



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

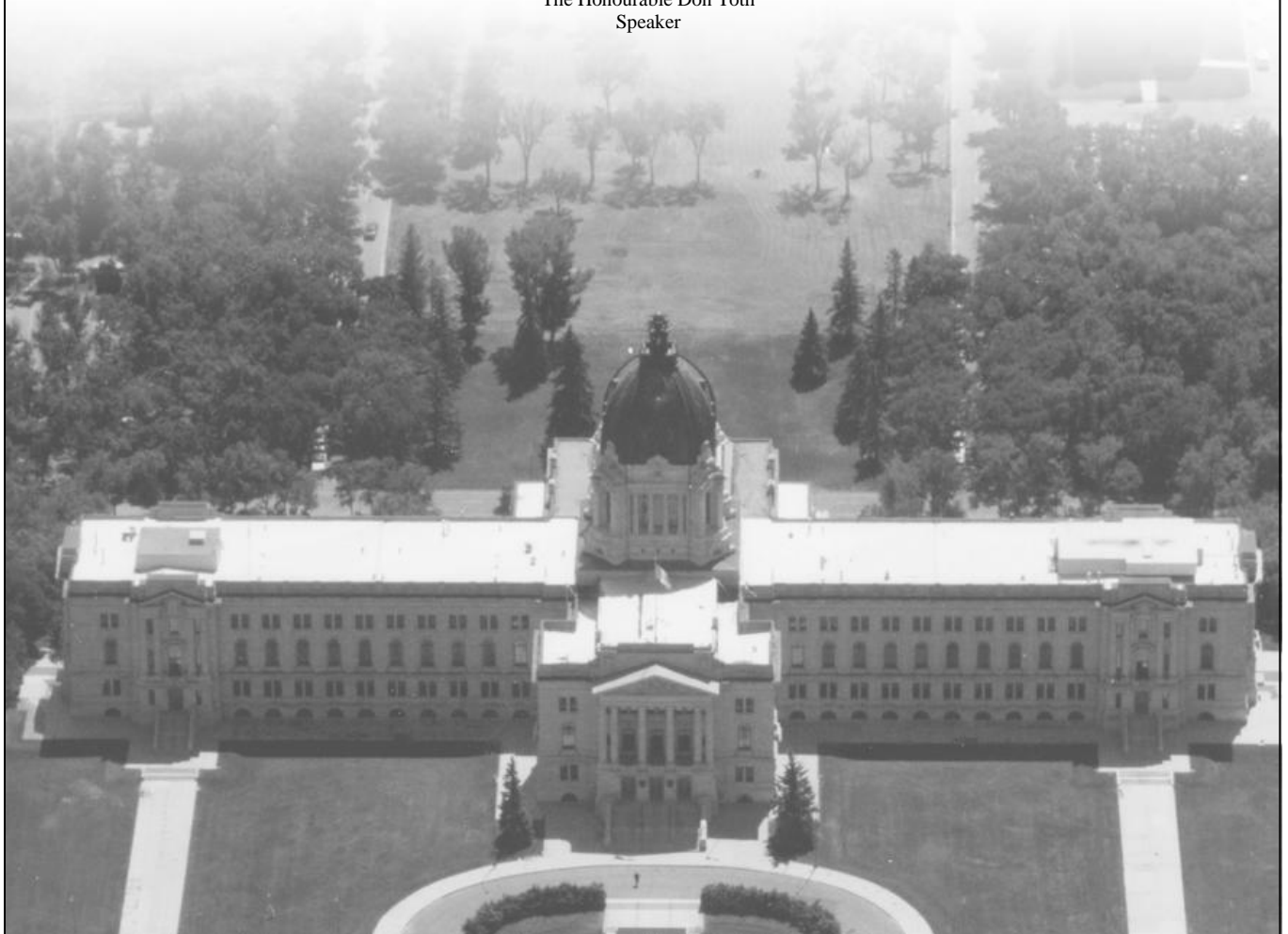
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Don Toth
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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

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

[The Assembly resumed at 19:00.]

EVENING SITTING
GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 132 — *The Wildlife Habitat Protection (Land Designation) Amendment Act, 2009*
(continued)

The Deputy Speaker: — The House now resumes. I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Before the dinner break, we were discussing a number of Bills and got a little carried away and didn't realize how close to the clock I was running, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is a number of my colleagues who would wish to speak to this Bill, and there are a number of issues that we have to do further investigation into and look at the implications of the Bill as it touches a number of areas across the province.

So at this time, I would adjourn debate.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for Moose Jaw Wakamow has adjourned debate of Bill No. 132 — *The Wildlife Habitat Protection (Land Designation) Amendment Act, 2009*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 101

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 101 — *The Credit Union Amendment Act, 2009 (No. 2)*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And it's my pleasure to weigh in and debate discussion of Bill 101, *The Credit Union Amendment Act, 2009*. I don't know if there's an institution or an organization from the co-operative spirit that reflects our social and economic fabric in Saskatchewan more wholly or more significantly than credit unions within Saskatchewan. And so it's my great honour to speak here today about legislation as it relates to credit unions and how they're governed, how they're legislated, how they operate. And it's pointing to that great history that these organizations and these institutions have played within our province that we need to ensure and keep a mind on the important role that these institutions, these co-operative organizations will play into the

future.

You know, as we look across our province's history, when farmers and farm families couldn't rely on the big banks, it was the credit unions that were able to step up and to serve the needs of communities. And in fact it's the story of Saskatchewan in many ways when we look back to the collapse, the market collapse of 1929 that gave rise to some challenges here in Saskatchewan. Of course subsequent to that, there was the drought that occurred that caused great pains for Saskatchewan producers and families. And in our homesteading state that Saskatchewan was, of small farms, that was a huge challenge for Saskatchewan people — a story, of course, that's ingrained in each of us as we move forward and sort of a shared experience unique to Saskatchewan.

But not only was there drought, Mr. Deputy Speaker, within the land as it affected agriculture. There was a drought in lending as a result of the market crashes. And what we recognized was that the big banks, all centred for the most part out of eastern Canada, quit lending and the economic calamity was exacerbated by this fact.

Had the credit unions not been in place to be able to take up this space — this lending — the economic calamity that was the stock market crash, the drought, the depression of the '30s would have been far more trying than what it was already. And there was huge growth and opportunities for which credit unions were able to fill that role. When eastern banks quit lending and sort of pulled out some of the supports that they offered, it was our local credit unions and our organizations that delivered to Saskatchewan families.

You know, and I look to the member from Melville who's listening in, and of course my family at that time was actually homesteading in around Melville. And I know at that point in time the reliance on the credit unions to be able to access the credit needed, the cash needed to be able to put forward basics for running the farm operation, the fuel, the machinery, the inputs, the seed . . . But even beyond that, Mr. Speaker, there was families that were relying on our credit unions for food, for money for groceries, Mr. Speaker.

And they've played an incredibly important role, and I would argue that they've played, as many institutions do, a vital part of our history, and it's important that they play a vital part of the future. There'll be different roles, Mr. Speaker, but we need to make sure that legislation that's put out allows them to play that relevant and important role that they have in Saskatchewan's economic and social fabric.

I think it's worthwhile to talk a little bit about just the innovation in technology that has been driven in this province by Saskatchewan's credit unions, its many, many, many credit unions. And I think that we can look to some of the technological innovations when companies such as CDSL [Consumer Digital Subscriber Line] here in Saskatchewan, here in Regina, created technologies that in fact advanced the first ATM [automated teller machine], and I think many Saskatchewan people wouldn't be aware of that. Secondly, they should be rightfully proud to look at the world of e-commerce and how that's developed worldwide to know that that was born

right here on the Prairies, right here in Saskatchewan and out of, in fact, innovations that have been supported by the credit union movement.

And certainly now, CDSL of course played an important role. I believe now they're part of . . . have been amalgamated or purchased by CGI and still have a presence here in this province, but that's an incredible story of innovation technology homegrown on the Prairies by Saskatchewan individuals, Mr. Speaker. And I know many of these individuals, and I won't cite them at this point in time to embarrass them, but these are leaders within our community, Mr. Speaker.

And it hasn't just stopped there. In recent times here, we've seen some of the new chip technologies for member cards that Conexus Credit Union has introduced, and this has been another display in a short time frame of the kind of innovation and technology that's been driven and born on the Prairies, here in Saskatchewan, led by Saskatchewan people and led within our credit unions.

So we've had these credit unions that have played such a vital role for families, for farmers, at times where credit had dried up and at the time where their crops had dried up as well. And now we see it into our knowledge-based economy, when we talk about the innovation agenda and the technology, what that means for our economy moving forward and world-wide. We can be incredibly proud with the evolution of credit unions in Saskatchewan.

You know, we would never as well want to ever dismiss the absolutely huge economic impact that credit unions have on Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan communities, and Saskatchewan's way of life. And I can point to . . . of course this number has dwindled over many years through amalgamation and through this process, but even at this point we still have well over 60 credit unions in Saskatchewan and that's impressive. And each one of these credit unions of course represent in many ways a specific community. Now we're moving a little bit away from this, going to a bit of a larger amalgamated credit union base with still strong local presence of course within the province.

But many of these credit unions have served their communities so incredibly well because of the local governance structures that were in place that allowed them to serve communities' needs, in understanding the unique and dynamic differences in our vast province. And I think they're really something that, when we look at Saskatchewan and our thriving private sector which is something we're all so proud of, we should be also just as proud of that strong co-operative organization that exists, that in many ways has ensured the success of our province.

And we can look and think of, as it's changed — even the landscape of Saskatchewan, the physical structure — and the role credit unions have played in providing the resources to be able to see hoteliers develop in all sorts of communities, see the commerce develop, and see lending that has really changed our landscape. And many, many physical structures today and yesterday and 50 and 80 years ago were lent from credit unions.

And it's still a thing of pride when you go out to various communities — whether that be in Moosomin or Fort

Qu'Appelle or wherever, and you sit, and use Moosomin for an example — where they're looking at some of the development of the hotel there. And of course it's a thing of pride to the credit union that they were able to supply that project with its financing, and I think that it is something that we should all be proud of, Mr. Speaker.

The economic impact also speaks for itself. We talk about the fact that in a province of 1 million people that we have 500,000 members of credit unions in this province. When you think about the employment aspect, we have 3,600 employees — more than that — within this province that are of course playing vital roles within their communities, distributed across Saskatchewan, small communities and large, rural and urban, and that are paying taxes, buying their goods, raising their families within all these communities. And I believe right now the assets of the credit unions are beyond \$12 billion here in Saskatchewan, so we're not talking about a small entity of any sort.

And of course they distribute proportionately their lending. And it also provides a bit of a snapshot of the importance of that lending because it represents the activity of where those dollars are flowing and, in many cases, vital resources to industries and to our economy as a whole. And to break that down, we can look at the almost \$2 billion in lending that relates to agriculture, something that we should be proud of and something that certainly serves our community and our implement dealers and our seed dealers and our chemical dealers — such a very important purpose here in our province, \$2.4 billion in commercial lending.

And of course it's so exciting — in the span of, you know, particularly this last decade — to see the kind of development that's occurred in this province and much of that being commercial. And it's inspiring to realize that the institutions that, in my case, that my grandfather and great grandfather worked to be good stewards of and leaders within still play a vital role here today in our modern Saskatchewan.

So when we look at credit unions, we need to look at the social fabric, the social impact that they've offered, the change to the physical landscape, and the economic impact. Specifically from a social stewardship or a community goodwill aspect, we know that when we go to our events across this province, one of the most recognized name on the placards is the sponsor of the local credit union. And they've supported communities in being able to provide recreational facilities, local culture and arts, and programs that are vital to communities.

Much of that, Mr. Speaker, I believe comes from the strong local governance and their ability to understand the needs of local community, something that we should all recognize and something that I'm sure that we do, but sometimes you have to step back and realize these things just don't happen by chance. And we need to make sure an institution such as our credit unions are as strong moving forward, as is relevant moving forward, as they have been to our history, and I'm confident that we, as legislators, will strive to ensure that that's the case.

We should never look past the impact of the fact that people are actually able to keep their money here in relative ways within our own province. And I think it's important, you know, we

speak often with great pride — and rightfully so — about the good regulation on the banking industry. And as we've looked at this most recent economic calamity worldwide, nations from around the world have looked to Canada and its regulations and its structures, its governance over its banking system, something that we should rightfully be proud of, Mr. Speaker.

But the big banks and the regulation goes beyond that here in Saskatchewan where our credit unions also play an incredibly vital role. So it's a proud day when we see Canada's banking system and the protections and securities that have been put in place being highlighted in forums such as the G20. But we should never be shy, Mr. Speaker, to also point and tell the story unique to Saskatchewan, unique to credit unions because they have been incredibly resilient. We need to ensure that legislation ensures that they will be into the future, that they'll be as secure into the future, and learning the lesson of other countries, through their banking systems, to make sure we always, always make sure that Saskatchewan and Canadian residents have the confidence and the security in their banking system.

So it's through that lens that we need to make sure we understand this legislation, that we analyze it. It's through that lens that we need to make sure that we've done our due diligence as government and opposition MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] in making sure that the kind of discussion and dialogue has included a discussion of potentially unintended consequences of this legislation and making sure that we very clearly delineated and highlighted the impact of all of the changes that are here. So it's with that that we study the actual purpose of some of the legislative changes, but then we also have to make sure we understand what the effect of the legislative changes are.

And we do know that at times the current government has struggled significantly in understanding that — the consequences of legislation. And we want to make sure we get something like this right, Mr. Speaker, because these are organizations that have been vital to our past, and they will be vital to our future as well.

You know there's provisions in the Bill around services and coercive tied selling which appear to be similar to the previous Bill or the existing provisions. But upon closer inspection, Mr. Speaker, the insertion of a phrase, I quote, "a group of products or services" may give credit unions greater scope to offer other financial services such as insurance, and this has traditionally been prohibited in Saskatchewan.

[19:15]

And I think what we need to do at this point in time, if this is a consequence of this Bill, is that we need to understand and consider the potential ramifications of these provisions for consumers and for other financial service providers in this province before rushing to judgment on this Bill.

It's incredibly important that we understand because there's new phrasing that's been placed into here. We see words and with emphasis being placed on product. We need to understand we know what that means specifically. What does this allow for? And what's going to be the impact? How does that affect

the current landscape, the current individuals and businesses in Saskatchewan? We need to know this before we can proceed, and that's certainly some of the questions that we're going to be seeking both from government and from industry and from individuals.

Further we need to understand exactly what the word that's been added here, I believe, as it relates to affiliates. We need to understand what that means because, on this front, credit unions have a substantial interest, but so do Saskatchewan people and businesses, and we just fully need to understand what those consequences are, Mr. Speaker. To date we haven't had the information that would allow us to understand these fully.

The opposition New Democrats always, always practise very thorough oversight, very thorough scrutiny, and very thorough understanding of what a legislative change, what that impact might be because sometimes a Bill might be well intended enough — and this one quite rightfully could be — but we need to make sure we always understand as well what the other impacts and consequences are, as I say, for Saskatchewan people, and on an institution that, I think I've wanted to make sure I've highlighted, have played such a vital role in our province.

There's provisions in this Bill as well as it relates to creating processes for handling disputes between credit unions and their members. And of course we spoke of the 500,000 credit union members in Saskatchewan. That's a real thing of pride, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm not sure if you're a credit union member or not, Mr. Deputy Speaker — and you're not offering me any signals here right now — but certainly I would assume that at least over half, if not probably a greater proportion, of the members sitting in this Assembly would be members. And certainly that's reflective of the general population.

But we do need to make sure we understand how these new dispute resolution mechanisms . . . What does this mean? How is it going to operate? And it specifically relates to the termination of membership. It's certainly appropriate that credit unions be involved in this process, absolutely, but at the same time it's important for people to have access to an independent process in the form of a registrar that serves Saskatchewan people well. Now I think that there's an ability to marry these two concepts and to maintain balance. We need to make sure that the new provisions in this Bill allow for that, Mr. Speaker.

In closing on this, Mr. Speaker, I can say that, you know, just to wrap up, the credit union system, the co-operative organizations in this province have played such a vital role to our history. They, in the same way but in different ways, are going to play an incredibly important role into the future, and we need to make sure that the kind of legislation that we put forward doesn't impede that and that in fact it allows them to be relevant in our modern environment. They have played such an important role in transforming our physical landscape, the structures, the buildings that are in the end fixtures within our communities and buildings that we look to. Many of those buildings, the money was borrowed from credit unions.

And of course we've talked about the important and vital role that credit unions have played and do play as it relates to agriculture, the historical place that they have, and their role as

economic drivers. The economic outcomes that come out of credit unions with over 3,600 employees is significant, with over \$12 billion worth of assets in this province is huge, and never, ever to dismiss the role of these in developing socially as well because proper lending to families and to entrepreneurs, to small business is vital in a strong and healthy and progressive economy. It's also important to the well-being of individuals. And of course the community and social stewardship that these institutions, these credit unions have played in our past has been huge. We know that it will be into the future as well.

This opposition is going to continue to consult with our stakeholders, continue to ask the questions that aren't answered, continue to make sure that credit unions are empowered to be as meaningful into the future as they have been in our past. And I know many of our members will be wanting to speak to this piece of legislation. We'll also be having many questions of the government of which aren't answered at this point in time. But at this point in time, I will adjourn debate on this Bill, Bill 101, *The Credit Union Amendment Act, 2009* for further debate at another time.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Regina Rosemont has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 101, *The Credit Union Amendment Act, 2009*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 103

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 103** — *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Professional Discipline) Amendment Act, 2009* be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Furger: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure this evening to enter into debate on Bill 103, the miscellaneous statutes professional discipline Act. Now essentially what the Act does is allows an organization to pursue disciplinary action against a person who was in a profession but leaves a profession and is found out to have committed some sort of misdemeanour against the . . . well against somebody, anyway, and perhaps within the organization.

So what it means is effectively that the organization that's represented is able to provide some sort of sanctions against that person. For up to a period of two years, they can commence an action against that person after a resignation.

So what happened in Bill 103 is that it affects 40 self-regulated groups around the province. And I'll list those groups after, interestingly, who's in and who's out. And we'll certainly be asking questions at some point in terms of how the decisions were made to include one group and disclude another.

Now a situation that might exist, where a person is wronged by somebody who's part of a profession and is interested in

sanctions against the person who committed the wrong who then would choose to leave the profession in some manner to avoid a sanction. You can understand how it would be very frustrating for an individual who's been wronged when the person that committed the wrong can simply resign from the profession to avoid any disciplinary action.

So certainly we're largely in favour of many aspects of the Bill. And when they brought forward similar legislation but was limited — only judges — one of the members from the NDP [New Democratic Party] basically called for exactly this Act. So it's interesting because professional organizations in Saskatchewan play a very important role in society for a number of reasons. They are essentially the keepers of their own profession, whether it's the SMA [Saskatchewan Medical Association] or any other body like that.

And so it's in their own best interest as a professional group to ensure that the highest standards are met by the professionals within that group. Different professional organizations will provide mentoring and support of people who are new to the profession. But one of the other very important roles of a professional organization is to provide discipline to their own members. And if you look at the College of Physicians and Surgeons, they will be a body that will investigate and defend the professionals in their group, and so they play an important role in discipline.

Now whenever legislation is brought forward, it's incumbent upon the government and the opposition to look at who exactly has been consulted in conjunction with the legislation. We have found on numerous occasions from the pony Act, the Bills 5 and 6, the Bill 80, that one of the large flaws in legislation with the Saskatchewan Party government is that they refuse to consult with nearly anybody in respect to their legislation.

So we certainly have some major concerns about who might have been consulted, considering the very large number of groups represented or affected directly by the legislation. As I had mentioned, there are 40 groups directly affected, and what's just as interesting as the number of groups that are affected are the number of groups that are left out. I'll get to that a little later.

Now this government has brought forward or supported TILMA [Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement] in many different forums because the Premier on one occasion said that they wouldn't sign on to TILMA. They ran to British Columbia and changed the name, and then they signed on so that he wouldn't break his promise, but effectively it's TILMA. Now one of the things that TILMA allows, that is interesting with respect to Bill 103, is it allows movement of professionals inter-jurisdictionally across the country. It enables a standardization of rules and procedures that would affect any profession so that if you are certified in one province, you're certified in all. And so TILMA enables people to move inter-jurisdictionally rather easily.

And so you have to ask yourself, when you introduce Bill 103 that affects some of 40 different professional organizations, what exactly can be done to ensure interprovincial standards for each of these groups? Because one thing that has been learned, at least recently, is that it's been allowed that a professional will

quit whatever discipline they were engaged in in one jurisdiction and effectively escape any sanction and then are able to move to another jurisdiction in Canada and practise the same profession. And so we would go to see something in this legislation that decreases the possibility that that will happen. And I don't see that in any of the Bill, as far as I've read it. So we'd like to see something considered, especially in light of the ease of mobility of professionals in Saskatchewan.

And so when you've got a TILMA-like agreement signed onto by a government and you bring forward legislation such as Bill 103, you have to ask, are we duplicating something, or does this legislation already exist in another jurisdiction where it's seen success? And then you ask yourself, well who's included in that jurisdiction and who isn't?

And so in order to strengthen legislation here and anywhere else, it's important to look at other jurisdictions and how they're doing things. And so I think that it's incumbent upon the government in this case to look at where else this legislation exists in order to strengthen their own.

[19:30]

Now one thing that seems to be unclear in reference to this legislation is what sanctions are able to be meted out. So you've got somebody in a profession who commits a wrong. They choose to quit, but two years less a day later there are sanctions; there's an investigation launched to determine what the wrong is. And in some cases — in most cases, it wouldn't be taxpayers' money that's being spent — but in some cases, I'm sure out of the 40 groups, it would be. And so you have to ask yourself, is there a possible outcome after the investigation takes place?

So if you have somebody who is in an organization, a professional organization, who commits a wrong, resigns to avoid any type of sanction, and they effectively become a private citizen and aren't interested in practising that profession any more, and then within two years less a day you launch an investigation. And after the findings come back, it's determined that there was indeed a wrong committed, but since the person has left the profession, there are no sanctions available to that organization, professional organization.

So you have to ask yourself how effective the legislation will be. And are we essentially creating legislation that has no teeth, where somebody could do what was done before and the only difference is now we can investigate and determine wrongdoing after they've quit, but you still can't mete out the appropriate sanction? And so I think that's an important question in relation to Bill 103.

Now I'd like to, if I could, talk about the groups that are encompassed by the legislation, and for the benefit of the folks who are affected or who think they might be affected and who are watching at home, I'll go through the list. It's agrologists. It's architects. It's assessment appraisers. It's Canadian Information Processing Society of Saskatchewan. It's certified general accountants. It's certified management accountants. It's certified management consultants. It's chartered accountants. It's chiropractors. It's community planning professions. It's dental disciplines. It's dieticians. It's engineering and

geoscience professions. It's forestry professions although they are becoming an endangered species in Saskatchewan. There might not be any left to provide sanctions against, the way the Saskatchewan Party government treats the forestry industry in Saskatchewan.

It's funeral and cremation services. It's interior designers. It's land surveyors and professional surveyors. It's League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents. It's LPNs [licensed practical nurse]. It's management accountants. It's medical lab technologists. It's medical radiation technologists. It's midwives, occupational therapists, ophthalmic dispensers, optometrists, paramedics, physical therapists, podiatrists, psychologists, registered music teachers, registered nurses, registered psychiatric nurses, respiratory therapists, rural municipality administrators, science technologists and technicians, social workers, speech language pathologists and audiologists, and urban municipal administrators.

Notably in that list you will note that for some reason the list doesn't include teachers. More interestingly than that is the exception of the police service of Saskatchewan. Now the people engaged in the police profession are by and large a tremendous group of folks who do no wrong. You could say the same thing about politicians in Saskatchewan, but it's been the occasion in Saskatchewan's history that it happens. And so what's interesting is, with three members of the police service on their side, why police aren't included on this list.

It's interesting to note that dieticians and agrologists and rural municipal administrators are included, but folks engaged in the police service aren't. And so we'll be asking these questions and many more in committee when this Bill is sent there.

And so with that, I move to adjourn debate on Bill 103.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Prince Albert Northcote has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 103, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Professional Discipline) Amendment Act, 2009*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 108

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Harrison that **Bill No. 108** — *The Cities Amendment Act, 2009* be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And it's my pleasure to join debate and discussion here tonight as it relates to Bill 108, *The Cities Amendment Act, 2009*. And it's always a pleasure to enter into debate to ensure that the purpose and the objective of legislation that's been put forward is clear but then to also ensure that the effect of that legislation, the consequences of that legislation, are the intended ones that are desired.

And to do that, Mr. Speaker, of course we're always engaging our wide group of stakeholders across the community, the broad community, asking questions, seeking questions from government, and bringing forward the kind of transparency and questions that Saskatchewan people so deserve to have as it relates to laws that in the end govern our cities, our institutions, or individuals themselves.

In this case, it would appear the legislation reduces the provincial's role in approving street closures in certain municipalities in the case of provincial highways that travel through cities. And certainly on face value, this would seem to make a lot of sense. It would seem to be very reasonable in principle, and I certainly think that we need to consider the specific provisions of this piece of legislation very carefully. But at first blush and with the thoughtful consultation that we will embark on on this piece of legislation throughout the various stages of this Bill . . . and we need to ensure that it in fact is reasonable, but not just reasonable, that's it's practicable and that it serves both municipalities, towns, cities, and people well in the end, Mr. Speaker.

On that note, I think it's fair to say that we have huge faith and huge trust and huge confidence and huge pride in the governance of our municipalities within Saskatchewan, urban and rural. And it's something that, in many ways, I believe, it's something that we can all be very proud of. And we each come from different places within the province. But we can point to strong governance, and whether that be our rural municipalities, Mr. Speaker, who do such a good job of the services that they are responsible for, the scope of their responsibility, and being accountable in a very, very close way to the taxpayer . . . has served Saskatchewan very well.

And the governance structures are something that sometimes I hear members opposite talk about . . . are cumbersome. And then we see them sort of try to shove school boards out of the way and take away their autonomy.

But when we look at municipalities, as we do with school boards, Mr. Speaker, we think that local governance is good government. And it's not perfect, and it's not always incredibly efficient to deal with many levels of government, Mr. Speaker. But we know when you're elected in a regional fashion for a very specific purpose, it has served Saskatchewan well in its development for many, many years, Mr. Speaker. We would urge the government to make sure they're always recognizing that and that in legislative changes they do as well.

So we're proud of the governance of our cities, of our towns, of our rural municipalities, Mr. Speaker. But further than that, we're very proud of the administration of those entities — of those cities, of those towns, of those rural municipalities. And in some ways, the capacity we have in this province as it relates to administration of municipalities is huge, Mr. Speaker. And you can walk into RM [rural municipality] office after RM office in this province, Mr. Speaker, and expect to meet competent, strong administration that delivers those programs and services that are vital to local taxpayers.

So it's on that note, when I talk about good governance and strong administration, that we have faith in being able to work with municipalities in looking at roles such as further roles as it

relates to street closures and looking at ways that the province doesn't duplicate some of that and that some of that responsibility can be abdicated possibly on the provincial end. But we need to make sure that that makes sense. And certainly those questions will continue to be asked in our thorough meetings and consultations, not just in the cities, Mr. Speaker, but across the province.

Another aspect of this piece of legislation relates specifically to the power to seize mobile homes in cases where property taxes have gone unpaid, are in arrears. And there's a concern that the mobile home could then be moved. On the face of this, Mr. Speaker, as well this certainly doesn't seem to be an unreasonable piece of legislation. And certainly this is one of those pieces, though, that I think specifically we need to make sure we're very clear of the problem that this is the answer to, and the objective of this specific provision. And then we need to make sure that the objective of that provision is being met with the legislative response that's within this Bill and making sure that the proper oversight and scrutiny was provided as this legislation was put together, and certainly affording it the thoughtful deliberation, discussion in consultation that Bills deserve as they proceed through their various stages of reading, Mr. Speaker.

So on the face of it, this aspect as well does not seem unreasonable, but we need time to consider this proposal further as well, and we need to ensure that it's applied fairly, Mr. Speaker. And I think that's the same with any piece of legislation that we're looking at. And as we look at the potential, unintended consequences — hopefully never intended — but making sure that legislation is set up to be applied in a fair manner . . . and it might be the objective . . . I would never believe that the objective would be to have legislation go forward that could be manipulated and applied in unfair ways.

But we need to make sure at this end, when we create laws, when we put forward Bills and we put forward provisions, that those Bills, those provisions in effect have been double-checked and scrutinized and vetted to make sure that in their application, in the practical application of these Bills, that fairness will be ensured and that's there's no ability to exploit any aspect of this or for it to be misunderstood, Mr. Speaker, because we certainly want to make sure that there's not inequitable treatment for mobile home owners as compared with other residential property owners, many of whom are facing some of the similar concerns as it relates to tax arrears or unpaid taxes.

And of course these are certainly big problems for municipalities who rightfully are seeking those dollars for the services that they provide. It's also, you know, in some ways a reflection of . . . because I don't think most people would try to not pay their taxes. I think it's a reflection of a broader theme that we're recognizing across this province, and that is one of cost of living. But I would argue, Mr. Speaker, that's not for the purview of municipalities. So we need to make sure they have the tools to be able to effectively and fairly and efficiently provide the services and collect the taxes that they need.

[19:45]

But for us as provincial legislators, I think there's a huge take-home at this, one that the opposition New Democrats raise

regularly on behalf of Saskatchewan people in all communities in Saskatchewan, and that be the rising cost of living, Mr. Speaker, that is of huge hindrance to the social well-being and economic well-being of many, many families in this province, Mr. Speaker. And we need to make sure we have a mindful eye to that, Mr. Speaker.

When we have a piece of legislation like this that highlights specifically a problem that exists in society . . . And it's not necessarily a completely new problem, unpaid taxes, but certainly we know that problems like unpaid taxes are exacerbated in circumstances where cost-of-living increases haven't kept pace with or have exceeded the revenues in average households.

And this is a real problem, Mr. Speaker, and we hear about it regularly in every community across Saskatchewan. And in fact it's a pretty bold statement, Mr. Speaker. And we have travelled to hundreds of communities — the opposition New Democrats — in the span of the last few months and of course through the last couple years as our role here in opposition. And what we're hearing in every single one of those communities — and again I repeat, every — is that cost of living is a major challenge.

And I think it's important that I highlight “every,” Mr. Speaker, because sometimes members opposite often overlook their own constituencies on this front, Mr. Speaker, and I think that they sometimes believe that this is somehow just an urban problem contained within the larger cities of Regina and Saskatoon. But I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, the issue and challenge is profound in some of our smaller urban centres as well — Swift Current, Estevan, Weyburn, Nipawin, Melfort, Yorkton, right across the board, Mr. Speaker, North Battleford, Lloydminster. But it doesn't stop there, Mr. Speaker. We're talking about some of our smaller towns within this province, Mr. Speaker, where we're sitting in meetings and we're hearing about the cost of living. It's a major, major challenge.

And when we're talking about a piece of legislation that in the end provides tools to collect taxes for which families aren't paying, what I would make sure, I want to make clear, Mr. Speaker, is that we also recognize the broader problem. That's not necessarily for municipalities to respond to because they don't have the resources, Mr. Speaker. I do think that it's always important when municipalities — and most do — take a mindful approach of ways they can partner and ways that they can be mindful of cost of living and these aspects, affordable housing and whatnot, but these are roles for the province, Mr. Speaker.

So while this seems to be a very reasonable piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, as it relates to the seizure of property, we need to make sure what that process means and to make sure that it's treating people fairly, making sure that Saskatchewan people have the peace of mind and the rights and the dignity and the personal space, socially and economically, that allowed them a productive life in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

As I look at some of the other aspects of this Bill, it also speaks of annexation. And annexation for a number of cities and their neighbouring RMs have run into some challenges with this process. And I would never believe, Mr. Speaker, that this is a process that would ever take any level of adversity and

challenge or take all adversity and challenge out of it. I don't believe there's a system that would allow that to happen because when you're talking about land development and whose land is it and compensation and services and who will provide those and for what costs and historical territory, these are things — and property — these are things that people and communities take great ownership of, Mr. Speaker.

So I would never suggest that there's a way that the province could simply make a process that takes away the adversity and challenge that exists. But I do believe, do believe that a better process exists than what we have here today, Mr. Speaker, one that puts huge challenges on neighbouring municipalities whether that be the rural municipalities, Mr. Speaker, who in many times are feeling encroached upon by their growing, sprawling urban neighbours or whether that be even the challenges that relate to those urban municipalities, Mr. Speaker.

And we hear these concerns raised at the annual conventions of these organizations, the representation when we meet with the mayors and councils at SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association], and they're certainly not in an adversarial way with the rural municipalities, but they're looking for a process. And I know when we go and we meet with SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] . . . And tomorrow I look forward to going and meeting with the rural municipalities that are in Regina for their annual convention. We welcome them to Saskatchewan. They play such a vital, vital role — SARM itself — in representing those rural municipalities but also those rural municipalities themselves in delivering the programs and services in a very accountable way back to the local ratepayers.

And when we go to SARM, I know that we will certainly be hearing some of the challenges from their end as it relates to annexation. And I don't necessarily say that there's simple changes to be made, Mr. Speaker, but I don't think it's the simple changes that are the worthwhile ones, Mr. Speaker. I don't think that good public policy is always easy, Mr. Speaker. I think when you're looking . . . about good public policy and looking at the kind of mechanisms that can make processes like this better, I think in fact you're dealing with terrain where you really need strong leadership, where you need strong consultation, and where you need a bringing together of really good minds.

I'm confident of the ability and the people that exist within the province to provide that consultation. I'm not confident in any way on any front, financially or other, Mr. Speaker, with the Sask Party government who's ham-handed on all these fronts and is always chasing a populist agenda as opposed to moving forward with the kind of meaningful public policy, Mr. Speaker, that's been derived in a format that is going to be conducive and lend itself to providing legislation that achieves the kind of goals that we want.

So I hope that this legislation isn't just some grasping of low hanging fruit, Mr. Speaker, because I do think that when you have an opportunity to look at, say, *The Cities Amendment Act* as this does, and it's opened up . . . there are some bigger opportunities to go in and address some of the real big challenges that exist in the province. And I think that this is

very siloed, this government is very siloed in the way they look at some of these circumstances.

The government is very, very pleased to try to continue the kind of economic growth and development that the previous New Democrats had under way and the upswing of that development. And they like to speak of that message of economic growth that was exemplified by New Democrats, but speak of that often. But at the same time, they seem to have trouble with then understanding its consequences and planning for it. And some of that relates specifically to issues and challenges around annexation specifically, Mr. Speaker. Not simple answers on this front, but leadership is needed. And you can't advance one without thoughtful deliberation and work on the other. And they have impact.

And again I go back to the piece about the cost of living, Mr. Speaker. That is exemplified in a piece of legislation that provides an important tool, that being a remedy for properties that don't pay taxes. We do need to make sure we understand that process as well and make sure it's one that lends itself to being fairly applied. But it speaks to a broader issue in this province. And it speaks very clearly again to a government who sees things in silos and misses the interconnectivity that needs to go on if we're going to go beyond a cheap populist message of simply growth, but one of development and progress for which growth is a vital part of, Mr. Speaker.

The legislation also gives municipalities the authority to request criminal record checks for candidates seeking public office. The government says that voters deserve to have all of the information they need to make an informed decision. We support that principle, Mr. Speaker. We're certainly not opposed to that principle. However the specific changes the government has chosen to make give rise to a whole other set of questions, Mr. Speaker. If we're going to impose and provide this tool to local communities to be able to impose on individuals to provide criminal record checks, should we not be looking at this same procedure provincially, Mr. Speaker?

Is it fair for us to create legislation that says if you want to run as a city councillor or as a reeve or as a mayor that you need to have a criminal record check and have that examined by the people, and to assist them in making their decision, but then we don't ask that of ourselves, Mr. Speaker? On these fronts, Mr. Speaker, I think that we need to be very mindful of not being hypocritical.

So as I say, I think it's a sensible thing to look at, but I think it's backwards. I think that when you make changes like this, you start with yourself. Start with yourself and looking at the processes that govern us. And it's surprising to me that you would advance this upon municipal elected officials and communities but not on provincial officials, not on provincial MLAs, Mr. Speaker. So that's, I think, questions and I think that I would argue that by doing what the Sask Party has done on this, they run a huge risk of being able to be challenged that they've provided a real double standard, Mr. Speaker. And I think that we should be beyond reproach on these fronts, Mr. Speaker.

It's the same thing, I believe, that if a government's going to go in and say, well we're going to . . . We screwed up the budget.

Now we need to find some cost savings, and we're going to constrain certain aspects of a budget such as on health care workers, which this government is trying to make the health care workers pay for their mistake.

Where is the accountability at the highest level of government? If you are going to squeeze wages for one of the lowest paid groups in this province and you are not going to do it for yourself, your own salary, your own office, then I think you've got a huge leadership void there, Mr. Speaker. And I hope it's something this government addresses before budget day, but it doesn't appear at this point that that's something that they're too interested in, Mr. Speaker.

You know, when you open up a question such as criminal records as well . . . It was interesting at one point. It was of great concern to hear that the government was trying to proceed to mandate that criminal record checks would only be required in the North, Mr. Speaker, in the North, Mr. Speaker.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we don't buy that kind of stuff, Mr. Speaker, as opposition New Democrats. We buy equity. We buy fairness. And when you apply something, it needs to be applied across your province and equally to people, just as the same I said, that if you're going to expect that of your mayors and of your Reeves and of your councillors, you better darn well expect that of yourself and your colleagues as MLAs. So I think the cart is ahead of the horse on this front, Mr. Speaker, and certainly it was shameful to hear that there was advancements to have this mandated to northern municipalities but to somehow have free rein in the South.

Mr. Speaker, if you're doing it for the right reasons, you've done your research and it says that that's good public policy and you're advancing that, not for some populist agenda but because it's providing good public policy, then you do it across the board, Mr. Speaker, in a fair treatment of all residents, not just up into the North where you have a very distinct population and a very real possibility of having individuals feel as though they're being treated differently for certain reasons. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to see the government's retreated on that front, but I think that they still have questions as it relates to a double standard and provincial politics.

So when you look at some of these aspects, you always have to look at the . . . basically make sure you've got them in the right order as well and to make sure that what you're doing is in the public interest. And I think that if you're making changes that have implications on individuals in the province, it's far more well received if you can take that own responsibility yourself, Mr. Speaker.

And I guess just on one other aspect here, Mr. Speaker, we're talking about *The Cities Act*, and we talked about different opportunities to evolve and change. We talked about annexation. We've seen a government probably advance a Bill here with kind of the easy stuff, Mr. Speaker, populist agenda, but doesn't bring the real kind of governance and difference that we actually need, Mr. Speaker.

And I guess I look to one other area, and that'd be the joint planning commissions, Mr. Speaker, that exist between neighbouring municipalities — rural and rural, rural and urban.

And these planning commissions of course have been in place for many, many, many years, and they provide equal representation on either side to make sure they understand each other's development plans, to make sure that their development plans in fact are respective of one another's, in some cases complementary to one another's.

I think this is important on many fronts, Mr. Speaker. From a very prudent perspective, from a taxing and service efficiency perspective, Mr. Speaker, RMs and neighbouring RMs and urban municipalities need to understand what kind of development they're having, to make sure we're developing in an orderly way that brings about the maximum types of efficiency, the types of communities that we wish to see develop, that are done in a very even-handed, thoughtful kind of way. And that I think that orderly planning, Mr. Speaker, is something that I believe is very important.

And again this is where you can't look at these things in silos. You can't cheer for growth — not really know how to do it, to be frank, Mr. Speaker — but cheer for the growth that was put in place by a good balanced economy but then deal with all these other aspects and silos such as . . . One of the consequences of growth which can be quite positive, Mr. Speaker, is development within municipalities, rural and urban. These are exciting opportunities, Mr. Speaker, for rural municipalities and for cities, for towns.

[20:00]

But it's important that, as we develop and we look at the borders of these communities, Mr. Speaker, of these municipalities, that the planning is sequenced and understood with one another. And this isn't necessarily expeditious at times, Mr. Speaker, and it certainly takes time. But I believe that, when we're planning communities and the services that they provide, we're planning something that's going to be serving us in 10 years, in 30 years, in 50 years, and 100 years. And if there's a time to get it right, Mr. Speaker, it's in those planning stages. If there's a time to take the capital and the investment and to ensure it returns to us the kind of living environments and communities and efficiencies of services that municipalities and rural municipalities and cities are striving for, that that's achieved.

We don't do that in silos, Mr. Speaker. And I scold the minister for not providing a tool. This could be done even at the regulatory level. But to provide to Saskatchewan communities, to municipalities the ability to ensure that orderly planning is achieved . . . and like I say, it's not always a process that will be free from an adversarial environment. It won't be free from all challenges but, Mr. Speaker, I believe the time, the energy, the thought, the oversight, the scrutiny will serve us well, Mr. Speaker, into many, many generations into the future.

The failure to do so, Mr. Speaker, speaks to sort of that real right wing, scattered, unfettered-type growth that achieves sort of a state that — honestly, Mr. Speaker — I think very few desire. And I'm not looking for overburdened regulation here. What I'm looking at is a meaningful role for municipalities to continue to work together as they have for many years and for the current government to take a leadership role in this front to make sure that, as communities see capital flow in, that their

services that they're providing, the plans that they put forward, reflect one another's understanding of that and, as I said, in many cases complementary.

And it's not just the services. Certainly it's, as well, environmental understandings, environmental impacts, understandings of watersheds, understanding of land usage and best uses for that land. I'm confident, Mr. Speaker, 100 per cent confident, that we have the governance in our rural municipalities, in our urban municipalities, in our towns, in our villages to achieve this in balance with one another. Just the same, I have the same confidence in those administrations to work in the best interests of their communities, their ratepayers, but the province as a whole. And this gets to the whole point of making sure that, as we move forward, we are achieving the most desirable place to live, work, raise a family.

And we have an exceptional opportunity here in this province, Mr. Speaker, and Saskatchewan New Democrats are going to ensure that that kind of oversight is maintained. What we're concerned . . . is right now it would seem that the Sask Party government is abdicating itself of any responsibility on this front, and we see it a bit more of a go-it-alone approach, Mr. Speaker, which might be expedient in the sense of saving a few months in planning, but we don't think it serves our province well as a whole. And I look to stronger leadership from the government on this front.

At this point in time, I've stated some of our concerns, some of the fact that certainly on first blush some of what's put forward seems to be sensible, seems to have a purpose or an objective anyways. But we need to make sure that the objectives are being achieved, that we're not duplicating another piece of legislation or another level of government on some of these aspects, that we aren't creating some consequences that are something that are not desirable, that are a direct consequence of these changes here.

And, Mr. Speaker, I challenge the Sask Party government to quit just simply opening up Bills and picking the low hanging fruit that exists, the stuff that isn't going to have much pushback on either front. But they need to dig deep and work with the exceptional talent we have in our municipalities, in our rural municipalities, in our urban municipalities and to be able to bring about address of the problems that they're seeking solution for.

At this point in time, I will adjourn debate on Bill No. 108, *An Act to amend The Cities Act*. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 108, *The Cities Amendment Act, 2009*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried.

Bill No. 121

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Heppner that **Bill No. 121** — *The Environmental Management and Protection Act, 2009* be now

read a second time.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to join in the debate on Bill No. 121, *The Environmental Management and Protection Act*. And I want to point out, Mr. Speaker, when I listen to my leader speak about the premise of building a successful economy and a successful province, there's a number of cornerstones he identified. And I thought it was very, very important that people of Saskatchewan hear some of what he thought was important and the reason why he chose to be the leader of the NDP.

The three components, of course, is talking about business and private investment and allowing the economy to attract that investment. I think that's something that he is really quite frankly very knowledgeable about and very experienced about.

The other matter he spoke about is also making sure we talked about the unions and the labour movement. And the people that can certainly run the economy and the oil of the economy, economic engine so to speak, was certainly the unions and the working people. He certainly highlighted that particular aspect of what he thought were cornerstones of the economy that Saskatchewan needed.

He also spoke about that private business and the government's role. He spoke about Crown corporations. He spoke about unions, the working people. He spoke about investors. He spoke about all the different avenues that ought to be supported and ought to be certainly acknowledged when you're trying to build an economy.

And one of the things that he also spoke about was a need for environmental regulation and environmental protection, and to point out that the resources are certainly part and parcel of a successful equation for environmental and certainly for economic building for Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, as I look across the way, I look at the whole notion of credibility. And right now I can tell the people of Saskatchewan are fast and very quickly losing any kind of respect that they once may have had. They may have had lingering thoughts of, well maybe we'll give these guys a break to see what they're about. And after their fiasco with the budget, we are now starting to see that they don't have any concept of how to manage the province's finances. They don't have any concept of how to work with the working people, with the unions. Look at Bill 5, Bill 6. You look at Bill 80. All these are meant to hurt the working people.

And, Mr. Speaker, you look at trying to attract investment, and well a lot of investors will not come to a province that is basically broke. So not only are you killing your unions; you're also hurting your working people. You're also trying to debase your resources, and you're also trying to discourage investment. So one after another, you get a big fat F on all three fronts.

And now we're looking at the environmental perspective, Mr. Speaker. How does the environmental perspective work when it comes to this particular government? And I was quite struck by one point raised in some of our discussions when this

government said, by 2010 we promise to stabilize greenhouse gas emissions. Well we have a news flash. It is now 2010, Mr. Speaker, and there's no stability in our finances. There's no stability in our economic thinking, and there's certainly no stability when it comes to greenhouse gas emissions or action on the environment by that government across the way, Mr. Speaker. Absolutely none.

And as I mentioned the leadership aspect, it's just very apparent to the people of Saskatchewan that the confidence that they've had — lingering confidence that they had — and the hope that there'll be some environmental movement from that government, they quickly dashed it, Mr. Speaker, because obviously with this Bill 121 there is no action on the environment. Quite frankly, there's been never any actions in environment for the past number of months that that minister and that party have been in charge, Mr. Speaker.

Let me tell you what I think is really important that people ought to know. And I can remember the point that they raised is, they said we will implement the NDP's target for greenhouse gas emissions. The reductions of those emissions are pretty darn important. So that party across the way said we will copycat what the NDP promised, Mr. Speaker. They said we'll copycat. We'll follow that lead of the NDP to see what we can do to address the greenhouse gas emission problem that Saskatchewan's had.

And not only did they try to follow our leadership, Mr. Speaker; they then found out that they couldn't do it. They couldn't do it. They said, oh no we better not do that. We can't follow that leadership, so what we'll do is we'll say well now we can't. So first of all you establish this goal, and then you say oh well maybe we can't. Maybe we'll follow the NDP's plan. Then you turn around and say, well we can't follow the NDP's plan as well.

So now we're back to square one. So what do we do? What do we do? And now they're saying, now they're saying, now they're saying, we'll just rag the puck — as the Premier put it — when it comes to environmental protection and to reduce those greenhouse gases, Mr. Speaker. And I want to point out on Bill 121, for that member's information, Mr. Speaker, on that point, on that point, Mr. Speaker, as they talk about looking at the environmental challenges that the province of Saskatchewan face, they are really, really coming from an angle where credibility is not their strongest suit, Mr. Speaker, whether it's on the economy, whether it's managing our finances and now building a step towards what people are talking about to protect the environment, to protect the environment. That's what their language is over there.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the plan, quite frankly, the plan, quite frankly, is . . . [inaudible] . . . and look. People are asking for leadership on the protection of the environment. They're asking for a leadership from that government. They're asking for standards. They're asking for targets. They're asking for a lot of things to see if this government is serious about protection of the environment. And what we tell them is they're so busy fighting the unions. They're so bloody busy trying to clean up their fiscal mess. They're so bloody busy trying to attract new investment . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I would ask the member to be mindful of the language he uses in the Assembly.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I apologize for the phrase bloody, and I won't use it in the future.

But they don't have no plans whatsoever to deal with the environment. And, Mr. Speaker, looking at the convention this weekend . . . Well I wouldn't call it a convention. I'd call it a staff barbecue. But the convention itself where you set the tone at the staff barbecue, where you set the tone. There is not one resolution to deal with the environment — not one, not one. And the people of Saskatchewan are saying, well why are you guys talking about the environment when you don't have one resolution to deal with the issues?

You got to get with the program, you guys. You got a news flash. You're the government. You're the government, so set the tone, set the motions, set the action and direction. And why don't you for once follow through on what you say you're going to do on the environment? And I look at this document, Mr. Speaker. No targets, no reduction. We're going to turn to industry. We're going to turn to industry to see if they can help us in that regard.

Well, Mr. Speaker, you've got to have a strong government because last time you guys went to industry, they told you they're going to have — what? — \$3 billion in potash? Oh no, it wasn't 3 billion. It was 1.9 billion. Then it went down to 100 million. Then it went down to zero. Now it's minus 202 million or 204 million. What's a couple million here and there?

So, Mr. Speaker, I guess the message on the environmental front is that if you're going to, if you need leadership on that, then what you guys ought to do is provide it or get out of the way and we will provide it, Mr. Speaker. That's the important message when it comes to environmental protection. The government has to provide the leadership. It has to provide that leadership, and you guys are failing on every count when it comes to environmental protection, every count, Mr. Speaker.

[20:15]

Now what I can't understand on Bill 121, you know, the people are asking about standards. What are the standards under your Bill? And so far, no answers. Who is going to help to implement those standards? Who's going to monitor, make sure these standards are there? Well we hope to have a relationship with industry. That's fine to have a relationship, nothing wrong with that, but don't you need staff as well to monitor the water? Don't you need staff to monitor the air? Don't you need staff to monitor how our forests are doing? Don't you need staff for that? So the question we have is, show us the money. Where is the money to hire all these people to follow these standards that you talk about under the environmental protection?

Now I look at this, and I noticed from some of the discussion, the minister talked about engaging the FSIN [Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations] and the Métis Nation on his environmental regulations and see how they can add to it. But at the same time, they're asking for advice on environmental protection which they're not serious about, that government over there. In the meantime, they're ignoring First Nations and

Métis people under the duty to consult, as they issue permit after permit after permit.

And not one bit of discussion or consultation to the Métis Nation, but they're putting rules and regulations in. Hey come on, let's come on to the tent; we'll talk about what's important on this particular front. So, Mr. Speaker, as you issue permit after permit after permit to different companies without the duty to consult, the people of the First Nations communities and the Métis communities, they know that you guys are just playing with them. They know exactly what your game plan is. And once again, as you issue permit after permit after permit, the duty to consult means nothing to you guys.

So I would say to the Métis Nation, to the FSIN, under their so-called environmental plan with no clear guidelines, no targets, and no standards and no way to implement those standards and to police them, why would you engage them in this process when you're ignoring them on a bigger front and that's on the duty to consult?

So, Mr. Speaker, allow me to say that on the environmental front, you're not providing leadership. You are just simply using the people that want to take this issue and matter seriously. You're using them for something that you're not . . . don't have any resources nor political will to implement. So why put Bills like this forward? For what? For what reason? And that's why I say to you today, the people of Saskatchewan are quickly finding out that you're the great pretenders of government. You don't know how to do it, step off the way, Mr. Speaker.

Now the other point that I think is important is that we're asking for leadership. And you guys promised that; you promised to do something on the environment. That was your promise. We'll do this. And, Mr. Speaker, they broke that promise. They broke that promise. They promised to be fiscally accountable. They broke that promise. They promised they wouldn't bring in the whole notion of back to work. They broke that promise. So whether it's the economy or whether it's the finances, whether it's the unions or whether it's Bill 80 or whether it's the environment, they've broken every province that they found convenient to do so, Mr. Speaker. And once again on the environmental front, another promise broken.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let's take a recap of what I think is really important. The people of Saskatchewan and the world is saying to all of us, our environment is radically changing. It is radically changing. And the one point that I made in this Assembly was I hate that word adapting to environmental change because it almost insinuates that we can't reverse what is going on with our atmosphere, with our environment, almost like we are giving up. And that language is being used by many governments: adapting. I think we ought to address it, Mr. Speaker. And not only is this government not even accepting the word adapt; they're not doing a thing about the challenges that we face on the environment.

Now as the minister gets up and as the forest in northern Saskatchewan is burning and as our water resources are dwindling, she's going to come along and say, oh we're going to do a consultation with industry, and that's going to be such a wonderful exercise. So as the forests are burning up and the

rivers are drying up and our greenhouse gas emissions go up and as you continue paying the potash company money you owe them, people are going to say, well what's up with that?

So that's why when you bring forward your strategy through Bills to deal with a political promise you had no intentions of ever filling, people are seeing right through that. This opposition is seeing right through it, Mr. Speaker. So the minister, as I look at the minister, we're telling them, look, don't pussyfoot around. These are real, serious issues. You should engage, engage the public in a very thorough and a very comprehensive and a very powerful position to get them all engaged in this whole notion of meeting the challenge of our environment. You ought to do that. You ought to do that.

And Mr. Speaker, they talk about this so-called new air management system. Now that's a good one — air management system — sounds almost like an aviation company. Mr. Speaker, what is that? What is an air management system? Is that the same thing as your potash price analysis? Is that the same thing as your duty to consult when it comes to the First Nations, this fancy terminology that you use to confuse people?

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think what's got to happen, is you guys have to wake up. You've got to wake up because what happens is . . . from our side, from the opposition side, we asked you to do one thing when we handed you a booming economy and three billion bucks or two and a half billion bucks in the bank. Everybody was working. Things were moving. The workers were protected. Things were moving along. We asked you to do one thing: please don't mess it up. That's what we said. Please don't mess it up.

So we came along, and us in the NDP [New Democratic Party] circles say, well we're pretty sure they will make the same mistake that Grant Devine did. But, Mr. Speaker, it's worse, is right. At least Grant Devine even had a couple of balanced budgets before he started going haywire there, Mr. Speaker, and built some buildings. And I go back to my leader's comment, the Conservatives of the '80s went broke at least building things. These guys are going broke just talking about it, Mr. Speaker, and that's worse. That's worse.

Now what I'm trying to figure out, what I'm trying to figure out is let's look at the environmental point. You guys are going broke just talking about environmental reductions that are non-existent.

Now I'm just trying to figure out, Mr. Speaker, again I go back to this, to the whole point of what did the NDP do about this, Mr. Speaker. What did the NDP do? They put some targets that people could look at and measure against. As tough and as risky as that was, we put targets down, Mr. Speaker. What did the NDP do about this, Mr. Speaker? They worked with industry. And a good example of that is the northern mine sites, the abandoned mine sites. We worked with industry and the federal government and put \$30 million into reclamation of old uranium mines and other smaller gold mines. And we worked with the federal government and industry, and they've come along, and they've done a lot of things, Mr. Speaker.

What happened? We worked with the Watershed Authority to make sure our water source was taken care of, was protected,

Mr. Speaker. We looked at how we were able to man up and to build up a system for forest fire fighting. We worked with a number of industries to make sure that not only did we protect our environment, but we absolutely made sure that they had the place that they could thrive in terms of bringing their business forward.

We always thought, we always believed that balance was the most important word when it came to the economy, and it came to the environment, Mr. Speaker. The balance is something that's really, really important. And what we see, what we see is that they don't have balance on the environmental front. They don't have balance on their budgetary front. And, Mr. Speaker, they don't have balance in their commitment to the people of Saskatchewan on many of these things that they brought forward in the last election. So I think you guys are way out of whack when it comes to balance.

So I think one of the most important things, one of the most important things is that when you talk about working with the companies . . . And companies want to be responsible. Companies want to be responsible. They said — and we believe it to be the truth — that we want to make sure that we come to Saskatchewan; we take the resource base that belongs to all the people of Saskatchewan. We create an economy with it. We create jobs. We pay royalties on it. And after we leave — whether it's 20, 30, 40, 50 years, for as long as they're here — that they decommission those sites. And all companies took the responsible position saying, yes we will set aside money to make sure that we take care of the environment long after we're gone.

And, Mr. Speaker, what these guys have done with this particular Bill, this so-called government, they have turned around and said, oh we're going to just go to a different system. We're not going to set targets; we're going to consult. And, Mr. Speaker, there is absolutely nothing here under Bill 101. . . oh I'm sorry, under the Bill 121.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think the point that people are talking about is that the greenhouse issue, folks across the way, the greenhouse issue has got to be dealt with. It's got to be dealt with. We're hearing time and time again that not only do we need protection of our air, of our soil, of our water, and of our forests. People are saying we need to protect that; that's something that's very, very valuable.

And you guys come along and you say, okay we're fine; we have this air management system, air management system. Wow, that's a nice exchange for the greenhouse gas reduction targets that we had, you know, because it's all connected, you guys. It's all connected. The big thing that's important is that people don't understand that when it comes to the environment, it is all connected, and we are connected.

And if you guys can't do anything and if you can't provide solid leadership, get out of the way. That's my point. Get out of the way. We'll show you how it's done and that it can be done. It could be done. Absolutely it could be done.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I was hoping that the minister would be able to talk to the Crown Investments minister and to the agricultural minister, kind of have a team approach, you know. Don't be

talking to the Finance minister because, based on his plan, we'll all be in trouble. But in terms of the co-operative approach, you should talk to them because there might be a really neat idea and a really neat concept. When you look at the Crowns as an example, they might be able to help you reduce those greenhouse gas emissions. They might be able to help you. They're part of our Crown corporations. And I go back to my leader's comment when he talks about business and government Crown corporations establishing a new regime of opportunity when it comes to addressing climate change.

Go talk to SaskPower. They have a \$15 billion spending plan to try and green how we generate our power — to green up, if you will. Why don't you talk to them? Why won't you talk to them? And they would give you an opportunity, \$15 billion environmental deficit or a \$15 billion green opportunity.

And, Mr. Speaker, what we see from this Bill, the inaction, and the lack of leadership from that government and that minister is that we're quickly heading towards a \$15 billion environmental deficit based on what they have been not doing and what they have been ignoring, Mr. Speaker.

Now I point out the fact that the Crown corporations can provide an excellent opportunity. The business community, industry, they can really add to finding a solution to what ails the environmental part of our province. You can't simply ignore it. And if you think the people of Saskatchewan are ever going to forget your promise to reduce greenhouse gases, they are not. You made that promise and you broke it.

And the next thing you tried to fall back on is you wanted to follow the NDP plan. And we tried our darndest to make sure we had that balance, and he said, oh we can't even do that. We can't even do that. And now we're left with this air management system that the minister keeps talking about in this particular Bill 121. And, Mr. Speaker, people throughout Saskatchewan are asking. They're going to start demanding action on the environment. And so far they have not seen nothing, and Bill 121 is very similar to that.

Now what I think happened, what I think happens out there is . . . because you've got to have that environmental conscience throughout government. And what happened is this minister put forward a few little details of how she wanted to do this whole environmental movement, and she got slapped back in line by the Minister of Resources. You got slapped back in line by the Minister of Agriculture. You got slapped back in line by the minister of Crowns and by the Premier.

We are not going to do something as silly as protecting the environment is what they said. When it comes to a quick buck, right now we need a quick buck. We need money in a bank right now. And I'm sorry; when it comes to the environment or getting money from the resource base, guess what? We're going to get the quick buck, and that's exactly what this Bill is all about, Mr. Speaker.

[20:30]

And the people throughout the environmental movement are just generally very upset, to put it mildly, that there has been no action, no leadership by this minister on many fronts.

This Bill 121 really isn't worth the paper it's written on because it isn't doing anything to address the whole issue of climate change.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me point out as well . . . And I find this amazing that the minister wants to try and connect with industry, which is a good idea, but she's just using industry as well as the focus to shift away from her and her government and say, okay you guys, it's your responsibility to look after the environment, not government . . . [inaudible] . . . governments have a big role to play. And why do they have a big role to play?

Because I had the opportunity to speak to a number of commercial fishermen from Dillon this past week and what happened to them was they had a couple of COs [conservation officer] come after them. These COs basically charged them with overfishing, and I think it was in one week they confiscated or they took away well over \$10,000 from several commercial fishermen in Dillon. And what is that for, Mr. Speaker? That was for their claim that they're overfishing. Ten thousand bucks from a commercial fishing, two or three families, that's an incredible amount of money in one week. And all of a sudden you've got these COs after these commercial fishermen. And in the meantime, the Alberta oil sands are dumping whacks of . . . just a total amount of greenhouse gas in our backyard and acid rain as well. And what does the minister do? Oh we're not, we're not going to establish emission targets.

Why aren't you guys getting your COs to start concentrating on the real damage caused in the northern Saskatchewan environment instead of picking on commercial fishermen who are just trying to make a living, Mr. Speaker? Why don't you do that, something more tangible, something more realistic, and something that the people of Saskatchewan want?

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the minister today, will she give that money back to those commercial fishermen that lost their income from that livelihood? Well will she do that?

The Speaker: — Order. Order. The member is not to be drawing into debate the minister directly. The member is supposed to be directing his comments through the Chair.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I'm going to ask the minister if she has enough resources — to the Chair — if she has enough resources to send COs after the commercial fishermen of Dillon, Saskatchewan and not COs to go and address the oil and gas industry in Fort McMurray, Alberta to stop putting acid rain in our northern forest. Will she do that? That was the question that I had, Mr. Speaker.

And this Bill 121 does not in any way, shape, or form do any of those things, Mr. Speaker. She doesn't hold anybody accountable for the massive amount of environmental damage being done to our northern forest. But to go after commercial fishermen and to pick on commercial fishing industry, well that's where she's spending her time and all the resources that she has, Mr. Speaker. And I think that's just unfair, Mr. Speaker.

So in the meantime as you're consulting with FSIN, as you're

consulting with the Métis Nation on this whole notion of trying to protect the environment — this Bill that doesn't do anything — maybe don't mention the duty to consult stuff. That's pretty darn important to the First Nations, to the Métis people. Don't talk about environmental protection of the northern traditional lands. That's pretty important to them too. Don't talk about protecting the commercial fishing industry. That's pretty important to them too. Let's just say we're going to consult with you guys on trying to set targets when it comes to environmental protection, Mr. Speaker.

And I just think this whole notion, as the Premier mentioned, to rag the puck on addressing climate change, I think that's really patently indicative of what this government refuses to do and yet what they promised the people of Saskatchewan to do.

So, Mr. Speaker, come next election I'm telling every Saskatchewan Party person that give these guys the opportunity at the ballot box, they rag the puck on them, Mr. Speaker. They rag the puck, and they stay home and don't vote for a government that's not only going to break their promise on accountability on the financial front but to do nothing on climate change and to do nothing to address the challenge of climate change. And every single aspect of Saskatchewan life — whether it's rural Saskatchewan, urban Saskatchewan, Aboriginal Saskatchewan, northern, western — we're all asking the government to provide leadership on meeting environmental challenges, and this government is not doing anything about it, Mr. Speaker, and that's a shame.

I go back to the vision and the importance of the four cornerstones that our leader spoke about, and that's attracting business. That is certainly working with the unions and working people to make sure that we have a strong balance between the environment and the economy, and above all else, to have a government is willing to show solid leadership on the environmental front and on many other fronts, Mr. Speaker. And I've seen nothing on any of those four fronts to build a successful economy — nothing, nothing, nothing, and nothing on all four fronts, Mr. Speaker.

Now I go back to the whole notion of the Bill 121. And this government's been in power now going on to three years. And I mention the fact that I look at the notion of . . . We left them two and a half billion dollars, so they use that money to pay down the debt. We left them a whole whack of environmental leadership opportunities — nothing on that front. And yet today when they overestimated potash from \$3 billion surplus to a \$204 million deficit, the Premier gets around and he says, oh it's you guys' fault. We're following your, we're following your regulations. Most people on this side, they try to . . . They burst out laughing. They can sure take the money we left them, but any problems with the potash industry, it's all our fault again.

So, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan, you can't insult their intelligence with that. They know exactly what's going on. They're very, very intelligent people, and that's why I think next time, next time, Mr. Speaker, I think the people of Saskatchewan are going to rag the puck like you guys are on the environmental front. They're going to rag the puck, and you're going to feel that. And we're just pointing out to a lot of folks that yes, the chance was given for this government to be a

government, but quite frankly I think the people of Saskatchewan have seen enough, and they don't want you guys any more. They don't want you guys to be their government any more, Mr. Speaker.

So I think the point is, the point is you may not like the message, but you ought not to be making promises on the environmental front if you have no intention of keeping them. That's my point. If you have no intention of keeping them, then don't make those promises, Mr. Speaker, and that's all this is. Bill 121 is another promise broken, another promise broken because the promise was never meant to be kept to begin with. And if you don't think people have memories, let me assure you, they have memories.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity of going through Big River many times coming to work, and I often sit down and I talk to the people of Big River. And the people of Big River are absolutely upset. They are not very happy.

I understand that they're going to have a new Rona store. I understand that they have a subdivision going, and they're pretty happy with some of the opportunities that they've developed on their own.

An Hon. Member: — One little problem.

Mr. Belanger: — But one little problem, that's right, one little problem. Mr. Speaker, they had a mill. And a few of the RM folks tell me, well you know, when you guys were in power, we were worried about losing our mill. So we were just really worried that the NDP would take away the mill. And what they said is, we started voting with that fear because we were told that the mill might be shutting down under the NDP.

Well the mill is still physically there, and there's opportunities to look at the forestry sector because it will come back. Everybody knows in Big River the cyclical nature of forestry. It'll come back, and they'll get another opportunity. The only problem is they got the mill physically there, but these guys gave away their wood supply. And I said, well hold it. How does that work? How does that work? How does that work for Big River people? And I'm not going to mention names, but I met with a number of the local leaders there. Just for their purpose and for their protection, I'm not going to mention their names. But for the Minister of the Environment to give up forestry rights attached to a mill and without consulting the people of Big River, without doing anything to show respect to the people at Big River, there's going to be a price to pay for that.

There's going to be a price to pay for that because, again, is that your idea of consultation on the forestry front? Is that your idea of consultation on the forestry front? You go into towns that they're not going to make no change to our forest management practice, which is part of the environmental portfolio. And before we tell you what's going on, we're not going to make any decision anywhere, couple of days later, make a decision in a different town.

And the people of Big River are, quite frankly, very, very upset. And these are the people that reached out to that government and that party, and you turned your backs on them. You turned

your backs on Big River as you've turned your backs on the fishermen from Dillon, as you turned your back to many people that thought you were serious about the environmental challenges that we face in the province. They thought you were serious, and here all it was, was a simple thing . . . is to grab power, is to get elected.

And, Mr. Speaker, the people in the opposition look at this Bill 121, and we've never bought into any of your promises. And that's why today on Bill 121 we are not supporting this Bill in any way, shape, or form, Mr. Speaker, because it isn't worth the paper it's written on. You guys have made a decision. You made a decision that affects Big River and a very dramatically adverse effect, and the people of Big River are going to pay you back.

You've made a terrible decision on choosing between fighting commercial fishing industry as opposed to taking on the oil and gas sector of Alberta. You have not reached out to the industry as you should, to work with them respectfully, and that's going to pay you back. You haven't reached out to the First Nations and Métis community on duty to consult and protecting the northern lands. You've said, well we've consulted you on this Bill. Again the Bill doesn't do anything. Why would you want to consult people on that? They want to consult on a number of issues that affect the environment, and, Mr. Speaker, you've failed them at that as well.

So how in the world do you think that the opposition's going to react to some of these points that you guys are raising when you bring forward Bills like this? Mr. Speaker, we don't buy any of it. We don't buy any of it. And I tell every group and every organization throughout Saskatchewan that may be listening to this, is to tell the Sask Party we've seen what you are. We've seen what you've done, and we've seen what you failed at. And we don't want any more of that. That kind of leadership ought to be exactly where it is, and it's back in opposition.

And, Mr. Speaker, when you sit back and look at some of the challenges that were addressed under the NDP, many were addressed. Some weren't. Some weren't, no question there.

But the problem is, when you make promises to Big River, when you make promises to address climate change, when you make promises to Prince Albert, when you make promises to hundreds of families impacted by forestry throughout the forestry belt, here's a really big news flash for you guys. You ought to keep those promises. You ought to keep them because if you don't there will be a price to pay.

And, Mr. Speaker, that price is coming up in the next 18 months, Mr. Speaker. It's going to come up in the next 18 months with the people of Saskatchewan when the people all along the forestry fringe say, that's enough of these guys. We give them the opportunity and they messed up on many fronts.

And that's why, Mr. Speaker, I entered the discussion on Bill 121, talking about our leader's vision about the economy. What makes a successful economy? Very simple. You attract business, and you certainly want to make sure you protect your workers, and that involves unions. You want to make sure you're taking care of the environment which is really important, and that builds an economy. It's very basic building blocks that

he explained to you guys, and you still don't get it.

So, Mr. Speaker, I looked at it with some great interest. And I'd seen some of their ads on TV — no mention of the deficit, no mention of the lack of duty to consult under the First Nations or Métis, nothing on protecting the environment.

And what do they do, Mr. Speaker? They attack our leader. And I'll tell you, if I was the vice-president of a company that had many dealings with different countries and my only sin was living in Calgary, I'll tell you, that's not very much to compared to what these guys have failed Saskatchewan on. Nothing wrong with being a world traveller, nothing wrong with understanding business, nothing wrong with understanding Aboriginal people. And if that's the best you got to attack our leader, Mr. Speaker, then that isn't much. That isn't much.

So the message, quite frankly, whether it comes to the management of our money, you get a big fat F, F minus. You were at F because you guys were basically at zero. Then we found out you owed 204 million bucks, and now it's F minus.

You know, on the environmental front you failed on every other issue that First Nations, Métis, or people like Big River or communities like Big River were hoping that you would do something on. Another F minus.

Working with the business people and trying to make sure that they're able to work in relative comfort and to make sure they understood the rules and they could make a profit, something that we think is a great idea — you've failed on that front. And now we look at all the other issues that you've failed miserably on. That includes labour and unions. Mr. Speaker, I think it's time that people of Saskatchewan get up and say, about this Bill 121 or any Bill that this party brings forward, people are going to say no. We're going to say no to you guys. And that message will resonate.

[20:45]

And we are still waiting, we're still waiting for the budget. And we noticed, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of unhappy faces over there. There's not the energy and enthusiasm they once had here when they had \$2.5 billion that we left then. All of a sudden the money's gone; the deficit is here. Oh my goodness, what are we going to do? Well I know what we'll do. We'll throw up this environmental protection Bill and we'll throw in things like air management systems. That might get people to deflect.

Oh I know what's even better idea. We'll wrap ourselves around the Saskatchewan Roughrider flag. And, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, not only have they made a mess of the Saskatchewan Roughriders, they've lost a number of good players because of you guys. And they lost the Grey Cup because of you guys — a pox on them from you guys cheering them on.

We told you, leave well enough alone. Please don't mess up it any further. And to the people of Saskatchewan, on the economic front, on the fiscal competence front, on the labour union front, and now on the environmental front, it is time to get rid of these guys. It is time to get rid of these guys, Mr. Speaker.

Because at the rate, at the rate that they're breaking promises and at the rate they're messing things up, after 2011 I don't think the NDP want to clean up another mess, Mr. Speaker. We don't want to clean up another mess.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think what's important to the people of Saskatchewan is, well we tried them. They were just a huge failure but we're going to rag the puck when it comes to voting for them. But we're going to come out in good numbers for the NDP where the leadership has always been, Mr. Speaker.

So on that front, I want to adjourn the debate on Bill 121, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The member from Athabasca has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 121. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried.

Bill No. 102

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 102 — *The Personal Property Security Amendment Act, 2009*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to enter the debate on *An Act to amend The Personal Property Security Act, 1993*, Bill No. 102. Now this Act is going to be supposedly updating the language in the current Act for a number of reasons, and I just wanted to look at some of those.

So under the Act, the minister says that it currently contains language that's outdated and that the new Act should include language that's consistent with the terminology used in Saskatchewan personal property registry. So, Mr. Speaker, of course that's not something that anybody would want to oppose, in terms of making sure that things are more streamlined and that language is updated to reflect the current situation as it is today.

Now the minister also claims that the legislation may be useful for businesses who operate in the province as it will alleviate some of the conflict between laws of multiple provinces. And if that's the case, that's also something that we would like to applaud.

Now the Act was originally designed to deal with local jurisdiction and local protection and to ensure that the rights for property owners are not lost under those situations. Now the Act is also supposed to ensure that there are similar laws for all provinces and that it makes it easier then for the situation of purchasing goods from one province and bringing them to another and making sure that those rights and protections for the citizens of the province are not somehow compromised or lost under the Act.

Now I'm told by a very learned colleague from Regina Lakeview that the personal property Act was first enshrined as it was directly related to the hardship of the '30s, where properties were being seized in the 1930s and this was to enshrine the issue of ownership for personal property. So I'm certainly going to take the lessons that I've learned from my colleague from Regina Lakeview under advisement and do more research on this in the future as well.

Now there was strong concern for the citizens of the province and the rights and protections of the citizens of the province and, as I said, some of those rights and protections were contract issues that were interprovincial and ensuring that those rights interprovincially were something that were of an equitable basis for the citizens of the province.

So, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to just review something that I was privy to receiving today. And it's a document entitled the *Sask Party Proposed Resolutions 2010 Saskatchewan Party Convention*. So this is actually the resolutions from the Sask Party convention that just recently took place. And it's fairly easy to get through, Mr. Speaker, given that it's only four pages long and one of the pages is, of course, the title page. So, Mr. Speaker, it's not something that took me a great deal of time to read through and review, as I'm sure it didn't take much time for the Sask Party convention to review as well.

That in contrary, if you looked in the context of the NDP conventions of the past, Mr. Speaker, the resolutions packages typically contain about 80 or more resolutions. And needless to say, it takes a fairly lengthy period of time to debate. And it is actual debate, Mr. Speaker; it's not something that's portrayed to the convention members on the floor that they should be moving to a certain position. But it's actual debate; it's democratic debate. Sometimes it's contentious debate, Mr. Speaker. But we in the NDP feel very strongly about the fact that good debate leads to the best ultimate solutions in terms of making sure that we have the right policies moving forward for the people of the province of Saskatchewan.

So we invite that vigorous debate, Mr. Speaker. And quite frankly, I'm going to look forward to engaging in that vigorous debate yet again at the end of March when the NDP holds its convention in Prince Albert. And we will most certainly have the same amount of resolutions if not more, I'm sure, given that we are currently undergoing a policy review within the party. It will be a real convention, real debate. And it will take multiple days, Mr. Speaker, to get through all those resolutions.

So the one resolution is actually printed on two pages. So as I've said, since the document is only four pages long and one of them is a title page and the back page is actually blank, you can tell how many resolutions were actually debated at this convention.

This particular resolution talks about an amendment to enshrine property rights, which is interesting because that's what we're discussing under Bill 102. And some of the whereases describe what the intent of this resolution is about. It says:

WHEREAS the primary duty of any government is to ensure that the rights and freedoms of its people are protected.

So they are fully acknowledging that it is the government's responsibility to ensure that those rights and freedoms are protected and that that's a government responsibility to do so.

The second whereas is:

WHEREAS property and civil rights are provincial jurisdiction under section 92 (13) of the *British North America Act, 1867*; and

WHEREAS the previously enacted *Saskatchewan Bill of Rights of 1947*, now known as the *Saskatchewan Human Rights Code*, is inadequate in that it does not protect property;

So the therefore be it resolved reads as such

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Government of Saskatchewan shall amend the current *Saskatchewan Human Rights Code* to enshrine the individual's Right to own property.

So, Mr. Speaker, one can see that there is a notion that there is some more protections required to ensure that the property of Saskatchewan citizens and the freedoms of Saskatchewan citizens are properly enshrined in legislation, given that it is a government responsibility to do so.

So when one looks a bit further down the page, and it talks about existing Sask Party policy and it talks about the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code, it talks about a "Bill of Rights." And points 5 and 6 in particular caught my attention, because point 5 is "Right to free expression."

So what I'm curious about, Mr. Speaker, is whether they thought about the right to free expression prior to ramming through some legislation last year in 2009, namely Bill 43, where they did exactly the opposite, where they actually removed — removed — the right to free expression potentially, under Bill 43, which limits the ability for people to express themselves and do so in a very public way.

So, Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that this is contradictory that a year later these people, the members, are coming to the Sask Party convention and saying, you know what? We want you as a government to fulfill your responsibility in terms of making sure the rights and freedoms of our citizens in our province are protected. And here is what we want you to do. We want to make sure that the right to free expression is protected.

And yet what did their party, that Sask Party government, what did that Sask Party government do in 2009? They actually shrunk the right to freedom and expression because they introduced . . . they didn't just introduce, they rammed through Bill 43, Mr. Speaker. They rammed it through despite the fact that we had phone calls galore on our side of the House from citizens across the province expressing their deep concern about Bill 43 and how that can be interpreted and how that could be limiting to the notion of freedom of rights and expressions.

We made sure that we expressed those concerns with the Sask Party government opposite. And what did we get from them as a response? Nothing. Matter of fact, even less than nothing.

They mocked us. They mocked us for the concerns that were brought to us by our constituents, by the citizens of this province and said, you know what? We're doing this anyways. We don't care.

Now this expression of, we don't care or we're not going to consult or we're going to consult after the fact seems to be somewhat of an MO [modus operandi] for this government, Mr. Speaker. It seems to be their MO, and it's very disconcerting to the people of this province and it's especially disconcerting to the members opposite in the opposition here who have to listen to these individuals on a day-by-day basis, either breaking promises or we find out information after the fact that they weren't transparent and accountable for to begin with.

And then what do we have to do, Mr. Speaker? We have to say afterwards, why? Instead of saying, what can we do to find the best possible solution, the opposition has to constantly say, why? Why did you do this? Why did you do that? Why didn't you do this? Why didn't you do that, Mr. Speaker. And that is becoming a modus operandi for the Sask Party government.

Now point 6, point 6 is "Right to free association." Well as soon as I read this, I chuckled to myself, Mr. Speaker, I chuckled to myself. And do you know why I chuckled to myself? Because right now this Sask Party government is wanting desperately . . . I mean you can just see how they're salivating at the notion of ramming through Bill 80. They're salivating at the notion of ramming through Bill 80, Mr. Speaker. They are absolutely disregarding any of the concerns that are being brought to them again by the people who are going to be directly affected by Bill 80, so much so as the fact that they're not willing to speak to them when they come to the legislature, they're not willing to meet with them, they're not even willing to talk to the Premier when he sees them out in the public somewhere, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, he won't even speak to them when he just runs into them casually in public. Well he won't meet with them when they make arrangements to come here to the building, so what chance do these people have to ever express their heartfelt concerns about what that Bill will do to their lifestyle, to their families, to the future employees of those crafts? How can they possibly express to this government, to that Premier, to those Sask Party members exactly how it's going to affect them if they refuse to meet with them? And, Mr. Speaker, again, another MO for this government.

If I could tell you the countless calls I get in my constituency office of people telling me that they're blocked when they phone those ministers' offices, that they're actually being blocked or that there's an out-and-out . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Absolutely. There's an out-and-out refusal to meet with them, that their letters are, I mean they're not even being replied to in terms of what the actual content of the letters is. It's basically, you know what? Get lost. Try some other agency like, oh I don't know, the Provincial Ombudsman or something.

[21:00]

It is unbelievably unbelievable how dismissive, how dismissive the Sask Party government is to the very people that they are

supposed to serve. These are the citizens of the province who are bringing them their concerns about the legislation that they want to ram through or bringing them concerns about current existing legislation or bringing them concerns about numerous situations that are going on in the province or going on in their personal lives or going on with their personal situations. And what are they getting? They're being blocked. They're being shut out. They're being blocked. And again another MO for this government.

So you have their membership, the Sask Party membership coming to a convention for the Sask Party saying, listen, we want you to enshrine the right to free expression. We want you to enshrine the right to free association under your obligation as a government of Saskatchewan because they say, "WHEREAS the primary duty of any government is to ensure that the rights and freedoms of its people are protected." And yet their own government members for the party that they belong to as members are not doing that very thing, Mr. Speaker. It's absolutely deplorable.

Now they provide some background information for the resolution. As I said, it's a resolution that takes up two pages of the four page document. And the background information is interesting as well because it talks about, again, the *British North America Act*. And it states, "Property and Civil Rights in the Province." Which they go on to say means that the provincial governments are charged with protecting these rights.

They go on to say, though:

Yet Quebec is the only province that has a *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* that is not a simple anti-discriminatory statute, but a genuine fundamental law largely inspired by international documents.

What's interesting about this, Mr. Speaker, and the reason I wanted to talk about the situation in Quebec, is that it also talks about, they have various points under the Quebec charter of rights and freedoms. And point no. 8 is the one that I want point out. So point no. 8: "No one may enter upon the property of another or take anything therefrom without his express or implied consent."

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm wondering how that meshes with the fact that there's expropriation of land going on right now for the building of highways under the Sask Party government. So I'm wondering how that's all meshing together. I'm not saying that there is, you know, necessarily anything that I have great concerns about, but obviously it raises the notion of the question of how those circumstances are being dealt with, given that they strongly believe that there needs to be changes made to Saskatchewan legislation.

They cite the desires that they have with respect to the right to free expression and right to free association. They cite the fact that the Quebec charter of rights and freedoms has that enshrined in their legislation. And they cite the fact that ultimately it is the primary duty of any government to ensure that the rights and freedoms of its people are protected.

So they are fully, fully, fully acknowledging that this a

responsibility of the Sask Party government, but in the same token the Sask Party government has obviously let these Sask Party members down last year. They abdicated their responsibility last year with Bill 43 when they basically gave away the right to free expression with respect to that Bill and how it can be used and instituted. So it's interesting that we've got this change, Mr. Speaker, in 2010 now, where now they're looking at Bill 102 to potentially enshrine the notion of personal property.

So it also raises the issue, of course, Mr. Speaker, of what is considered to be property that is affixed to land and what is not affixed to land, of course. Because this personal property Act talks about obviously property that is not deemed affixed to land. So I'm curious to see, Mr. Speaker, what the details of the Act will be with respect to, say for instance a grain bin, and whether that would then be considered to be something that is affixed to the land or not. So there are some details to this Act, Mr. Speaker, that require some clarity at this point as well.

So as I've said from the onset, this legislation is ultimately designed to protect consumers, and that we have to be careful that that intent is not lost or diminished through this legislation, Mr. Speaker. And there's going to be a lot of consultations that are done obviously by the opposition members to ensure that the intent of what the legislation is supposed to do remains intact and potentially strengthened, Mr. Speaker.

The other issue, Mr. Speaker, is that this is a piece of legislation that will potentially affect a lot of people with respect to issues between provinces. And as the minister alluded to in his comments, he said:

. . . but many people come in contact with this type of legislation on a frequent basis. It's the personal property security registry that deals with liens on an automobile, if you don't pay a garage bill, or if you finance a new car, or if you lease an automobile. All of those things are dealt with through this legislation and through this registry. So in fact many, if not most, of the citizens of our province have a direct interest in it.

And that's, Mr. Speaker, something that we want to ensure is dealt with very carefully in this legislation. Because of the potential impact on the amount of people that this legislation may have, we want to ensure that the legislation is doing what the minister is talking about in terms of protecting the individuals of Saskatchewan with respect to these issues, but yet not diminishing that protection in any way, shape, or form.

So he goes on to talk about the fact that these changes, ". . . where there is a dispute between parties that crosses provincial or national borders, determining the location of the debtor and the applicable law becomes very difficult." And he says, "These rules will address that concern."

So, Mr. Speaker, obviously anything that would be of assistance to individuals in the province when they're purchasing items from out of the province or purchasing items from out of the country or dealing with potential liens on, for instance a vehicle, or the location for instance as he talked about of a debtor, those are obviously issues that we would be very much in support of with respect to the language of the legislation

strengthening those issues.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to see the fact that the Sask Party government is now looking at the notion of further enshrining potentially the personal property of individuals of the province. Like I said before, I'm very disheartened to see the fact that the Sask Party government went a step backwards, a giant step backwards or numerous steps backwards last year with Bill 43, with some of the issues that they raised in their resolutions at their convention.

But all in all, our caucus is in favour of simplifying government forms and using the Internet for more day-to-day transactions of government. We as the government prior to the Sask Party's election, we were going down this path when we were government. And quite frankly we're glad to see that that is being continued upon, as long as the legislation does what the legislation is designed to do in terms of protecting the individuals of this province.

So on that note, Mr. Speaker, I know that there is much more work to be done by the opposition members doing consultation with people around the province with respect to this legislation. I would encourage the Sask Party government to do so as well. It would be a welcome relief for the Sask Party government to undergo and engage in consultations with individuals around the province before they pass legislation instead of deciding to hold consultations after they've passed legislation, which quite frankly the citizens of this province find farcical and obviously ultimately disrespectful.

So on that note Mr. Speaker, I'm going to take my place and adjourn debate on the personal property Act, Bill No. 102. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The member from Regina Walsh Acres has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 102, *The Personal Property Security Amendment Act, 2009*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried.

Bill No. 109

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Harrison that **Bill No. 109 — *The Municipalities Amendment Act, 2009*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Broten: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure on this Monday evening to enter into the debate on Bill No. 109, *An Act to amend The Municipalities Act and to make related amendments to The Local Government Election Act*, Mr. Speaker.

All members of this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, know of the important and the good work that occurs in municipalities. Municipalities are a level of government where people's lives

are often affected in most direct ways. They have to deal with many of the services, Mr. Speaker, that touch people in how they conduct their business on a daily basis, determine how their households run, determine what sort of additional money they might have in their pocketbook at the end of the month, Mr. Speaker. It's clear that the work of municipalities is very important.

For any of us who have spent some time door knocking in our home areas, in our constituencies either during elections or during summers or off-season when we have a chance to meet with our neighbours, it's clear that the issues that people bring up on the doorstep are often municipal in nature. They don't necessarily know which level of government deals with what service and what issue when you are at the doorstep talking about, introducing yourself and asking for their feedback. As a provincial MLA, that doesn't always matter. Often what you hear are the stories about potholes in the city streets or the garbage collection, all the things that are done at the municipal level, or complaints or questions about municipal taxes as well. So it's clear that where the provincial government has interaction with municipalities on the local level, we need to ensure that the relationship is a smooth one. It's one built on mutual respect, that it's one that allows both levels of government to meet the needs of the citizens in the best possible way.

Sadly, Mr. Speaker, what we have seen in the last two years under the Sask Party government, Mr. Speaker, is I think additional stress put on municipalities and also a general ethos that does not speak to the level of respect that municipalities are entitled to, I believe.

So looking at this piece of legislation, Bill 109, *An Act to Amend the Municipalities Act and to make related amendments to The Local Government Election Act*, those were some of the . . . that was the lens, Mr. Speaker, that I approached this piece of legislation: asking myself, these proposed changes, these proposed amendments, how will they meet the needs of local constituents? How will they ensure that different levels of government deal with one another in a respectful way? How will they ensure that the ability of both levels of government to assist citizens, to help citizens live the best possible lives that they're able to have, how can we ensure that that is in fact done? Do these changes, in fact, facilitate that? Do these changes encourage a greater level of respect between levels of government? And not only respect, Mr. Speaker, but also a greater level of efficiency and an ability to get things done.

In reading the minister's second reading speech in outlining some of his concerns, some of his rationale for bringing forward this piece of legislation, I have had a chance to go through some of the material, Mr. Speaker. And there were some of the opening remarks, Mr. Speaker, where I would like to pay a compliment to the minister. Where the minister said that the changes that are coming forward in these proposed amendments, Mr. Speaker, they were done in consultation with the municipalities. They were done in consultation with politicians at the local level, with the individuals that are in fact facing some of the challenges at the municipal level.

And it's from this consultation that some of these changes have come forward. That's what the minister stated in his second

reading speech, and I think that is a good thing. So when consultation takes place, it is a good thing.

[21:15]

We see many examples, Mr. Speaker, in the Sask Party government's two-year record where consultation has not taken place, and the result has been very negative. The result has been one where individuals have been thrown into confusion, where individuals have become angry, where individuals have been hurt, where individuals have not received the services that they do in fact deserve. When consultation does not occur, the end result is not positive.

I think, Mr. Speaker, to just this afternoon in question period when my colleague, the member from Nutana, was talking about changes to support programs for victims of domestic abuse and how some of these programs were in place, how there were individuals, there are a number of individuals to help women find themselves in this most difficult situation. Without consultation, Mr. Speaker, the government chose to make changes to that program, reduce staffing levels, and as a result, individuals are not being served as well as they ought to be.

So consultation is one example where when consultation does not occur, problems come quickly and they come in a major way.

Mr. Speaker, another example where consultation is so very important is an area of Bill 80. We saw, Mr. Speaker, legislation brought forward without consultation with many of the men and women on the front lines performing the work, allowing for . . . doing the work, allowing for our province to do well. Consultation did not occur, and as a result, the outcome is, I think, a negative one for the province.

Mr. Speaker, one of the best examples we've seen in recent weeks when consultation does not occur and the end result is negative was the trial balloon that was floated by the Minister of Education with respect to educational assistants and the cutting of those positions, Mr. Speaker, where consultation did not occur with many of the families, with many of the students, with many of the EAs [educational assistant] and the teachers working in our school system providing excellent work, excellent care.

Consultation did not occur. The trial balloon went up whether or not this was a good or a bad idea, Mr. Speaker. And I think the sad part of that type of consultation — consultation only through the media, consultation only once a decision is made, consultation only when one is trying to make a political calculation as to what they can pull off — it causes a lot of uncertainty, a lot of unease, a lot of worries, a lot of headaches for the families, for the teachers, for the people in that actual situation.

So when I'm looking at this piece of legislation, Bill 109, if consultation has occurred with municipalities as the minister's second reading speech would suggest, if those remarks are accurate . . . And the member is honourable so I have to believe that there was consultation, and I do. If that is the case, if that is reflective of most people, then perhaps that is a good aspect of this legislation, not debating all of the aspects. Perhaps the

consultation, Mr. Speaker, wasn't as thorough as it ought to be. Perhaps the consultation did not meet every individual that it should have or connect with every individual. Perhaps it was an incomplete picture. And it's also a problem when consultation is incomplete and inaccurate. That is a problem.

We also want consultation, Mr. Speaker, within government as well. I know many members in this Assembly, many people in Saskatchewan wishes that the Minister of Finance, the Premier consulted with his own ministry officials when it came to potash numbers. We'd be in a much better situation if consultation with their ministry officials had actually occurred in a proper way instead of choosing the information that one simply wants to hear.

And I bring up that example, Mr. Speaker, because it has a great deal of relevance when we look at Bill No. 109. If the consultation is only from the people who you want to hear from, it's not true consultation. If consultation is only from those to whom political favours are owed, it's not true consultation. If the consultation is done for strictly partisan reasons and not for the best interests of the entire province, Mr. Speaker, then that is not true consultation.

So it's my sincere hope that the consultation that occurred around Bill 109 was a true consultation, connecting with all the people who need to be heard from, listening to their opinions, listening to their advice, listening to their concerns, and then bringing forward amendments that truly spoke to the changes that were requested or suggested. And that is my hope that I hope occurred with Bill 109.

I know as members of the opposition, as we do continued consultation with people in the province, whether they be at the municipal level, whether they be public citizens, those are the types of questions that we are looking to hear information about because that ensures that there is true consultation, not quasi consultation, not lopsided consultation, not one-sided consultation, but true consultation. And that's the type of consultation that needs to occur in Saskatchewan.

In the minister's remarks at second reading about Bill 109, *An Act to amend The Municipalities Act and to make related amendments to The Local Government Election Act*, the minister divided his comments up into three areas, stating that the changes that were brought forward were addressing the three areas that the ministry, the minister had heard from municipalities were of greatest concern to them. And so I will make some comments, Mr. Speaker, on these three areas. As I said, I hope these three areas are the actual three areas that the minister heard from in his consultation. I hope that these three areas are accurately reflecting the suggestions and the changes that were put forward by individuals through the consultation. And, Mr. Speaker, I hope that it is not a consultation in name alone because that would indeed be a shame.

The first area where Bill 109 speaks to address is the area of third party disputes with roads. As you know, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is a fairly large province. We have an extensive road network. And many of us here rely on this road network, as do the citizens of this province, to get around, to engage in commerce, to pursue education, to visit our loved ones, to simply enjoy our parks, to enjoy the great outdoors, Mr.

Speaker. So the road network is an important one.

So the changes that were put forward in this first area on roads is a mechanism to allow for a more easily resolution of disputes. So there might be situations where a municipality has contracted with someone to provide services in an area to fix a certain piece of road or to provide maintenance in that area.

And this is part of life, Mr. Speaker. Anyone who's dealt with people knows that conflict and differences of opinion and people's recollection of events do vary. So it is expected that there will be disputes and differences of opinion on what contracts or arrangements were set up and put in place in order to ensure the proper maintenance of our road system. But I understand that if the municipalities are saying that we need a faster way to solve some of these disputes, if there can be a faster way to do it in order to ensure that the roads are kept in top-notch condition that commerce can be pursued, that people can receive the education they want, that loved ones can be with their families, that people can get to hospitals in a fast and safe way like they need to, then that's a good thing.

It's also important, Mr. Speaker, to resolve such disputes in a timely manner because the longer disputes carry on, most often the case, the more expensive it becomes for individuals, for municipalities to take care of the issues at the local level. So if there is a dispute with a contractor on a particular issue about how a road was to be maintained, not only, Mr. Speaker, can it be an inconvenience for those wanting to access the road for whatever purpose they are on that road. But it also takes time. It takes money. It's a headache. It's a burden administratively on individuals who already have many things on their plate, as people that work at the municipal level are very busy.

So if this can be done, if the disputes can be resolved, if there can be some type of process that allows this to occur in a timely manner where the issue's resolved, where people can go about their business in a fast and speedy and efficient way, then I think that is a good thing.

So there's the aspect, if a dispute drags on, Mr. Speaker, it certainly causes headaches administratively. It's time that individuals need to spend on the issue that they otherwise could be putting into more important matters. But it also costs money to solve disputes, whether you're going through the court process, whether you're simply spending energy and time on meetings and travel to solve this dispute. That's the type of thing, Mr. Speaker, where if the municipal level of government and the provincial level of government can work together, find a solution that is quick, that is speedy, that is efficient, Mr. Speaker, I would say that's a good thing. And I could understand why municipalities may in fact have requested this type of change.

The changes are important because it can save money. And I say that it's always obviously important to always use financial resources wisely. I know that's a lesson that members on this side of the House know well.

The other side of the House, Mr. Speaker, I'm not so certain that lesson has really sunk in. I'm not quite certain members opposite actually realize the severity of the financial mismanagement that has occurred under their watch. I don't

think that has settled in into their psyche yet based on their actions, based on the rhetoric that still comes forward, based on their behaviour with individuals.

But I think there might be a few of them over there — one or two, three or four — who do understand that it is important to be careful with finances and to, whenever spending decisions are made, to do so in a responsible manner. And I know perhaps it's some of the individuals that have the most contact with individuals at the municipal level of government because they've heard, they've heard about some of the pressures that they are facing at the municipal level.

And while those members on the other side were listening to these individuals, I'm sure a few of them, at least a few of them have heard about the unhappiness that many municipal politicians are experiencing right now due to the broken promise, Mr. Speaker, of members opposite to give a percentage of the PST [provincial sales tax] back to municipalities. And I imagine the few that are plugged in at the local level and are concerned about how we can have pieces of legislation like Bill 109 to make life more efficient for municipalities at the local level, I think maybe a few of them get that. But sadly, Mr. Speaker, I think it's perhaps the members who aren't in cabinet, and that's the real shame. I think it's perhaps, Mr. Speaker, the members who don't have the decision-making authority or power to actually change course, to actually go from a course of financial mismanagement, to go from a course of running huge deficits and gambling with the future prosperity of this province, Mr. Speaker, to abandon that course and to go to a course of responsible fiscal management.

And I think the few people over there that are perhaps hearing that aren't the individuals around the cabinet table, aren't the individuals in charge of the finances — surely not the individual occupying the Premier's office, Mr. Speaker — because if they had that approach, if they had that approach, Mr. Speaker, there is no way they would have allowed us to get into such a situation as we see now, where in fact we are paying potash companies to pull the resources out of the ground instead of the other way around.

And I think that's a concern for all Saskatchewan people. I know it's a concern for me. I know it's a concern for many people, many members of this Assembly, at least on this side of the House, and perhaps one or two over there. But, Mr. Speaker, it's individuals who don't have a loud voice either around the caucus table and certainly the voices that aren't even present at the cabinet table.

And, Mr. Speaker, when individuals were in consultation about Bill 109, when they were listening to municipalities on ways that they could improve the efficiency and the effectiveness of municipalities at the local level, surely, if this change in fact could make life more simple by having a third party mechanism to resolve disputes about differences with contractors on road repairs and construction, if the members opposite were talking to people, they would have heard that the promise, Mr. Speaker, that the Sask Party government made to tie a percentage of the PST, direct that straight to municipalities, Mr. Speaker, that was an important promise.

And the rationale for that promise was that there was a recognition, at least once upon a time when it was convenient during an election, there was a recognition that commodity prices, Mr. Speaker, do have a tendency to go up and down — wild gyrations, I think it was coined at one time, something along those lines. And because of those types of changes, it was seen as important to tie a percentage of the PST, to designate it straight to municipalities so they wouldn't have the question marks, they wouldn't have the huge question marks and uncertainty about what level of funding they would have, and in turn be able to . . . what types of services they would be able to provide to individuals at the local level.

So the very tragic irony, Mr. Speaker, of this broken promise by the Sask Party as they're going out and about doing all this great consultation on Bill 109 about how to make municipalities more efficient, I'm sure, I'm positive they heard from members opposite that it was important to tie a portion of the PST straight to municipal funding in order to clear up some of the uncertainty and to allow municipalities to better deliver services at the local level. Because as I said before, the whole point of consultation, Mr. Speaker, is to hear from people, to recognize what they're saying, and to really integrate the feedback you have into the decisions you're making.

[21:30]

And based on the broken promise, Mr. Speaker, based on the broken promise, to break the promise of delivering a percentage of the PST straight to municipalities, I could see why it might be attractive to put forward this aspect, the first aspect that the minister brought up in Bill 109, this aspect of third party resolution in order to solve differences between a municipality and a contractor. Because I'm not minimizing the importance of that type of change, Mr. Speaker, but it's not as significant a change as was the promise to deliver a percentage of the PST which has been clearly broken by members opposite.

So perhaps this was an easy way . Perhaps they thought this would provide some cover for the broken promise. Perhaps this would be a deflection. Perhaps the strategy around the caucus table and coming out of Executive Council was, well we know we've broken the huge promise on PST, among other promises. We know we've horribly managed the books. We know we're now paying the potash companies, as opposed to the other way around, because of our own inability to do things properly. But, you know, we'll give them a third party source to solve disputes around differences on servicing roads. Perhaps that will appease some of the people for some of the time. Perhaps that will be something we can deflect some attention, some negative attention.

Say, well you know we have broken this huge promise about PST funding or funding from PST to municipalities. We know we've broken that promise. But we know we've broken our promise to be good stewards of the resources in this province. We know we've broken our promise on how to manage the finances properly and to ensure that Saskatchewan is on strong financial footing. We know we've broken our promise not to squander our future prosperity. But you know what? We have given you, or we're putting forward in legislation, the means to solve disputes between a municipality and a road contractor over whether or not certain materials were hauled in the right

way, whether or not the service was . . . whether or not the repairs to a road were done properly.

A colleague close to me said, well that doesn't sound like a very fair trade-off. And I would have to agree with the member, Mr. Speaker. I don't think it's a fair trade-off. I think the trade-off of sound fiscal management is something you don't want to give away. I don't think that's something you want to trade away. But sadly, Mr. Speaker, what we've seen from the Finance minister, what we've seen from the Premier, what we've seen from the members around the cabinet tables, they have traded that off. They have traded away our sound financial footing here in the province. They have traded away the mechanisms to ensure that Saskatchewan people can trust in their government to take care of their best interests.

But, Mr. Speaker, if Bill 109 goes through, municipalities will have a third party mechanism in order to resolve disputes at the local level about roads. So I guess it's something. I don't think it's a fair trade-off. I for one, Mr. Speaker, would rather have good fiscal management. I for one, Mr. Speaker, would rather have good royalties coming from the resource sector. I for one would rather have a type of consultation that is thorough, that is proper, that does not float trial balloons simply on a political basis. But, Mr. Speaker, it's a sad reality.

But if members opposite think individuals in the public are content with trading away fiscal security, proper management of our financial resources for a third party resolution mechanism for disputes between municipalities and contractors over things like the hauling of gravel — important issues; I'm not minimizing the significance of those issues for individuals at the local level — but I don't think it's a fair trade. I don't think it's a . . . It's a horribly lopsided trade. It reminds me of the type of lopsided consultation, Mr. Speaker, that occurs with this government, the type of lopsided consultation that they pursue with only the people who want to hear from them and only the people they want to hear from.

So we know, Mr. Speaker, that dollars at the municipal level are very important. And because they're so important, Mr. Speaker, if there are changes that this Assembly can make at the local level or legislation at this level which can affect the local level in a positive way by providing things like a third party mechanism to resolve disputes between a municipality and a contractor, I won't speak for all of my colleagues, but in principle I think that's an okay thing.

But I have some real question marks, Mr. Speaker, whether it's an appropriate trade-off, whether the sell job that the Sask Party is pursuing on this issue is in fact a good trade-off. Because I think while municipalities, I'm sure many of them truly want legislation that can make life better for them at the local level, I don't know if they're willing to trade away the promise that the members opposite made to have the finances of this province managed in a responsible, in a transparent and true way. To me, not a fair trade-off. It reminds me . . . And I think individuals in the province understand this. They know what's fair, Mr. Speaker.

It reminds me of the one ad that's being played on TV. And this isn't a political ad. I think it's an ad for selling insurance or something like that. But it's the ad about the pony, Mr. Speaker.

And there is the two, two young girls in a room, and the first girl receives something and it really isn't all that impressive. You know, perhaps it's nice, but not the most important thing. Perhaps it's sort of like the third party mechanism to solve disputes between a contractor . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . A wee pony, you know. And ponies have been a topic that have been discussed at great length in this Assembly in recent months, and I will go on record that I am in favour of ponies. I think they're a good aspect of Saskatchewan life.

But then the second girl, the guy brings in a full . . . like a proper pony, a real live pony, the pony of her dreams, the pony that many young children grow up wishing they had. And the first girl says, well that's not fair. I mean, what's the deal? Why does that one get the pony and I'm stuck with this fake pony, I'm stuck with the miniature? And he said, well you didn't ask.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think that's what these, the members opposite, Mr. Speaker, they're pursuing these kind of trade-offs where individuals are being given the mini-pony, they're being given the fake deal. Because they've mismanaged the resources so badly, Mr. Speaker, that it's no longer ponies for everyone; it's only ponies for a few select people. It's only ponies for a few select people who are friends, a few select people who provided the type of consultation feedback the members opposite actually wanted to hear, the type of, the type of relationship, Mr. Speaker, where you give a pony to your friends because you like your friends. You owe them a favour because they did something for you once.

But in terms of being fair, in terms of doing what is best, what is right for the people of Saskatchewan, that's not the plan, that's not the approach the members opposite are taking. They're choosing certain individuals who they've done some consultation with, they've heard the type of feedback that they want to hear. They've had selective hearing and they've chosen to give ponies to those people. But for the other individuals who are just as deserving, there is no pony.

And, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people, I don't know, I can't . . . I can speak for myself and my friends and my family if I've spoken to them. You know, I know people in Saskatchewan, they wanted the resources of this province to be handled in a proper way. The people of this province wanted fiscal management that was responsible, that was forward-looking, not looking for the . . . not looking only at the moment, Mr. Speaker. And Mr. Speaker, they haven't received that. And they are feeling like they are not being treated fairly because they were promised, Mr. Speaker, they were promised responsible government, and they've had the complete opposite, Mr. Speaker.

Members opposite have overpromised and underdelivered, Mr. Speaker. They promised the world. They started to believe their own hype, Mr. Speaker, that the new era had arrived with the Sask Party. But guess what, Mr. Speaker? It was a few new faces but more or less the same people, the same old ideas, the same backwards economic thinking, Mr. Speaker, the same reckless use of our resources, the same cover-up, the same pitting one group against another, the same buying ponies for some and giving miniature ponies, fake ponies to the others, Mr. Speaker. That's the approach that they've taken, Mr. Speaker. That's not the approach that people of Saskatchewan

want.

So, Mr. Speaker, when we look at these three areas, Mr. Speaker, and I've talked about the first area. I've talked about how, in my opinion, it probably is good to have third party disputes . . . Or to have disputes solved by a third party. That's probably a good thing, Mr. Speaker. But it is not a fair trade-off to lose financial management, proper financial management. It's not a fair trade-off to have the reckless use of our resources here in the province. People in Saskatchewan don't want that.

So I've touched on a bit, Mr. Speaker, how it's not . . . how there may be some merit to the first part of the amendments in this legislation. And I would now, Mr. Speaker, like to move on to the second part. And the second part as stated by the Minister of Municipal Affairs during the second reading speech . . .

An Hon. Member: — Who is that?

Mr. Broten: — I don't know. The member opposite asked, who is that minister? We can't use names here, but there was a shuffle, Mr. Speaker, when certain individuals were booted from cabinet and others were brought in. But that's another speech and that's another story, though I would like to get into that one.

An Hon. Member: — Well get in a little bit.

Mr. Broten: — No, I am one to always stay on topic, on topic to Bill 109, *The Municipalities Act*.

The second area, Mr. Speaker, stated by the minister, was an additional tool, as they put it — an interesting word, interesting tool — or another tool to collect taxes on mobile homes. There was recognition in this proposed legislation, Mr. Speaker, these amendments, that there are changes in the municipalities, changes in our cities, changes in our towns and in the countryside with how individuals are living. And as individuals make changes to their homes, and the example in this piece, in the legislation are mobile homes, that it's still important to have a proper tax structure in place on the mobile homes. And these changes, Mr. Speaker, are suggesting that this new tool will make it easier, easier to have the proper tax structure in place on these mobile homes.

And this issue of mobile homes brings forward an important issue for the people of Saskatchewan. Because just as in the first issue about a third party resolution mechanism in order to solve disputes between contractors and municipalities, this issue of changes to the tax structure on mobile homes brings forward the most important issue of housing for people here in Saskatchewan. And the type of tax structures in place on housing — whether it's in a condo or whether it's in a house, whether it's in a mobile home — has a great deal of importance for Saskatchewan people because it ties straight into the issue of affordability. Affordability.

So on the first proposed amendment in this piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, as we saw how the issue of fiscal incompetence by members opposite, the issue of horrible mismanagement of our province's resources and finances, became very clear in the first example.

In this second area, Mr. Speaker, on mobile homes, we see the issue of affordability come into the discussion. Because life under the Sask Party, Mr. Speaker, has become more expensive for individuals. Now again they will get into a shell game. You know, they'll give a little bit here but, Mr. Speaker, when no one's looking, they'll take a whole lot out of the other pocket.

So they might give a small benefit in one area, Mr. Speaker. They might give a change to property taxes — you know, individuals living in mobile homes. They might make a small change that will help them in the \$27 range. I think when the changes were brought in a couple of budgets ago, when the mismanagement was certainly bad but not as horrible as we've seen in recent months, the changes at the property . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well the member opposite says I give them too much credit, that it's been bad all along. And I would agree with him.

But when the changes that first occurred were about \$27, about \$27, Mr. Speaker. I think at the time, some of my colleagues said, well for 27 bucks perhaps I could take, perhaps I could take my wife out for supper one night, maybe to A&W, maybe to A&W. Perhaps we could stop at Tim Hortons and have a Timbit with the \$27 of saving in municipal taxes. And, you know, I guess one night out with my wife, going to A&W, and having some Timbits, perhaps that's okay. Perhaps that's not bad. But when you look at the whole picture, when you see the increases to SaskPower, when you see the increases, Mr. Speaker, to area of tuition, where individuals are paying hundreds and hundreds of dollars more, you know, Mr. Speaker, no longer am I getting the mozza burger. Perhaps I'm only getting one root beer now and . . . Well the Timbits, that's seriously called into question whether or not I could afford the Timbits.

[21:45]

Because, Mr. Speaker, when we've seen the issue of property taxes at the local level — whether it's in a mobile home as presented in Bill 109 or whether it's in a condo or whether it's in a house, Mr. Speaker — the issue of affordability is something that cuts across the province. It cuts across regions. It cuts across cities. It affects people on farms in a major way. We've seen with the recent proposed increases, Mr. Speaker, to SaskPower, how this disproportionately affects rural people in a negative way. We've seen that from members opposite, whether you're a student who once upon a time had a dream of pursuing post-secondary education, but under the Sask Party government that has become more expensive.

Most recently, Mr. Speaker, well we have the issue of EAs as well that was floated by the Minister of Education. If EAs are cut, that's a burden of additional expenses on families once again as they look for other means to provide the supports to their children because the minister chooses to pull those supports away from families.

Mr. Speaker, so we see in all these areas, whether it's SaskPower rates in rural areas, whether it's SaskEnergy bills in the cities, whether it is tuition that students are having to pay . . . Whatever the issues, Mr. Speaker, it's not enough to provide a small, token \$27 reduction or \$13 reduction in one area but then take hundreds, thousands of dollars, Mr. Speaker,

out of their other pocket.

And this is the type of approach we've seen. Again it ties into the fairness aspect of the fake miniature pony and the real pony. It calls into question this government's approach to fairness. It calls into question this government's approach to true consultation, to managing resources properly, and to ensuring that life is affordable for Saskatchewan people because, Mr. Speaker, we have seen the opposite under this Sask Party government. We have seen life for individuals, Mr. Speaker . . . Mr. Speaker, I see that the light is not on. Does this mean I'm cut off, or should I keep going, Mr. Speaker? The clock is rolling? All right, thank you.

Mr. Speaker, so whether it's the issue of fiscal management, proper use of our resources, whether it is affordability, Mr. Speaker, these are the issues that matter to people.

And so when we look at Bill 109 changes, Mr. Speaker, to *The Municipalities Act*, if we, in the amendments brought forward here, deal with the issue of taxation on mobile homes . . . We know, Mr. Speaker, that many people live in mobile homes. And it's a good way to live, a good type of housing for many, many people. And perhaps more people will pursue the option of living in mobile homes, but we have to make sure, Mr. Speaker, that whatever changes are brought forward in 109, that it's done in a responsible way.

So I can see, Mr. Speaker, why municipalities may in fact want to ensure that amendments come forward in order to allow for a proper tax structure on mobile homes because, one, perhaps more people are living in mobile homes. That's one reason why municipalities could think this is a concern for them. But municipalities, Mr. Speaker, are more and more concerned about their bottom line. And that's because, Mr. Speaker, of the approach that we've seen of members opposite, of the Sask Party government, of breaking promises.

So once upon a time, municipalities were promised that they would receive a portion of the PST straight to the provinces so they could plan accordingly. They could have the tax structures in place that mattered, tax structures in place that ensured people could have an affordable way of living. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm not so sure that that is the reality under the Sask Party government because of the broken promises that the members opposite have already done in these two years.

The budget's coming down, Mr. Speaker, on the 24th. I think we're going to see a whole lot of other broken promises. We will see, Mr. Speaker, that the issue of taxation at the municipal level — whether it's on a mobile home, whether it's on a condo, whether it's on a house, Mr. Speaker — matters. And it matters to owners as well as renters, Mr. Speaker, because if the taxes go up at the municipal level for landlords, those expenses, Mr. Speaker, will naturally be passed on to the renters. And we've seen this, Mr. Speaker, in jurisdictions or in cities and towns across the province. We've seen rents, we've seen rents, Mr. Speaker, go way up. And I know, Mr. Speaker, that is a concern for many, many people.

Mr. Speaker, so I've talked tonight . . . I'm not winding down, Mr. Speaker; I'm just doing the midway recap in case my grandma just tuned in tonight at the 10 o'clock hour. We've

talked, Mr. Speaker, about the important work that municipalities do. We've talked about how it is only through proper consultation that a government can have the proper priorities in order to deliver to Saskatchewan people. We talked about how in two short years members opposite have done horrible trade-offs. They've given small pieces of legislative changes, whether it's a proposed change like the one here in the first area of a third party mechanism to solve disputes at the local level, whether it's a \$27 reduction in property taxes but at the same time taking hundreds, thousands of dollars out of the other pocket, Mr. Speaker.

We've talked about, this evening, how there are changes to this, how changes at the local level on property, places like mobile homes, have a real effect on individuals because it ties into the issue of affordability, and life has become more expensive under this Sask Party government.

The third area, Mr. Speaker, I would like to comment on, which the minister made remarks on in his second reading speech, is the area which allows criminal record checks on individuals seeking public office at the municipal level. Again I have to go by the minister's opening remarks in the second reading speech when he said that this change, this request has come through consultation. I hope that is the case because proper and true consultation is always the best way.

But, Mr. Speaker, in the two years of Sask Party track record here, we have seen a whole lot of weak consultation, a whole lot of non-existent consultation, many opportunities, Mr. Speaker, where members opposite have made up policy on the fly, on a cocktail napkin. The Premier has rammed something through. He's made a call on a Saturday afternoon. He's pegged potash numbers at a certain level which just simply aren't realistic. And, Mr. Speaker, we've seen the horrible domino effect that this has throughout the entire budget and through the entire province.

So it's my hope, Mr. Speaker, it's my sincere hope, my honest hope that true and proper consultation took place here, not the type of consultation that has become the so consistent, regular track record of members opposite.

Now I'm not saying, Mr. Speaker, that every member opposite on the other side is engaged in this half-hearted, quasi-type of consultation that produces no real true and accurate results. There are some, Mr. Speaker, who do the true consultation, but, Mr. Speaker, we've seen those individuals booted from cabinet. Mr. Speaker. We've seen these people moved even further back in the benches. Mr. Speaker, these are not the individuals who have a say around the cabinet table who can ensure, who can speak up and tell the Premier that true consultation needs to occur.

So when I get to this third issue, Mr. Speaker, this issue of municipalities having the choice to bring in the option of criminal record checks on individuals seeking public office, it really is my hope the consultation occurred. But as the member from Nutana highlighted this morning on cuts to workers who assist women who are victims of domestic abuse, as we heard this afternoon through a petition about Bill 80, how this was done without proper consultation, as we've heard about in recent weeks with the possibility of EAs being slashed

drastically throughout the province, consultation is not members' opposite strong suit. Consultation is actually a huge weakness. It's a huge broken promise. It's a huge failure of members opposite.

So I hope when the minister says proper consultation occurred, I hope when the minister says this request came by people at the municipal level who want increased transparency, I hope that is in fact the case, Mr. Speaker, because transparency is an important issue. And I know many people . . . Earlier on I gave the story of the two girls. And one gets the real pony and one gets the dud pony, Mr. Speaker. The girl who received the dud pony would want transparency. How did that decision occur? Why is that individual receiving the real deal and I am getting a poor imitation of a pony, Mr. Speaker?

I think some people in Saskatchewan right now are asking themselves, why am I getting a poor imitation of a real government? Why, Mr. Speaker, why do I have a government, Mr. Speaker, that talks the talk about consultation, that talks the talk about proper fiscal management, Mr. Speaker, that talks the talk about not squandering our future prosperity, that talks the talk about listening to Saskatchewan people and doing what's best for everyone in Saskatchewan people, but why, Mr. Speaker, am I being left with a poor imitation of a government that actually does that?

And I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, this is because the government that came in, the Sask Party government, the members opposite, they came in, Mr. Speaker, believing their own hype. The hype was if we simply cheer enough, if we cut enough cakes, if we blow up enough balloons, if we give each other enough high-fives in the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, if we do enough really positive, feel-good things, well you know the new era of prosperity and hope and every other good thing has arrived and everything will just be great, Mr. Speaker. And they actually believed this, Mr. Speaker.

They actually did not realize that, well you know what, Mr. Speaker? Running a proper government, running a province, Mr. Speaker, actually takes discipline. It actually takes proper consultation with people. It actually takes forward thinking. You can't simply, Mr. Speaker, make a call on a Saturday afternoon, peg potash at some pie in the sky, fantasyland budget number, and expect everything to work out just fine, Mr. Speaker

That's not a realistic way of doing business. It's not a realistic way of managing a family. It's not a realistic way of organizing one's individual life. So why on earth, Mr. Speaker, would it be a reasonable way to run a province? I simply do not understand. And I think people in Saskatchewan now are beginning to ask themselves, why do I have this government that pretends that it's something that it isn't? Why do I have this government that pretends it knows what it's doing? Why do I have this government that says one thing . . . On one hand, we'll give you 27 bucks in property tax reduction, which isn't even all that accurate, but we'll take away thousands out of your other pocket, Mr. Speaker. Simply doesn't make sense, simply doesn't hold water with Saskatchewan people.

So when we look at Bill 109, Mr. Speaker, when we look at this issue of increasing . . . Or this possibility of providing criminal

record checks for those seeking municipal government, I see why individuals would call for this at the local level. I think they would call for this at the local level, Mr. Speaker, this type of change to bring in changes at the municipal level to do with allowing criminal record checks of people seeking public office because people want more transparency.

And I think that yearning, that desire for more transparency, Mr. Speaker, a lot of it comes out of their horrible experience with this Sask Party government of two years. A lot of it comes out of their experience of being promised the world, their experience of being promised that the new-found era of hope and prosperity had finally arrived, that the new-found era of balloons every day and cakes to cut every day and reannouncements of reannouncements of reannouncements are great every day. This new-found era, Mr. Speaker, they want to know how did we get to this position.

How did we get to a position, Mr. Speaker, where there were billions in the bank, where the province was doing well — we had a surplus — and we're now in a situation, Mr. Speaker, where we have a deficit, where we're paying the potash companies to pull our resources out of the ground, Mr. Speaker, where members opposite have no real plan. They float ideas here and there like cutting EAs across the province. How did we end up in this state? Members opposite want transparency. They want answers as to why this occurred.

So I can see why, Mr. Speaker, why, looking at Bill 109, why they might call for this type of change where we could have increased transparency at the local level for those who are seeking public office. I could see why individuals might want that change because their experience with members opposite with numbers have not been positive.

And this, Mr. Speaker, calls into question as to the type of faith you can have in the government.

You know, once upon a time the Premier suggested, oh we would have \$1.9 billion in potash revenue. And we actually had the minister, the person you would think would have somewhat of a clue what's going on; the person you would think who might have good access, who should have good access to ministry officials who could provide some honest, frank advice, individuals who you could truly listen to; an individual, Mr. Speaker, who should be tuned into what's happening in the world economy; an individual who should be tuned into what's happening with resources around the world — what's selling, what isn't selling, what areas of the world are doing well — who traditionally buys our resources. But you would think the minister responsible for is it energy, mines, and . . . What's it?

An Hon. Member: — Energy and Resources.

[22:00]

Mr. Broten: — Energy and Resources. You'd think he would have a clue.

And, Mr. Speaker, if you thought the Premier's estimates were bad, if you thought the Premier was totally out to lunch, if you thought the Premier had penned a fantasyland budget on a cocktail napkin on a Saturday afternoon, that's nothing, Mr.

Speaker, compared to what the actual minister said. He said, \$3 billion — not 1.9 — \$3 billion.

So fast forward a few months, Mr. Speaker, and we get to the state, we get to the very puzzling state, Mr. Speaker, where we now have, we now have the Sask Party government — the government who campaigned on being good business-minded people; the government, Mr. Speaker, that campaigned on having good business sense; the government, Mr. Speaker, that led the public to believe that they were plugged in, they were tuned in to the world markets; the government who would go around to events saying that they are so smart that they know exactly what to do. And under this new-found leadership, Mr. Speaker, after the election, they believed that Saskatchewan would be doing better than ever.

Well, Mr. Speaker, from that state — where the Premier had a fantasyland estimate of \$1.9 billion, and then the minister said, oh actually I'm the guy really plugged in and I'm in the know, and it's actually 3 billion — we've gone from that state, Mr. Speaker, to the government, the Sask Party government actually now cutting a cheque for \$200 million to pay back. Something's wrong there, and I think people in Saskatchewan understand that. They know something is wrong with that picture, and that's why they want transparency.

I could see why on Bill 109 they would say, from our elected officials we want increased transparency because our experience, Mr. Speaker, with the Sask Party members has been nothing further from the truth. We've seen a cheque of \$204 million being cut back. We see NSF [not sufficient funds] cheques to a whole range of important initiatives, whether it's the children's hospital in Saskatoon, whether it's the surgical care centres in the province that were supposed to address the fly-by-night promise of reducing surgical wait times that they made — haven't heard very much about that since the Throne Speech was made on the first day — somehow that's been lost in the shuffle, Mr. Speaker.

They're on to a new plan now of cutting EAs and cutting services to Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker. Because, Mr. Speaker, what we see in the members opposite is a government who believed their own hype, believed their own hype as opposed to understanding what it actually takes to run a province in a sustainable and proper way. So, Mr. Speaker, so, Mr. Speaker, I see why individuals would want transparency from their elected officials.

There are certain questions around this proposed change in Bill 109 on this issue of criminal records checks. For example, what are, what determines . . . Is this an even decision? How are the decisions made to ensure this type of check? Right now it's only for convictions. Should other considerations be put in place? What other types of information should perhaps be disclosed? Because people really do have a yearning for the transparency that they simply do not get from the members opposite on a host of issues.

Mr. Speaker, so as I do move to wrap things up on my remarks on Bill 109, I want to . . . I don't think actually say to this . . . So I was going to say reiterate, but it is my first, my first time saying this. I wanted to thank all those working at the municipal level, whether it's an individual who serves in an elected

capacity or whether it's an administrator. Mr. Speaker, these are the individuals who are doing much of the work that affects people so directly at the local level — the individuals who provide the services, provide the structure and make sure our cities and towns and RMs run well and meet the needs of Saskatchewan people.

So if in fact, Mr. Speaker, as the minister suggests, true consultation took place and the minister spoke to these people, not just a few of them, but a proper consultation and not a consultation, Mr. Speaker, that had the Sask Party filter on it where they only hear from the people who they want to hear from — we've sadly seen that far too often on a host of issues — but I hope it was a true consultation, Mr. Speaker. And I know people working at the municipal level, because they care for their towns, because they care for their neighbours, because they care for their families, the type of feedback they would give would in fact be thoughtful feedback. And it would be feedback that would allow for a greater amount of efficiency and effectiveness at the local level.

So if the consultation showed that individuals wanted increased . . . or wanted a third party mechanism to solve disputes, that's a good thing, if that is the result of a true and proper consultation. In my opinion at least — I won't speak for all of my colleagues — I think that's a decent idea.

But if the consultation was like we saw with the EAs, where you float a trial balloon and then you backpedal and backtrack and pretend that the real statements weren't actually made and it was just, you know, a passing thought that somehow was put down on paper and words, spread to many school regions and passed out through the public to the people. If that was the type of consultation, Mr. Speaker, then I would have some concerns about supporting this notion of the third party mechanism because I couldn't fully trust that it's what people want on the ground. Because without proper consultation, if it's only one-sided consultation, if it's selective consultation, selective consultation with selective hearing, then I've got some true concerns.

If the consultation was accurate, true, and honest, and I really did hear from Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker, if the consultation brought forward the request from municipalities that they wanted some changes to allow a different or an improved tax structure on places like mobile homes . . . We know under the Sask Party, life is more expensive. Life is less affordable. We know many families are facing pressures, so the issue of taxation at the local level is a very important one.

We also know at the local level municipalities are increasingly concerned about the promises they've received from members opposite. Because once upon a time, Mr. Speaker, they were promised to receive a percentage of the PST that was designated for municipalities. But, Mr. Speaker, I think with the amount of broken promises we've seen, I mean there was the PST broken promise. There was the promise that Bill 5 wasn't needed. Sure enough, it showed up right away. There was the promise that they would manage the provincial finances well. That certainly has not come to fruition. There was the promise, Mr. Speaker, that they wouldn't squander our future prosperity. That certainly hasn't come to fruition. There was the promise, Mr. Speaker, that they would follow greenhouse gas emissions

targets for reduction of . . . Members on this side. That promise was broken.

So, Mr. Speaker, the promises are mounting. There was a promise for a health ombudsman — not present. There was a promise, Mr. Speaker, that they would treat Saskatchewan people with respect. But we've seen with many pieces of legislation that they have brought forward — whether it's 5, 6, 48, or 80 — there have been some challenges. There was the promise, Mr. Speaker, to open the mill. A vote for the member from P.A. — I'd better get the P.A. constituency right, P.A. Carlton — a vote for that individual was a vote to keep the mill open. Well, Mr. Speaker, not so much.

So we see a consistent record of broken promises. So I understand why members opposite would be trying to do a deflection. They would be trying to pass off small pieces of legislation that provide some token change, some token relief while they ignore the grave and serious concerns the people have at the local level.

And, Mr. Speaker, if true consultation did in fact take place, if true consultation did take place, if they heard from all the people from whom they should have received feedback, if they chose to listen to all the feedback and not simply the ones that were convenient; if that took place, Mr. Speaker, well yes I suppose I could, I could live with that.

But, Mr. Speaker, I don't think that is what took place. Well we'll see. Time will tell, won't it, Mr. Speaker? But on so many issues, we haven't seen the accountability and the keeping of promises that were given to us.

So, Mr. Speaker, the work the municipalities do is very important work. I think we as an Assembly can all agree that we should commend the good efforts done at the municipal level, whether done by elected individuals or an administrator at the local level or the front-line workers who provide the services. Whether it is the individual grading the roads or collecting the taxes or enforcing the bylaws, Mr. Speaker, these are important jobs and, members of this Assembly, we do need to ensure that we are working co-operatively with levels of government at the municipal level to ensure that matters are taken care of as they ought to be taken care of.

But sadly, Mr. Speaker, consultation has not been the strong suit of this government, just as keeping promises has not been a strong suit, Mr. Speaker, just as running the province's fiscal resources well has not been a strong suit, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, I'm worried that people in society are not content with simply being given these horrible trade-offs where they get the fake pony instead of the real pony. I'm worried for the people in the province who are asking themselves, Mr. Speaker, what went so wrong in such a short period of time?

Mr. Speaker, members in society, in the electorate, are asking themselves, how could these individuals who promised us the world could have underdelivered so badly, could have promised the world, Mr. Speaker? How it could have gone from a huge surplus, Mr. Speaker, to a huge deficit? People in Saskatchewan want to know that answer and they deserve to know that answer, Mr. Speaker.

And this whole discussion that we've been having, Mr. Speaker, about Bill 109, *An Act to amend The Municipalities Act and to make related amendments to The Local Government Election Act*, you know, sometimes when you make minor changes to a piece of legislation it doesn't always seem like it's the biggest deal in the world. It doesn't always seem like it's earth-shattering or that everyone in the province should pay attention. But I think when you really examine the issues, often the minor changes to legislation, the small amendments to a piece of legislation, the types of changes that would affect individuals at the municipal level, often those are the most telling changes, Mr. Speaker, because the devil is in the details often. And those details can shed a great deal of light on the greater operations of a government.

So, Mr. Speaker, some individuals might question how Bill 109 has an effect and an impact on the greater aspects of government. Well, Mr. Speaker, if it's about consultation, if it's about consultation, it has the greatest relevance. It has a huge relevance, Mr. Speaker, because it speaks to a philosophy by members opposite with respect to who they will listen to, who will call the tune. Mr. Speaker, who they will truly respect in society and who they won't respect; who they won't listen to and who they will ignore. And that's a concern, Mr. Speaker, because if the individuals at the local level and municipalities are requesting changes at the local level of government, then, Mr. Speaker, I think it is appropriate to listen to them. It's appropriate to heed the request and the warning or the suggestion that they give because people at the local level are plugged in. That's the kind of true consultation that needs to occur. We need to hear from those people.

And what I fear, Mr. Speaker, when we look at a small issue like Bill 109 about changes to how things operate in municipalities, my fear is if true and proper consultation does not occur, Mr. Speaker, it calls into question what the government is doing on so many other fronts.

It calls into question as we get closer to the 24th of March, Mr. Speaker, when we have budget day, we have to ask ourselves what type of consultation took place, Mr. Speaker. Because the promises that members opposite made during election and during their first two years of government, Mr. Speaker, those promises were huge. And I think they were huge, Mr. Speaker, because members opposite actually believed their own hype. They actually believed their own rhetoric.

They thought, Mr. Speaker . . . And on this issue of consultation and how we learn from Bill 109 some larger lessons about how this government operates, there were comments by the Premier going into their convention, which recently happened this weekend here in Regina. There were questions about consultation and how this convention is a time to get together and talk politics with people.

Well, Mr. Speaker, when you look at the people who were actually there, Mr. Speaker, the numbers and the type of people, I imagine you'd see a lot of faces from this building of individuals who were required to be there because it was their job. So members in my caucus have referred to this as a large staff party, Mr. Speaker.

If that's the type of consultation, if when the Premier said they

were holding this convention to talk politics and hear from people to be informed about the issues that are important, so that when we look at pieces of legislation like Bill 109 we'd be making the proper decisions — we wouldn't be making decisions in haste; we would know what really matters to people, Mr. Speaker — then if the type of consultation that the Premier was speaking of, if their type of consultation is what we saw at the convention this last weekend, Mr. Speaker, I understand why the government would be pursuing this kind of horrible trade-off where they give us small changes, small yet significant changes in Bill 109, Mr. Speaker.

But they completely fail. They completely break their promise. They completely go back on their word with respect to election promises of managing our financial resources properly, of pursuing good resource policy, of ensuring that everyone benefits from the resources in the province.

And, Mr. Speaker, so when we see the issue of transparency around Bill 109, when we see what kind of process has been in place to get the feedback, if as the Premier said, that only type of consultation, as he said about the convention this recent weekend, that it was a time to consult with people and talk politics and get some feedback on what they want, well, Mr. Speaker, I have some concerns. Because while the changes in Bill 109 may be important, while they might truly speak to some true concerns at the local level by municipalities, if they don't come from a process of consultation that is true and sincere and comprehensive and is not lopsided, is not one-sided, is not selectively based — like I would argue occurs at the Sask Party convention by a bunch of people who are required to be there because their employment in this building hinges on it — well, Mr. Speaker, I don't think that is the best type of consultation. And that worries me.

So when we look at a piece of legislation like 109, and some might say, well yes it is somewhat insignificant . . . Well not insignificant, but the changes do not totally revolutionize the way I live my life. The changes do not turn my world upside down. Even though the changes may bring a greater degree of efficiency and effectiveness in the ability of municipalities to deliver services to people in their constituencies, in their areas, jurisdictions, then, Mr. Speaker, if the consultation has not been widespread and far-reaching, then I think that is in fact a concern.

So Bill 109, it teaches some lessons about transparency and taking a true and honest look at the facts and what people want. And I think if the members opposite took a true and honest fact of what Saskatchewan people want, I think some of them would be shocked. Again, not all. But two or three maybe in far, far backbenches who aren't in cabinet any longer or never have been or they're in the very backbenches, maybe some of those people, they're still fairly plugged in to their constituency. Maybe they're hearing the true consultation that needs to occur in order to ensure that we get pieces of legislation like Bill 109 right, Mr. Speaker.

But my worry is that the approach we have seen from members opposite is one of promising the world, promising everything, believing our own hype, blowing up lots of balloons, cutting a lot of cakes, waving a lot of pompoms, slapping a lot of high-fives. And in fact, Mr. Speaker, we've seen when you take

a high-five approach to the budgetary process, that the failure really is a thumbs-down. There is no high-five. In fact, people are just left with hurt knuckles because the end result is not a positive one.

And we will see the true extent of what improper consultation leads to. My hope is that we've seen proper consultation of 109. I can't guarantee that. My hope is that is the case because the minister has stated that that is what he did. But we'll see on the 24th what kind of consultation took place because I think, Mr. Speaker, if the Sask Party, if the members opposite were really plugged in to what people wanted their government to do, if the Sask Party is really plugged in to what people on the street are saying, I think, Mr. Speaker, they would hear that members opposite don't really have . . . They no longer have the credibility that they once pretended to have, that they once hyped up that they had about being great business people and having the best financial minds and being economic wizards that could somehow wave their wand and poof, the province would be doing better than ever, Mr. Speaker. Because reality hasn't really demonstrated that.

So we might see in 109 where consultation has taken place. But my worry is that it's the type of consultation that allows for an approach to legislation where you give a few things, you make a few changes at the municipal level, you, for example, you provide a third party mechanism to settle disputes at the local level on if there is a dispute on the servicing and the building and the repairs of roads. You get those types of changes because well, Mr. Speaker, frankly they don't cost as much as the huge promises that members opposite made.

And they made these promises, Mr. Speaker. They overpromised. They promised everything under the sun because they really did think they were the new Adam. They thought that the new era had arrived, but they failed to realize, Mr. Speaker, that while there's a few new faces on certain seats, on a few benches, the same actors are all there. And many of the faces that are new, Mr. Speaker, learned the behaviours from the individuals who so horribly treated the province in the past.

So while the hype might have said this is the new era of prosperity, Mr. Speaker, the reality on the ground has told a very, very different story. So if we look at consultation, if we look at this process and if municipalities, Mr. Speaker, said that, you know, we want a third party resolution mechanism to allow for the ability to solve disputes around the construction and repair of roads, if that's what the true consultation said, Mr. Speaker, then, you know, you can't argue with the people that are on the front lines delivering the service, Mr. Speaker.

But as members opposite were out and about on their travels, as they were talking about these issues like the need as is stated in the second reading statement by the minister that there is a third party mechanism needed to solve these types of disputes, surely, Mr. Speaker, they heard also from individuals about their desires to have the province run in a responsible, in a mature manner.

And the mature manner is an important part, Mr. Speaker, because mature leadership, mature control of the province's finances isn't the type of approach which gives a few changes in something like Bill 109 — changes which are significant but

not revolutionary, changes which have an impact and an influence on people's lives but aren't really the entire story, don't really speak to the entire story that they're hearing on the ground.

If, Mr. Speaker, the type of consultation they're pursuing and the type of approach and leadership that we've seen from the Premier, members opposite, is one to pick a few easy battles but when it comes to the really important issues, when it comes to the issues of managing our province in a responsible manner, in choosing revenue estimates, Mr. Speaker, that are realistic, that are down to earth, that are practical, that are not thought up of on a Saturday afternoon in between vacuuming the house when you call the Finance minister and say, oh actually I think we're getting 1.9 billion in potash so let's ramp up spending even more because I think we have in fact won the potash lottery. I think it's okay to have all of our eggs in one basket.

If that's the kind of leadership, Mr. Speaker, that people in Saskatchewan are now seeing, where you might get some changes in Bill 109 but on the really, on the super important issues, the issues that underpin everything we're able to do as a provincial government in terms of having our financial issues dealt with properly, in the delivery of services, in the care of our seniors and the care of our parents and the care of our children and the care of our colleagues and our friends, Mr. Speaker, if the type of leadership we've seen says, well we can make a few changes in Bill 109, for example we can make some changes as to how mobile homes are taxed. We can make some changes at the municipal level how municipalities can collect the taxes on mobile homes because we know, under our tenure, this is what the Sask Party is saying: life has become a lot more expensive for Saskatchewan people. We've given them a few breaks to disguise the huge clawbacks we've taken in other areas.

If that's the kind of leadership, Mr. Speaker, that Saskatchewan people can expect, then this raises some concerns for me on Bill 109 because it's not fair. It's like those two girls in the ad, Mr. Speaker. The one girl gets the real pony and the one girl gets the wee, poor, miniature, imitation, fake pony. And that girl who gets the fake pony knows at her core, in her heart of hearts, that it's not fair. It just speaks to her sense of what is wrong and what is right. And I think people in Saskatchewan are increasingly sharing the feelings of that girl who received the dud pony, the fake pony, the imitation pony, the pony that is not the real deal.

Because people in Saskatchewan now are in a position where, you know, they're saying to themselves, this Premier, you know, he was young, and he delivered some good one-liners. And you know, he was friendly — and, you know, who doesn't like a friendly person? — and, you know, he seemed to give a good speech. But, Mr. Speaker, these individuals are saying, well we thought we'd give that person a chance. And the member from Athabasca spoke about this issue. They said, people in Saskatchewan said, we thought we'd give these people a chance.

But, Mr. Speaker, I think they're starting to realize that they don't simply want the Bill 109 changes. They don't simply want the changes that change how mobile homes are taxed. They want the type of leadership, they want the type of

responsible leadership, mature leadership that doesn't predict \$3 billion in potash revenue when it's clear, Mr. Speaker, that the individuals who are purchasing potash are . . . In the world, the countries that are purchasing potash are clearly slowing down.

And you know, members opposite, I think people in Saskatchewan they also want the type of leadership that doesn't mock honest criticism and legitimate criticism.

You know, on this potash issue, I think we're going to be talking a lot about potash throughout this session. It cuts to every issue. And it cuts to these Bills like these Bill 109's, the Bills that don't turn the world upside down but can make some real changes because it causes people to think.

They say to themselves well, Mr. Speaker, you know some of these individuals, these . . . They say the Sask Party promised us the world. They promised us that this was the new era of hope, the new era of prosperity. But all that we've received, Mr. Speaker, is Bill 109, a change as to how mobile homes are taxed. And I'm not saying that's not an important change. It might be a very warranted change, and it might be the request that's coming from municipalities. But, Mr. Speaker, Bill 109 is silent, completely silent on the issue of the promise that the members opposite made of providing a percentage of PST to municipalities.

So we see in Bill 109, while some might deem it as a somewhat less than significant — well not less than significant; a significant yet not the flagship — piece of legislation coming from the Sask Party government in a session, it's important, Mr. Speaker, because it speaks to, a number of the issues speak to the ability of municipalities to provide services at a reasonable cost and to save money. Because, Mr. Speaker, municipalities and people in Saskatchewan are now realizing they can't trust the government. They can't trust the Sask Party to deliver on the big promises. So now they're in a position where they have to settle for the minor changes, the types of changes you see in Bill 109 where you change the tax structure on mobile homes.

But then that huge election promise, Mr. Speaker, that you left out flapping in the wind, the huge election promise that they made following one of their so-called amazing budgets to provide a percentage of the PST to municipalities, Mr. Speaker, you just leave it. You just ignore it. You say, well we're sorry we broke the promise on PST. We're sorry we broke the promise on providing meaningful change, Mr. Speaker. We're going to make changes so you can tax mobile homes differently. We're going to make a change, Mr. Speaker, so that you can actually do . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — The time being 10:30, this House now stands adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow afternoon.

[The Assembly adjourned at 22:30.]

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EVENING SITTING

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 132 — *The Wildlife Habitat Protection (Land Designation) Amendment Act, 2009*

Higgins4007

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 101 — *The Credit Union Amendment Act, 2009 (No. 2)*

Wotherspoon4007

Bill No. 103 — *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Professional Discipline) Amendment Act, 2009*

Furber4010

Bill No. 108 — *The Cities Amendment Act, 2009*

Wotherspoon4011

Bill No. 121 — *The Environmental Management and Protection Act, 2009*

Belanger4016

Bill No. 102 — *The Personal Property Security Amendment Act, 2009*

Morin4022

Bill No. 109 — *The Municipalities Amendment Act, 2009*

Brotten4025

GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN CABINET MINISTERS

Hon. Brad Wall
Premier of Saskatchewan
President of the Executive Council

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

Hon. Bill Boyd
Minister of Energy and Resources
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Power Corporation
Minister Responsible for Uranium
Development Partnership
Minister Responsible for Innovation Saskatchewan
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Research Council

Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff
Minister of Enterprise
Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated
Minister Responsible for Trade

Hon. June Draude
Minister Responsible for Crown Investments
Corporation
Provincial Secretary
Minister Responsible for Information Technology Office
Minister Responsible for Information
Services Corporation
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Government Insurance
Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission

Hon. Dustin Duncan
Minister of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport

Hon. Rod Gantfoer
Minister of Finance

Hon. Donna Harpauer
Minister of Social Services

Hon. Jeremy Harrison
Minister of Municipal Affairs

Hon. Nancy Heppner
Minister of Environment
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Water Corporation

Hon. Bill Hutchinson
Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations
Minister Responsible for Northern Affairs
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Gaming Corporation

Hon. D.F. (Yogi) Huyghebaert
Minister of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing

Hon. Ken Krawetz
Deputy Premier
Minister of Education

Hon. Don McMorris
Minister of Health

Hon. Don Morgan
Minister of Justice and Attorney General
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Telecommunications

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

Hon. Jim Reiter
Minister of Highways and Infrastructure
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Transportation Company

Hon. Christine Tell
Minister of Government Services
Minister Responsible for the Saskatchewan
Liquor and Gaming Authority
Minister Responsible for the Capital Commission