians, vegetarians, and pacifists, and they were Christians who contended that many of the Scriptures were not literally true. And well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, while it’s not a belief commonly held by Doukhobors living in Saskatchewan today, they also believed the land should be held in common, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that they would hold land in common and that was part of their beliefs when they came here.

Now in Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there were three colonies of settlers from Russia who settled in our province, as I mentioned, in the late 19th century. And those colonies were in or near the present-day Kamsack and Veregin, Good Spirit Lake and Yorkton area, and the Blaine Lake area which is close

— that one I’m aware of, Mr. Deputy Speaker — close to Saskatoon.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, just a bit of historical on this. The National Historic Site in Veregin, Saskatchewan, the National Doukhobor Heritage Village. Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is a National Historical Site in Veregin, Saskatchewan, and that being the National Doukhobor Heritage Village.

And in 2005, our government, the NDP at that time, designated the Doukhobor Dugout House at Veregin, Saskatchewan, as a provincial heritage site, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to recognize, as we have recognized many other people who came to this province and who have contributed to the welfare of the province. And that designation went a long way for recognizing the people, the Doukhobors who came here.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as in all for the different people that came to Canada or Saskatchewan, there at times were controversies or concerns. And the Canadian government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, originally promised the Doukhobors that they could hold land in common, as I mentioned earlier, and be exempted from military service. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the government later reneged on those promises.

So part of the reasons that the Doukhobors who came and who had those beliefs in land being held in common were told initially by the government that they could do this — only later that the government reneged on those promises — and exempted them from, as I mentioned earlier, military service as well as holding land in common.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, a split developed in the Doukhobor community, and it led to three camps. It led to a number of Doukhobors moving to British Columbia in an area near Castlegar. Now the Doukhobors who stayed behind were called independents. And these, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they were willing to swear an oath to the Queen and were open to the idea of private ownership of land.

So quite an interesting history, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on the development of beliefs of the Doukhobors who came into Saskatchewan and Canada. This is a crucial time in their history in terms of the split — people moving to Castlegar in British Columbia, and people staying behind in there. But as I mentioned, willing to swear, Mr. Deputy Speaker, an oath to the Queen and that they would be open to private land ownership. And quite a difference you see there, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on what the thinking might have been.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in *The Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan*, virtually all the Doukhobors in Saskatchewan today are descendents of those independents that we have. So as I was speaking that we had Doukhobors had come here in the late 19th century with certain belief systems that they held, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and those were changed. Those were changed and sometimes historically we find different groups having to deal with issues or concerns that they have. And these were people who made decisions, made decisions about the way they would be living, the way they would be conducting their business.

Even though they came to escape, as I spoke earlier to . . . As I

said where they were at odds with the Russian czars and the Russian Orthodox Church and they emigrated here because of their beliefs. But faced with a life in Canada, again they had to make choices when they were here, as most people have to.

And this is very interesting, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as to what they did and part of the moving to Castlegar in British Columbia. And those staying here were independents. And again as in *The Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan*, today most of those Doukhobors that are here are from the independents as they were known.

Now a very interesting point, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that the original C.C.U.B. Trust Fund was established by the Blakeney government in 1980, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to administer the funds that the former Christian Community of the Universal Brotherhood. And they were a co-operative that owned a number of assets in Western Canada until they were foreclosed on in the late 1930s.

So what we have, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is we have people who came here in the latter part of the 19th century at odds at home as many people were. I know various people came for various reasons, came to Canada, came to Saskatchewan, were promised certain things — being able to hold land in common, being exempted from military service — only to find that in fact the government changed their minds on them and did this.

So I raise this as sort of a historical background for . . . Perhaps we can all better understand the Act that we would be dealing with here and what it means to these people.

So as I mentioned, the original C.C.U.B. Trust Fund was established by the Blakeney government in 1980 to administer the funds of the former Christian Community of the Universal Brotherhood and again they're the co-operative that owned a number of assets in Western Canada until they were foreclosed in the 1930s.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is a very interesting situation that was happening. Now the money left in the C.C.U.B. fund was combined after the foreclosure in the 1930s, was combined with the proceeds of sales from former Doukhobor reserve lands that had been held in an account supervised by the Saskatchewan government.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I will also be talking about Larry Ewashen, a BC [British Columbia] board member with the C.C.U.B. But just to get back to . . . The money left in the C.C.U.B. fund was combined with proceeds of sales from former Doukhobor reserve lands that had been in an account supervised by the Saskatchewan government.

Now Mr. Ewashen notes that these parcels of land originally belonged to the communal Doukhobors who left for BC. So Mr. Deputy Speaker, you can recall that, as I said, when they came in the 19th century and at the end of the 19th century, to Canada and Saskatchewan, leaving and with certain beliefs, and then I spoke about when the Doukhobors, some had left for British Columbia. And here we have — and then I'll be getting to this document — Mr. Ewashen notes that these parcels of land originally belonged to the communal Doukhobors. And these were left as proceeds of the former reserve lands. And these all

were in the C.C.U.B. fund. And this kind of gets perhaps for us a better understanding of the C.C.U.B. fund, what it was originally composed of, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Before we would take that step and have agreement on this Bill or be able to establish our position on the Bill, it would be very important to know these sort of historical facts as to how . . . so that we could properly make a decision.

[16:30]

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when this particular trust fund that was set up by the Blakeney government, as I mentioned, in 1980 was established, there was approximately 267,000 in the fund. The principal was to be invested in perpetuity and the interest earned on the fund's investments was meant to be spent to preserve Doukhobor culture. Organizations in the three Western provinces could apply for project fundings. Now this is very good for us to know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and to take the time and to understand very clearly what had occurred here.

Now so if I could, Mr. Deputy Speaker, again just to mention the proud tradition that the Doukhobors have, and how important they are to our province's heritage with the numbers of other immigrants who came here and settled, and they also have their story to tell, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Now I guess the unfortunate part of that history, as I went over, is the promises made to Doukhobors by governments in the early part of the 20th century were broken. And those were on land ownership, military service, and more, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So they came out of, as I mentioned earlier, came out of where they were at odds with the Russian czars and the Russian Orthodox Church, immigrated to the Canadian Prairies. Felt that they could, basically, their religious freedoms could be practised.

The unfortunate part is that their history is also marred here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by the governments who broke their promises on land ownership and military service, so that they were . . . Now again before we would rush in, I think I would take the time on this Bill, the time that we need, that we not repeat history on this, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

My comments leading up to this were just so that we would all understand the significance of what we are doing and that again we need to consult, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We need to consult with the modern-day descendants of the original Doukhobors to ensure that this Bill meets their needs.

A very interesting history indeed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a history that many people who have come and left their homes and come and are faced with challenges, and the challenges they write, the challenges, decisions they make, write their story, Mr. Deputy Speaker, write their story for what they will be doing into the future. And here we have in 1980 where we establish a fund, and now we again are revisiting that fund to make changes to it, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Now as I mentioned, I was going to make a few comments on a statement from Mr. Ewashen. He makes some interesting comments on the fund and how it has been used. And he writes, and he says:

Although many contemporary Doukhobor societies have received funding from the C.C.U.B. Trust Fund, not everyone is aware of the origins [or] of this funding organization. [Mr. Ewashen is the . . .] As a member of the board serving my second term since being appointed by the BC Attorney General, this question has come up on different occasions.

And again he writes out . . . and this is very interesting because it's from his particular perspective of what he would be seeing this fund is about, what it should be used for, what it was initially set out. So he puts it:

Simply put, the C.C.U.B. Trust Fund, is the financial remnant of the once flourishing *Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood* [and I spoke about that earlier].

Incorporated in 1917, and brought to its knees in 1938 through foreclosure action, some [of the] resources of this one time exceptionally successful communal enterprise remained as a legacy to the present day Doukhobor societies.

So very interesting on that. "After the . . . foreclosure action by Sun Life Assurance, the Canadian Imperial Bank and Crown Life over the outstanding \$300,000 interest, the BC Government negotiated a settlement with the Trust companies by paying \$280,000, [280,000, Mr. Deputy Speaker] on the debt, and thus becoming owners of the entire C.C.U.B. holdings." Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker:

Previous to the BC Government takeover, the receivers announced to the CCUB governing Doukhobors that they intended to liquidate available resources to recoup their financial outlay.

This liquidation [Mr. Deputy Speaker] continued until most of the Doukhobor resources such as lumber and any other items in stock were sold off at fire-sale prices, and the basic industries such as the jam factory were totally depleted so there was no chance of the Doukhobors surviving their CCUB company in a meaningful fashion.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, "After the receivers had completed their work, the Government of BC took over and imposed a second condition, that being permission for the Doukhobors to remain in the villages as tenants on the properties that they had previously owned." So quite the story, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where the Doukhobors came to Canada and Saskatchewan to now find themselves in this situation.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, "After the government recouped the \$280,000, there was a balance left which was deposited into a holding account in Regina, [right here in] Saskatchewan, and was supervised by the Government of Saskatchewan under the terms of the bankruptcy procedures," Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I spoke earlier of the communal land and that and "When the communal homesteads were cancelled in 1906-07 in Saskatchewan over the issue of naturalization and communal living, the government of the day graciously reserved 15 acres for each resident over eighteen years of age on the periphery of each village." So, Mr. Deputy

Speaker, as I spoke earlier, the government going back on its promises in 1906 and 1907:

Of course, this was not sufficient for a family to survive on, [we can well imagine, Mr. Deputy Speaker] and those Doukhobors who had left for British Columbia, had given up their ownership rights. [Again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you check the history books in Saskatchewan, you'll find] These reserves dwindled as they were purchased by the new occupiers of the property after the Doukhobors vacated, in some cases by the Independent Doukhobors . . .

And independent, Mr. Deputy Speaker, remember I spoke of those being the Doukhobors who split and were the ones that were left in Saskatchewan. Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker:

In 1918, these former Dominion lands were sold or reverted to the province. The proceeds of these sales were also [Mr. Deputy Speaker] added to an account supervised by the Saskatchewan government. It is important to note that these fifteen acre parcels originally belonged to the communal Doukhobors who had left for BC.

Those are the people who went to Castlegar, as I spoke earlier, Mr. Deputy Speaker. "[Now] Up until the time of the bankruptcy procedures against the C.C.U.B., this fund was referred to as *The Credit Surplus Fund* and was held in trust by the *Toronto General Trust*, later one of the receivers in the case."

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as we all know, bankruptcy procedures can be costly and so in this case as well. A sum of \$142,111 was all that remained after the foreclosing agents. And the money was combined with the money from the proceeds of the 15-acre lots, which we spoke about, were allotted from the people who had left to go to British Columbia and who sold off their lots.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker:

In time, this trust grew to \$222,000 plus accrued interest. This sum was held in trust by the Canada Permanent Trust Company on behalf of the bankruptcy court and in 1979-80, was deposited with the Minister of Finance of Saskatchewan, concurrent with the creation [and this is where we get back to the Blakeney government's] *The Doukhobors of Canada C.C.U.B. Trust Fund Act* . . .

Now the question, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was but who were the legal heirs of this fund? Who were the legal heirs of this fund . . . [inaudible] . . . give you a bit of a history here in terms of how this fund was developed.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, since it was a surplus, presumably the creditors were paid off, but there were cases of people who had lent money to the corporation who were not paid, and so this posed a bit of a problem, but they also, Mr. Deputy Speaker . . . which complicated this, was that they had not made any claims on this money. Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker:

Various suggestions came forth as to how this money should be disposed of — it was accumulating interest at

[that time at] 3.5 % and if no action was taken, it could be transferred into the provincial treasury.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, so we have this fund. We have the fund growing. We have it growing at 3.5 per cent. And now the legal heirs in this case, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's important to know that "the legal heirs appeared to be all Doukhobors who at one time belonged to the CCUB or had their homesteads cancelled in Saskatchewan." You understand just going back to 1907-06, all of those . . . This presented a very complex and unique problem because you had all of these people who had owned some land. It was being cancelled. You had a fund established and now what was to happen? How was this money to be dealt with? And so the issue, people took the position perhaps that "the legal heirs appeared to be all Doukhobors who at one time belonged to the CCUB or had their homesteads cancelled in Saskatchewan."

Now at the last hearing of the commission on the problem of this disposition of these lands which were held with the C.C.U.B. and which were sold to Doukhobors in private, the attorney suggested that money should be converted into a general welfare fund for all Doukhobors. So as you see, not a simple issue, Mr. Deputy Speaker, not a simple issue at all, people having to determine what they would be, how this money would be dealt with.

And now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, "It should be noted that the Government of BC profited exorbitantly [according to Mr. Ewashen] from this transaction, since they had taken over 71,600 acres for \$280,000 and sold all these properties 20 years later at appreciated prices." We can well understand, being from Saskatchewan and land prices and what can happen to land prices, that this was quite a profit-taking.

Now other possessions, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there were other possessions. There were possessions such ". . . as schools were absorbed by local school boards, [and] the famous suspension bridge built in 1913 was taken over [Mr. Deputy Speaker] by the Department of Highways and continued to serve the public into the sixties, again without compensation to the Doukhobor toilers."

Mr. Deputy Speaker, a very interesting situation for the Doukhobors, and we've already, as I spoke earlier, we talked about how they left because they were at odds, came to a country where they felt they could continue in their style or in their customs, then had that changed on them. And then now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we hear that in these days of how their land is sold or taken, their homestead cancelled, having to move again to British Columbia — Mr. Deputy Speaker, quite a story when we have a closer look at all of this, having their properties later sold. Twenty years later I suppose, Mr. Deputy Speaker; we could all have comments on that.

But I think if any of us in the legislature here or in public, this is quite a story, Mr. Deputy Speaker, once we get into it and do that. And I think it's necessary in order when we deal with a Bill like this, that we truly get an understanding, that we get an understanding from the history so that we can put our changes in a context, Mr. Deputy Speaker, put changes into a context and thereby understanding the Bills that come before this legislature, so that we as legislators can properly deal with this

before we rush anything through.

And I think it's incumbent upon us to do this type of research and listen to the people that it impacts, and we'll still be doing some of that, contacting the stakeholders to this before we would be moving on this Bill.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there's quite a bit more here because if all the . . . As I mentioned before, that there was a commission, at the last hearing of the commission of the problem of this position of the former C.C.U.B. lands which were sold, the attorney suggested money should be converted into a general fund for all Doukhobors. And you recall when I spoke of the legal heirs appeared to be all Doukhobors who had belonged to the C.C.U.B. or had their homesteads cancelled in Saskatchewan.

Now if everybody was there, still left in Saskatchewan with the independents, and then the folks who went to BC were all legal heirs, so then, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if all the Doukhobors were legal heirs, what form could this general welfare fund take was a question that people had to struggle with. And out of that a Doukhobor institute was proposed, a seniors' rest home, a Chair of Doukhobor studies at the university. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, these were things that were discussed and done.

[16:45]

Now "A committee from Verigin approached the provincial government with the suggestion that the funds be allocated towards heritage purposes of the Doukhobors. [And again] The result was the committee receiving \$107,000 to begin forming the National Doukhobor Heritage Village in 1980, although this sum was not from this fund," Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And I spoke about the village and the rest of that previously, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But again, those were the things around along with the National Historic Site in Verigin and the National Doukhobor Village. And then in 2005, as I mentioned, the former NDP government designated Doukhobor Dugout House at Verigin as a provincial heritage site.

Now of interest is in June of 1980, Mr. Deputy Speaker:

In June of 1980, the *Doukhobors of Canada CCUB Trust Fund* was proclaimed by the Government of Saskatchewan following an order-in-council. [And this would bring us back up to the date where I spoke, about 1980.] The stated intent of the fund was to further the culture and heritage of the Doukhobors in Canada. Monies left, the principle sum of \$267,500 was invested in perpetuity and the interest earnings were to be shared by applying Doukhobor organizations from the three Western provinces.

[Now the] formula designated a board of nine persons, consisting of three delegates from Saskatchewan, three from BC, one from Alberta and one person nominated by the Attorney General of BC and one from Saskatchewan. The three members each from BC and Saskatchewan were to be nominated by recognized Doukhobor societies. [Each member again] Each member [was to hold] . . . office for a term of three years or until his successor is appointed . . . no member may be appointed for more than



two consecutive terms, [Mr. Deputy Speaker].

[Now] The present distribution formulae is 45% to British Columbia, 45% to Saskatchewan, 10% to Alberta, although it is [Mr. Deputy Speaker, although this is] worth noting that the vast majority of the capital funds came from the CCUB residual fund of BC.

Again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what was important about this fund was that they wanted to know . . . was that this was not rigid and subject to change, depending upon the relative groups and societies in relation to each other.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, “. . . the entire Saskatchewan disbursement is taken over by the museum in Verigin, by comparison, the Doukhobor Discovery Centre in Castlegar receives a portion [but it’s] not larger than the many other groups who apply from British Columbia, since that is where the majority of the societies and groups are headquartered.”

Mr. Deputy Speaker, so all of this very important when we come to look at our changes and what we are doing here: “The *Sons of Freedom*, who had formally reduced the assets of the C.C.U.B. through arson, are also now equal benefactors of this fund, as well as the Independent Doukhobor Societies of Saskatchewan who did not contribute to the C.C.U.B. holdings but now choose to have their entire allocation given over to the museum in Verigin” which I spoke about earlier.

Now again this was seen as “. . . entirely appropriate, since all buildings in the museum were constructed by members of the CCUB prior to the move to BC.” Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what also occurred were things that the Attorney General of Alberta, who had no longer wanted to be involved or sanction the Alberta appointments — and so that was just an interesting development as I spoke of earlier, where the Saskatchewan and British Columbia and Alberta had appointees — now in Alberta the appointments will be simply made from the Doukhobor societies.

Again BC. BC again went the same way, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It was on this basis, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Doukhobor culture and heritage finds itself. And we come to, as I spoke earlier, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the history of this group. The history of this group, and hopefully I’ve been able to help in a better understanding of where we are. So just, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to briefly go over the Doukhobors and some of their traditions and the background to this fund.

Again I spoke about the long traditions that they have, beginning in Russia, being at odds with the czars and the Russian Orthodox Church, their coming to the Canadian Prairies in the late 19th century. Who they were, Mr. Deputy Speaker — communarians, vegetarians, pacifists. They were Christians, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But they believed that land should be held in common. That was one of their essential beliefs, was that.

And so as a result of what occurred in, as I spoke about, in 1906-07 where the government came and when communal homesteads were cancelled, Mr. Speaker. So for those people coming and owning land communally, who had uprooted their lives to come to the Canadian Prairies, to now find themselves

to being told that this was not the life that they could and . . . And then, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to say to the people at that time that they would get 15 acres for everybody over 18, we can well see perhaps why people left for British Columbia, Mr. Deputy Speaker, leaving all that land. And that land being taken up and then later resold, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So quite an interesting history to how this fund came about. Quite an interesting history where in fact it has ended up. And so it brings us to today and the changes that we see before us here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the changes we see before us on the Bill. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the changes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will allow for the transition to occur, with the operation of the trust fund as it is currently structured, to an organization outside of a legislative framework.

Again quite the interesting history of the fund, how it has moved. Quite an interesting history of the people who came here to the Canadian Prairies and settled and the things that they had to face, the struggles that they endured. And again quite the story they have to pass on.

Now again, some parts that this will do is the Lieutenant Governor in Council will have the authority to set any terms and conditions it deems appropriate to the new organization that’ll administer the trust fund. And they put, for example, requiring that the board has representatives from each province of British Columbia, Alberta, and Saskatchewan. Again, the evolution of this fund, the evolution of the governance of this fund, something that perhaps with the historical background that helps us better see what this might mean.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this transition. Very interesting that all provinces will again put on, we’ll again require board representatives from each of these provinces, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And we have to, when we look at these Bills — what might seem at first glance to be simple and straightforward, it all changes — we as legislators must look at these changes and pay close attention to them, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Again just the way that the addition to the section, and hopefully that’ll achieve what the drafters are talking about, and that being that the notwithstanding any of the other provisions in the Act. And hopefully we would have to further look at that. And “after consulting with recognized Doukhobor societies,” and that’s very important for us as legislators when we look at this, that we would consult the stakeholders in this to determine that what’s being done here is in accordance with what they have requested.

And again quite clearly that when you do that, to:

- (a) dissolve the body corporate called the Doukhobors of Canada C.C.U.B. Trust Fund Board;

That needs to be done.

- (b) wind up the fund.

And then, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as has been wanted here, the:

- (c) transfer the assets and liabilities of the board and the fund to any person, agency, organization, association, [Mr.

Deputy Speaker] enterprise, institution or body within or outside Saskatchewan [again] that, in the opinion of the Lieutenant Governor in Council, is capable of representing . . .

And it's very important that their views be represented here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because as we've seen what a history that the Doukhobors have had on the Canadian prairies.

Very interesting also, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that in ordering the dissolution, the winding down, transfer mentioned in subsection (1), the Lieutenant Governor in Council may do all or any of the following. And again we outline here that the:

(a) impose any terms and conditions with respect to the dissolution, winding up and transfer;

That they would:

(b) provide for adjusting and settling the assets and liabilities of the board . . .

(c) provide for the disposal or destruction of the records of the board and the fund;

(d) order any other matter or thing that the Lieutenant Governor in Council considers necessary for the purposes of the dissolution, winding up and transfer.

Again so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, at this time I know there's many more of my colleagues who have things to say on this Bill. It's an important Bill for all of us here. And at this time I would adjourn debate.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Saskatoon Fairview has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 100, *The Doukhobors of Canada C.C.U.B. Trust Fund Amendment Act, 2009*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Hon. Mr. Gantfoer:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move that this House do now adjourn.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Government House Leader has moved that this House do adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried. This House now stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow morning.

[The Assembly adjourned at 16:57.]



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