



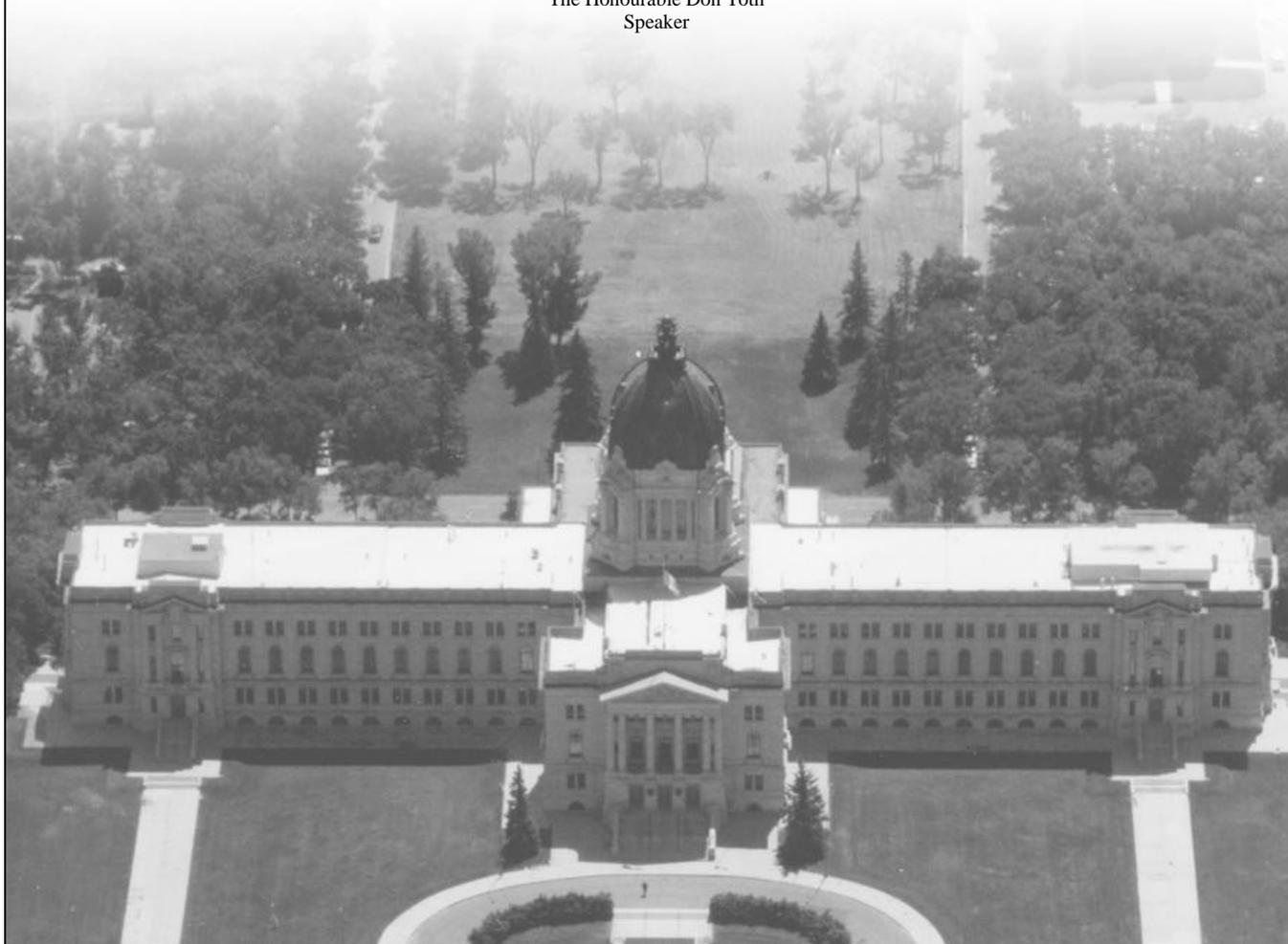
THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

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

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Biggar.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you I'd like to introduce one of the four 2010 Saskatchewan Internship Program members. If Michael would like to stand.

Michael was born in Melfort. Prior to beginning his post-secondary education, Michael spent a year in Dusseldorf, Germany as a Rotary exchange student where he learned German fluently. In 2004 Michael enrolled at the U [University] of Calgary and pursued a double major in history and German language. Michael was recognized twice on the dean's honours list. I can go on and on. He's a very accomplished young man.

He will be my intern for the first portion of session from January 25 through April 16. So I would like to please ask the Assembly to welcome Michael Selnes to his legislature.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, I too would like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the House, my intern for this part of the session, Sheena Gordon. If I could get Sheena to stand and give us a wave.

Sheena was born and raised here in Regina, went to the University of Regina. And she's got quite a background as well. Travelling seems to stand out in Sheena's background, being travelling to Dublin, Edinburgh, Belfast, having spent a semester in Cuba and doing all sorts of things like that. She's got quite an eclectic work experience, been a singing teacher, a waitress, a student researcher, a medical receptionist, and the list goes on. She's volunteered with very different groups including Engineers Without Borders, the Lumsden Beach Camp, and the Regal Social Association of Regina, and she continues to enrol in courses at the University of Regina.

So I ask all members in the House to give her a welcome. And I have another introduction after that.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Lloydminster.

Mr. McMillan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with my two colleagues and introduce my legislative intern, Elise Lonie. If you'd stand up. Elise is a student at the University of Regina majoring in political science and history. She was originally from Strasbourg, now lives in Regina. And she has spent a little time out in my constituency in the last month and is a natural. She can talk with the cattlemen or she can coordinate with the media. She's been a very effective intern. So I'd like to introduce her to you and through you and ask all members to welcome her to her legislature.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, while we're introducing the legislative interns, on behalf of my colleague, the MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] from Regina Elphinstone-Centre, I'd like to introduce his intern, Craig Fink. If Craig will stand and give us a wave.

Craig is also a Reginaian, born and raised here. And also went to school, Miller I understand, and also the University of Regina. He has quite a strong arts background whether it's in music or drama. He had actually done some parts at the Globe Theatre and took part in a band called The Polymaths. Quite a guy in his background. Also, maybe he got a start with this, the University of Regina student union where he was vice-president of operations and finance.

So on behalf of that, of my colleague from Regina Elphinstone, I'd like to welcome him and say to all the interns, you know, as a former teacher, these interns give us a real insight into what we do here. There's an old saying, to teach is to learn. And I think they help us see our world in a new, fresh way. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly a friend and future colleague in the Assembly, Yens Pedersen who is here with us today. And, Yens, I welcome you here.

Yens is a successful lawyer in Regina and I wanted other members to join with me in welcoming him here to the House.

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members in the Legislative Assembly, just joining us in your gallery, I noticed Terry Parker, business manager for the Saskatchewan Building Trades Council. And with him, Randy Nichols the business manager for the Plumbing and Pipe Fitters Local 179. I'd like all colleagues to welcome these fine trade unionists in our province to their legislature.

The Speaker: — And members if you could join with me in welcoming in the Speaker's gallery as well is the young lady Anna Siddons who is attending Eston College. And she made an inquiry about getting to know more about the political sphere in this province and approached my office. And we've been able to give her a term here as an intern and also working with some ministerial staff and ministers and MLAs. We're hoping to give her a broad scope of what it is to be a politician in the province of Saskatchewan. So would you help me welcoming Anna Siddons.

Before I call for presenting petitions, I would like to make a statement in regards to petitions that were delivered yesterday.

STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Oral Presentation of Petitions

The Speaker: — Yesterday, the member from Saskatoon Fairview presented two petitions, sessional papers nos. 106 and 107. Both petitions contained similar prayers requesting the government to negotiate a fair and just collective agreement with healthcare workers. Sessional paper no. 106 related to SEIU [Service Employees International Union] West members employed with the Cypress, Five Hills, Heartland, and Saskatoon health authorities. Sessional paper 107 related to CUPE [Canadian Union of Public Employees] members employed with the Prairie North, Prince Albert Parkland, Regina Qu'Appelle, Sunrise, and Sun Country health authorities. Both petitions were in order and will be read and received today. At issue is the oral presentation of the petition.

Pursuant to rule 16(2), no more than one petition on a subject matter may be presented during the period for presentation of petitions. Based on the petitions presented by the member from Saskatoon Fairview, his oral presentation related to Saskatchewan residents from both petitions, and there were more than 30 locations announced that did not appear on either petition. I would like to remind members that the rules permit the oral presentation of one petition on one subject matter during presenting petitions.

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order.

The member from Saskatoon Fairview and all members should ensure that when presenting petitions orally that the location of the residents announced are in fact contained in the petition presented.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today on behalf of concerned Saskatchewan citizens who are concerned over the condition of Highway 123. Highway 123 is approximately . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. The member is sitting very close and actually it's getting somewhat difficult to catch what the member is saying. So I'd ask members seated by the member trying to present the petition to allow their member the opportunity to present his petition. The member from Regina Northeast.

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of concerned citizens of Saskatchewan who are concerned about the condition of Highway 123. Highway 123 is about 133 kilometres long and it is an important link to the community of Cumberland House. In fact, Mr. Speaker, it's the only link to the community of Cumberland House. It's the only road in and the only road out. And, Mr. Speaker, the prayer

reads:

Whereas your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to commit to maintaining and repairing of this highway.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the good folks of Cumberland House. I so submit.

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

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition in support of indexing minimum wage. And it speaks to the issue that minimum wage increases are often very sporadic and they do not always reflect the rising cost that's faced by minimum wage earners. And the prayer reads:

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

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

I so present, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to present a petition regarding the withdrawal of Bill 80. This is the petition that indicates that *The Construction Industry Labour Relations Act, 1992* has provided a stable environment for labour relations in the construction industry in the province and that as a result of that stable labour relations environment we've been able to obtain quality work and safe construction sites that benefit all of our citizens. And the petition also indicates that the existing building trade contracts support an apprenticeship system of training which results in a highly skilled workforce. The petition prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to withdraw its ill-conceived Bill 80, *The Construction Industry Labour Relations Amendment Act, 2009* which dismantles the proud history of the building trades in this province, creates instability in the labour market, and impacts the quality of training required of workers before entering the workforce.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens of Regina and Churchbridge. I so present.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise

today to present a petition in support of wage equity for CBO [community-based organization] workers. And we know that the research shows that CBO workers are paid on average 8 to \$10 per hour less than employees performing work of equal value in government departments. I'd like to read the prayer:

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

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

And, Mr. Speaker, petitioners come from Spiritwood, Canwood, Birch Hills, Leoville, and Leask. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

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

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

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

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

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to stand today to present a petition that has been circulated by the Saskatchewan Student Coalition in support of affordable undergraduate tuition costs calling on the Sask Party government's actions to match their rhetoric. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to implement a long-term tuition management strategy in which tuition is increased by an average of 2 per cent or the most recent increase to the consumer price index.

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

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

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

Mr. Furber: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise and present a petition in support of reducing the interest on fixed rate student loans to prime. And I'll read the petition:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately reduce the interest on fixed rate student loans to the prime rate of borrowing so that students can accumulate less debt and focus their finances on building their lives here in Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is being circulated by the Saskatchewan Student Coalition, and folks who have signed it reside in Saskatoon and Regina. I so present.

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

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I stand today to present a petition on behalf of Saskatchewan residents that are in support of expansion of the graduate retention program. And, Mr. Speaker, the prayer reads as follows:

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

Mr. Speaker.

[13:45]

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, I stand today to present a petition in support of maintaining quality health care services. Mr. Speaker, it's important that the government recognize the value of health care providers and commit to adequate funding and an installation of good faith bargaining in the provincial bargaining process. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to commit to negotiating a fair and just collective bargaining agreement with health care workers in the province of Saskatchewan.

And the petition is signed by people from Norquay, Canora, and Pelly. I so submit.

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

Mr. Taylor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased today to rise to present a petition in support of the implementation of a Saskatchewan scholarship fund.

The petitioners note that the Saskatchewan Party promised to implement a Saskatchewan scholarship fund in its 2007 election platform and that students in Saskatchewan have recently experienced the loss of financial assistance through the discontinuation of the Millennium Aboriginal Access Bursary and the Millennium Scholarship Foundation.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, the petitioners call upon the Legislative

Assembly:

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

... to cause the government to implement the promised Saskatchewan scholarship fund.

Mr. Speaker, this petition has been circulated by the Saskatchewan Student Coalition and the signatures on this petition are all from residents of the city of Saskatoon.

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

Mr. Quennell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition signed by citizens of Saskatchewan concerned about this government's disregard for constitutional and legal rights. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to direct marriage commissioners to uphold the law and the equality of rights of all Saskatchewan couples, and to withdraw the reference to Saskatchewan Court of Appeal that would allow marriage commissioners to opt out of their legal obligation to provide all couples with civil marriage services.

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

The petition is signed by residents of Saskatoon, and I so present.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise to present petitions on behalf of concerned Saskatchewan residents as it relates to the unprecedented financial mismanagement of the Sask Party.

They allude specifically to the \$1 billion deficit created by the Sask Party and they recognize that this is a circumstance that's getting worse, not better, with the Minister for Energy and Resources projecting \$3 billion in revenues, now cutting . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order, order. I ask the member to move to the prayer.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — The prayer reads as follows:

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

These petitions are signed by good folks here in Regina. I so present.

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

Canadian Television Network Saskatoon Citizen of the Year

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I want to recognize the wonderful work of Al Anderson, a constituent of mine in Saskatoon Eastview. Rather than just supporting his community, Al has directed his time and energy to improve his community. He was recently honoured as the 2009 CTV [Canadian Television Network Ltd.] Saskatoon Citizen of the Year. Al epitomizes the best of Saskatchewan people.

Saskatchewan was built on dreams, determination, and a refusal to give up. Strong individuals, town builders, through strength of character, vision, and force of will pulled isolated farms into villages, laid down main streets, and gathered isolated towns and cities into a provincial consciousness. In other words, they built communities, and Saskatchewan's success and very survival depended on their efforts. Al continues this tradition.

Al has long been recognized by sports enthusiasts in Saskatoon as owner of Al Anderson's Sports. However Al has worked tirelessly to make people with special needs active, participating, and more importantly, acknowledged and appreciated members of the community. His dream has led him to be a founding member of both Kinsmen Elwood Lodge and Cosmopolitan Industries, and his important work with the Saskatchewan Prevention Institute.

Al reminds us that communities are not self-generating or self-sustaining. We have to work at it. He shows us that we cannot call ourselves a vibrant community unless we are willing to accept and appreciate the contribution that all citizens have to make. I know I am speaking for everyone in the community when I say, thank you, Al. You deserve our gratitude and you have certainly earned our admiration and this Citizen of the Year award. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Thunder Creek.

Canada's Olympic Hockey Teams

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise in the House to celebrate and honour the men and women of Canada's Olympic hockey teams. It was with excitement, pride, and sometimes even trepidation that I watched as they brought home the gold right here on Canadian soil. Our province now has our very own golden girls, as Hayley Wickenheiser was joined by three other teammates from Saskatchewan, Colleen Sostorics, Gina Kingsbury, and Meaghan Mikkelson.

Mr. Speaker, these women embody the dedication, hard work, and commitment that it takes to succeed. It is with great pride that I watched them receive their well-deserved gold medals. Saskatchewan was also well represented on the men's team by three players and coach Mike Babcock: Patrick Marleau from Aneroid, Brenden Morrow from Carlyle, and Ryan Getzlaf from Regina. Coach Mike Babcock grew up in Saskatoon.

These men did us proud throughout the whole tournament in

Vancouver. Our golden boys from Saskatchewan led the way in the semi-final against Slovakia. Patrick scored first, followed by Brenden, and then Ryan finished the scoring. That's right, Mr. Speaker. All three of Team Canada's goals were scored by Saskatchewan players in that game. Getting the gold with strong contributions and excellent play from our homegrown talent made the victories even sweeter for all of us.

To all of Team Canada and especially our Saskatchewan athletes, thank you. You have given us some amazing, unforgettable memories which we will cherish for a lifetime. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Saskatchewan Olympians

Mr. Furber: — Mr. Speaker, the 21st winter Olympics in Vancouver drew to a close on February 28th, but the spirit that it instilled remains alive in hearts of Canadians. The Olympics offered Canada an opportunity to celebrate our best and brightest athletes from coast to coast to coast, and celebrate their remarkable achievements.

Our Canadian team showed not only athletic excellence but also dignity, sportsmanship, and an infectious love of competition. Over an event-filled 17 days, the country rallied behind our athletes, uniting us as a nation and reaffirming our world-class achievements.

The Saskatchewan connection to the Olympics was strong. Ben Hebert and Cori Bartel were members of victorious curling teams. Lucas Makowsky helped bring home gold in the men's team pursuit speed skating. Lyndon Rush from Humboldt won a bronze in the four-man bobsleigh, and Meaghan Simister and Regan Lauscher were top Canadians in the women's luge event. Hayley Wickenheiser and Colleen Sostorics, both long-time Team Canada hockey players, led the women's hockey team to a gold medal. In the Paralympic Games, Colette Bourgonje from Porcupine Plain will soon be competing in the Para Nordic event.

The iconic and nail-biting men's hockey game, certainly etched into the memory of many Canadians, also had a Saskatchewan connection. Saskatchewanians Ryan Getzlaf, Brenden Morrow, and Patrick Marleau helped take their team to golden victory. The coach of the team also coached against me in university hockey and I can vouch for this: he's a tough coach and a fair coach and a great coach, and we congratulate him as well.

As John Furlong stated at the closing ceremonies:

We have seen first hand that there is indeed a beautiful force that can unite, inspire and liberate — a force that can replace despair with hope and ignite the human spirit.

This force is sport . . .

On behalf of the official opposition and of all people of Saskatchewan, congratulations to our Olympians and thank you for uniting and inspiring us all. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Estevan.

Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is hard enough when a loved one dies. It is even harder when that disease is treatable when detected early. Mr. Speaker, far too many families suffer tragic losses due to a disease that is highly treatable. Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month in Canada. People across this country work to promote awareness about this deadly but treatable disease. In Saskatchewan, colorectal cancer is the second most common cause of cancer in men and women.

Our government is taking steps in the fight against colorectal cancer. Mr. Speaker, we are fully funding the cancer drug Avastin so that patients with advanced colorectal cancer can have more precious time with their families.

We've provided \$1.1 million in funding for a pilot project colorectal cancer screening program in Five Hills Health Region. Implementation will take place over a 12-month period during which approximately 6,000 individuals will be invited to this screening program.

Piloting the program in one health region will allow any logistical issues to be resolved. Phase 1 will also provide an opportunity to assess participation rates, impact on colonoscopy services, cost of the program, alternative recruitment methods, and other quality indicators. Mr. Speaker, by raising awareness and increasing screening, we can beat this horrible disease. Thank you.

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

Environmental Activist Awards

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On Friday, March 5th, the Saskatchewan Eco-Net presented their annual Environmental Activist Awards at the seventh annual film festival, See the Change, Be the Change. It is a very impressive and inspiring list of award winners, including the long-time activist Karen Weingeist, the Coalition for a Clean Green Saskatchewan, of whom we've heard a lot about in this past year at the energy hearings, and Candace Savage, a well-known author and outspoken advocate of biodiversity here in the province.

Mr. Speaker, I'm delighted to tell the House that Peter Prebble, no stranger to us, was also recognized formally for his exceptional commitment to our province, planet, and its sustainability. As we know, Peter's work on Saskatchewan protected areas, particularly at Dore Lake and the Great Sand Hills, is outstanding. In fact in many ways it was Peter's deep diligence and commitment that caused over 90,000 acres of the Great Sand Hills to receive the highest level of protection possible. He reminded us on Friday that much work remains to be done for this special place.

As we know, renewable energy is truly Peter's passion. No one has quite the depth of knowledge and yet the commitment to learn more. His leadership in this benefits us all. Peter, a kind and gentle man, believes that we can do better and that our work is not yet done. Daily he brings that to the ongoing struggle for sustainability.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating Peter and all the winners this year in being recognized as true eco activists. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Arm River-Watrous.

Canadian Navy Centennial

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am proud to stand in the House today to honour the Royal Canadian Navy Centennial Year of 2010. During World War I and World War II, many young men and women from Saskatchewan joined the navy in service of their country. In recognition of this, many ships were named for Saskatchewan towns. On February 4th I attended such an event, a naval centennial event in Dundurn, one of the many events that have been held and will be held across Saskatchewan to commemorate the ships and those who served on them.

This particular event was to honour the World War II service of the HMCS [Her Majesty's Canadian Ship] *Dundurn*, a coastal tanker built in Walkerville, Ontario, and commissioned on November 25th, 1943. This event to honour the ship's service was held at the Wilson Museum in Dundurn with HMCS *Unicorn* Commander Randy Hanson unveiling a framed pictorial history of the tanker's noble service in assisting giant merchant convoys during the war. The HMCS *Dundurn* began her mission out of Halifax, hauling vital fuel to escort ships. Occasionally she sailed independently, but has often sailed with convoys while the U-boats lurked in the dark waters. After the war, she remained in service as a naval auxiliary vessel until her retirement in 1993.

Again I commend the Royal Canadian Navy for 100 years of service, as well as their efforts to celebrate the rich naval heritage with towns such as Dundurn and other ones across Saskatchewan. I would also like to thank the town and the many citizens that showed up for taking part in this event. I would ask all members to join me in congratulating the people of Dundurn and honouring the memory of the HMCS *Dundurn*. Thank you.

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

Comments About Saskatchewan Party

Mr. Trew: — Mr. Speaker, when your record is embarrassing, when you've taken the province from a surplus to a deficit in two short years, and when you're afraid of your opponent, what do you do? Well if you're the Sask Party government, you get scared, point fingers, and go into attack mode.

But the Sask Party's not giving Saskatchewan people enough credit, Mr. Speaker. Most people see through these attacks. They will not fall for the short-sighted tactics of the Sask Party,

and they're letting us know.

Here are just two examples. A letter to the editor in January 28 *StarPhoenix* says:

We all know why these ads are on our radio stations at a cost of \$150,000 to the Saskatchewan Party membership. The Wall government is running a billion-dollar deficit this year . . .

The letter then goes on to say:

Wall and his advisors are attempting to discredit Lingenfelter so that they can implement their program cuts without much public outcry. Good luck. I think Saskatchewan people are a little more sophisticated than that.

[14:00]

A letter to the editor in the February 19th *Moose Jaw Times-Herald* outlines the Sask Party record, "Wall going from a \$2.9 billion surplus left to the government by the NDP to a \$1.5 billion deficit in two years — would qualify as gross mismanagement." Then he says, "In the Sask. Party's attack ads, they ask . . . do you want Lingenfelter as a premier? My answer: the sooner the better."

Mr. Speaker, enough said.

QUESTION PERIOD

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of her Majesty's Loyal Opposition.

Rural Doctor Recruitment

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, when the Sask Party was running for election two years ago, they promised the people of Saskatchewan they would deal with the issue of rural health care and problems with rural health care especially as it related to the doctor shortage in rural Saskatchewan, and they said they had a plan.

Mr. Speaker, today if you go to the government's own website you will see that the doctor vacancies in the province has risen by 50 per cent — that's five zero — 50 per cent up. My question is to the Premier: is this the plan you had when you promised the people of rural Saskatchewan you would fix health care in rural areas of the province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, we inherited a situation from that government, Mr. Speaker, where the previous government was funding 60 training seats for doctors at the University of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order, order. I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, there were 60 residencies in

the province that were funded, 60 residencies funded by the previous government. Mr. Speaker, we campaigned on a four-year plan to increase the number of training seats for doctors at our College of Medicine in Saskatoon to 100, Mr. Speaker. We're well on our way. There are now 84 seats, 84 doctors being trained there, Mr. Speaker. Moreover when it comes to residencies . . . and this is an important area because if we can increase the number of residencies in the province, our likelihood of keeping them here to practice in urban and rural Saskatchewan increases. The NDP [New Democratic Party] record, the NDP record is 60, Mr. Speaker. We're already at 108 under . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. I would ask the member from Prince Albert Northcote when the Premier is up next time to give the Premier the opportunity to respond to the question from the Leader of the Opposition. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier indicates that his plan is in action and that he's making great strides. I'd hate to see it and see the results if he was failing. We have a 50 per cent increase in the vacancies of doctors in this province, and he claims success. Well I'll tell you, we were over at the SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] convention earlier today, hundreds of delegates from across the province. Their main issue is the lack of rural doctors and the lack of action by this provincial government. And the resolution from Willowbunch, no. 15-10A, says in part, "Whereas it is the responsibility of the Provincial Government to recruit doctors."

My question to the Premier is this: will he be doing something serious and taking proactive action to see that rural doctors are in place and that there isn't a shift of responsibility from the provincial government to the rural RMs [rural municipality] and the rural towns in the province of Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, after 16 years of NDP in power, Mr. Speaker, with that member serving in the cabinet as the deputy premier . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I think the opposition members would like to hear the answer to the question. I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — After 16 years of that party's health care system in rural Saskatchewan, unfortunately rural Saskatchewan knows what failing health care systems look like. When that member sat in the cabinet, he voted to close 52 rural hospitals, Mr. Speaker. When that member sat in the cabinet of the province of Saskatchewan, they refused to fund adequate seats to train doctors. They refused to fund residencies for doctors, so we could keep them here.

This government has moved on both fronts. We've moved to recruit more nurses, Mr. Speaker, already over halfway to our goal. And, Mr. Speaker, our work's not done. There is a brand new recruitment agency that's been announced by the Minister of Health.

Rural Saskatchewan and all of the province understands that these are still issues to be sure, the number one issue in the province of Saskatchewan. There is work to be done. They also see on this side of the House a plan for action, where what they got from that member while he was in the cabinet was nothing but words, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, a new question to the Premier. He indicates that and would have people believe that his government is doing an excellent job of rural health care. Well I can tell you that in places like Redvers and Shaunavon and Arcola, Maple Creek, Leader, where the lack of doctors and the shortage of doctors is creating a huge problem.

And he can deny it and pretend it isn't happening. But I can tell you that the people who need health care and need doctors in those areas take a very different approach. And my question again to the Premier is: when will he be taking action to fulfill the promise he made to rural Saskatchewan to have doctors in place? We've seen a major shift of responsibility to local government, some communities paying as much as \$800,000 to recruit and retain doctors. That's the responsibility of this government . . .

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

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we know there are challenges throughout rural Saskatchewan, as there have been for a number of years, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it wasn't too many years ago when I was sitting on that side of the House, and I was asking — the Health critic at that time — about emergency room after emergency room after emergency room closing under that government. And he said, that's just the way it's always been, Mr. Speaker.

Well that isn't the way it's always been, Mr. Speaker. We have seen in the last two and a half years under our government an increase of 72 general practitioners and 92 specialists. Mr. Speaker, that's 154 more physicians working under our government than under that government, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Question to the Premier. Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that the vacancies have gone up by 50 per cent for doctors in the province, vacancies up by 50 per cent.

An example of this is Shaunavon. He will know and the Premier will know that the hospital had to close for a period of time over the Christmas holidays because of the lack of a doctor. If you drove down 37 Highway — and the member from Cypress will know this — the fact of the matter is there was a black garbage bag over the hospital sign. That's how the indication was from this government that the hospital had to close.

And the Premier laughs. He thinks this is a big joke. I want to ask him the question: when will he take it serious, his job as Premier, that it's his responsibility to get doctors into our hospitals in rural Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, over the last two and a half years, we've seen the doctor count in this province increase by 164 positions — 92 specialists, 72 GPs [general practitioner], Mr. Speaker. But that isn't good enough, Mr. Speaker, and we understand that. That's why we've increased the number of seats in the College of Medicine. That's why we've increased the number of residency seats, Mr. Speaker. But more importantly, that's why we as a government are going to start taking responsibility, unlike the former government . . .

[Interjections]

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

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, that's why we're taking responsibility, and we're starting a physician recruitment agency that will look at making sure that we retain our positions. Mr. Speaker, it wasn't very long ago under the NDP when we had the worst retention record of our nurses, Mr. Speaker. Under our government, it's the best in Canada, and we're going to do it with physicians as well.

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

SaskPower Rates

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Will the minister call the recent rate increases at SaskPower what they really are, an annual backdoor tax increase of nearly 16 per cent for every family household, every farm, and every business in Saskatchewan?

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the question because I want to put on record that our government is committed to ensuring that SaskPower is run properly now and into the future. And it doesn't have to take many minutes thinking backwards to realize that there was zero planning and zero money put into the infrastructure in utilities under that government

In fact, Mr. Speaker, in the last 10 years of the NDP government, they averaged \$280 million a year. In the last two years under our government, we've spent \$1.4 billion in infrastructure just in SaskPower. We want to ensure there is infrastructure in our province.

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

Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, do they really think that they can tell the people of Saskatchewan no money's been put into the infrastructure of SaskPower over the last number of years? Nobody believes that. Mr. Speaker, families are paying more for their power because their money's going to Toronto, to the shareholders and an out-of-province, private company. The government's agreement with Northland Power, and I quote, “. . . provides protection against changes in the price of natural

gas, as fuel costs are passed on to SaskPower.”

Will the minister tell us why Saskatchewan families are paying more for their power bill to protect the private, Toronto-based company from natural gas increases?

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I think the members opposite should remember it wasn't too long ago that there was a deal done with ATCO with the previous government, under SunBridge with the previous government. We all understand, and I think that the Leader of the Opposition should remember a quote that he used, where he said utility rate hikes are a “fact of life in Canada.”

Mr. Speaker, we have to increase our rates because of things like the expansion needed for ensuring that we do have the facilities in our province. And we are ensuring that we have the lowest costs possible for the people in our province.

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

Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, increases do occur occasionally, but the rate of inflation was 1 per cent. The rate increase of power is over 15 per cent over the same period. Mr. Speaker, we know that this agreement guarantees Northland Power protection from increased costs, but the minister can't offer the same protection to taxpayers in Saskatchewan. Why did the minister sign an agreement where all the risk is handed to the Saskatchewan taxpayers and all the profits to a Toronto-based company?

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to clarify, I'd like to clarify for the Leader of the Opposition. When I made the statement that the utility rate hikes are a fact of life, that statement was made by the current Leader of the Opposition. And he is the one that . . . [inaudible] . . . that issue. Mr. Speaker, I'd like the people in the province to know that . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. If members of the opposition want to continue adding their own comments, they'll just absorb their time in question period. I recognize the Minister Responsible for Crown Investments.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — I guess maybe the Leader of the Opposition doesn't remember that he made that statement. It was *The StarPhoenix* from September 25th, 1999, where he said that utility rate hikes are really “a fact of life in Canada.”

Mr. Speaker, I want to make sure that the people of the province understand that, looking at utility cost comparisons across our province, Saskatchewan fares very well. We understand that hydro provides a lower rate than gas, for hydro. And when it comes to the gap between provinces, the only province in Canada that has a lower rate when it comes to

utilities is Manitoba. Everybody else is higher than Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, this government won't release any details of the 20-year contract with Northland Power. We've heard that Saskatchewan families will pay 20 cents per kilowatt hour for Northland's power. Will the minister tell us how much Saskatchewan families are going to pay for Northland Power? Is it the 20 cents we've heard, or is it even more?

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to say that our government is working with the private sector to ensure that we can supply power and have power purchase agreements with individuals and so that people in our province can have a lowest rate possible. There are deals that are being made with private companies to ensure that we can have power supply across our province. There was so little money put into the infrastructure within power, utility, and telephone under the previous government that now we have an opportunity to ensure that we're building our infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, the people of the province can ensure that under this government they can turn on the lights and there will be power.

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

Mr. Yates: — Well, Mr. Speaker, she won't deny the 20 cent cost, so obviously that's true then. The Premier told members of his own party at their convention last weekend that his government was, and I will quote, "moving away from the government having to build and own all the generating facilities. We will now work with private sector providers."

[14:15]

This government is quietly privatizing our Crown corporations one piece at a time. At least Grant Devine and Elwin Hermanson had the courage to tell the people of Saskatchewan their true plans. Can the minister tell us, can the minister tell us which part of which Crown corporation the Premier plans to privatize next?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — I know the members of the opposition were paying close attention to the events of the Saskatchewan Party at the convention and the speech that I gave. It's interesting though. The member who asked the question should be paying closer attention to what his government did in office.

His government in . . . his opposition, in criticizing a partnership with the private sector supplier of energy, forgets the fact that under his, when he was on the government side, and when the Leader of the Opposition was the minister for Crowns, they did what? They struck in a private purchase deal

with SunBridge, a private, Alberta-based partnership. Maybe, maybe he got to know them when he was in Calgary. I don't know. That was the first one.

ATCO was another one, Mr. Speaker, another cogeneration deal with a Calgary-based company, Mr. Speaker, where they would provide, where there would be a partnership between SaskPower and a private sector company to supply electricity. And the last one is Husky, which is based where, Mr. Speaker? It's probably not even based in Canada. That's another deal they've done, Mr. Speaker. They should get their homework done before they come in with questions into question period.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Saskatoon Eastview.

Chiropractic Services

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister of Health today please provide an update on the contract agreement between the province and the Chiropractors' Association of Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, what I will say is that the chiropractors of our province, that are spread across our province in many communities, do a great service in the profession that they supply, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the co-payment, it's a subsidy that is supplied to chiropractors. We in Saskatchewan have supplied that subsidy. The only other province is Manitoba. For many years, Mr. Speaker, that has been supplied.

We look at all of our expenses as we are going through the budget cycle, Mr. Speaker. We have some insured services, some uninsured services. For example, ambulance services are subsidized. They're not an insured service. Chiropractors are subsidized. They're not an insured service. We're looking at all those expenditures, Mr. Speaker, and as we move closer to the budget, and on budget day, you'll know the answer to that question.

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

Ms. Junor: — Well, Mr. Speaker, here's the real story. On January 7th, after one year of negotiation, the president of the Chiropractors' Association signed an agreement with the government on behalf of the chiropractors. The president of the Chiropractors' Association was told that the minister would sign the agreement within days. The Chiropractors' Association was later told the agreement was off. It sends a chill through the entire health system when there is no honour in bargaining.

Mr. Speaker, why is the minister refusing to honour this negotiated agreement?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, as I have said earlier, there are nine provinces and territories that cover absolutely no coverage on chiropractic service at all. A few provinces, a very few provinces will cover the . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. The Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — There are a couple of provinces in Canada that will cover low-income, Mr. Speaker. There is only one other province other than Saskatchewan that cover their services, and that's capped at 12, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, many provinces have moved away from funding chiropractic services. We see that across Canada.

Mr. Speaker, when we read the budget on March 24th, the people of Saskatchewan will know the decision of our government, Mr. Speaker, and they won't know until that time.

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

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, the minister had gone so far as to prepare a news release about the signed agreement between the government and the chiropractors. The minister was even quoted in that proposed news release as saying, "I am pleased that we've reached a deal with the Chiropractors' Association of Saskatchewan. It allows us to exercise some fiscal responsibility to treatment, cap, and copayment."

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: what changed? Why is he no longer pleased with the agreement?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, we had said, all the way along, for chiropractic services that it has been subsidized. Their contract was up a number of months ago, almost a year ago, so it was only incumbent on the ministry to start talking to the chiropractic association. It wouldn't have been responsible for any government, I don't believe, to sign a contract unless they can guarantee that funding's there. That funding will either be there after budget or not be there after budget, Mr. Speaker. It just . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. There is a handful of opposition members that seem to want to answer the question, and I believe the Minister of Health has been recognized. I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Well the member opposite said, well why would you even negotiate it, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the event that funds are available, we want to make sure that we have a contract ready to go. If the funds aren't available, Mr. Speaker, it would not be responsible for any government to follow through. Perhaps they feel that . . . You know, it was quite interesting as they had the galleries partially full with a number of their strong supporters, Mr. Speaker, how they were complaining about a contract that never went forward, has taken too long. Now the minister is saying well why even negotiate?

Mr. Speaker, you negotiate. And if the funds are there in this particular situation because it is in the collective bargaining, it's a subsidy to chiropractors. If the money's there, the agreement's in place and away we go, Mr. Speaker. If we decide that it isn't,

Mr. Speaker, we know that the contract would be there in case the funds are.

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

Ms. Junor: — That's just goofy. I mean that is just goofy, and Goofy's only working in Disneyland, not here.

It appears the Sask Party is prepared to, they're preparing to eliminate all funding for chiropractic care. I mean, the minister could dance and skate around all he wants, but this is what the message is coming out today. As a result, chiropractic care will be inaccessible for many people, especially those people on low income. It will mean forcing chiropractic patients to seek care from other areas of the system, going to emergency rooms, going to specialists, going to GPs. It will mean people living in pain and living with chronic pain, and it will mean ultimately increased costs to the health system and to individuals. Mr. Speaker, this is typical Sask Party math. Save \$1 now. Pay \$3 later.

To the minister: will he recognize that eliminating chiropractic care is unfair, short-sighted, won't save money, and in the end will cost the health care system more money?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, as I said it from the outset, there are nine provinces that absolutely do no funding of chiropractic service whatsoever. A couple of provinces will cover low-income. And, Mr. Speaker, our province and Manitoba do cover chiropractic services at this point.

Mr. Speaker, but if you use her argument, if you use her analogy that you better fund everything . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, there are a number of provinces and territories, nine that don't fund, and there are a few that do, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, if you use their argument though, you would fund all sorts of service that people already pay out-of-pocket such as physiotherapy, such as dentistry, Mr. Speaker. Is that what we're saying? Is that what the opposition is saying, is they would like all of that funded because we fund chiropractic service?

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

Ms. Junor: — There's nobody following that logic, Mr. Speaker — nobody. In a letter to the Premier, the president of the chiropractic association of Saskatchewan said, and I quote, "In spite of good evidence, the government appears to have decided to sacrifice the public good and refuse to maintain partial coverage for chiropractic services, ostensibly on the basis that revenue projections have been miscalculated." Blame it on potash.

Mr. Speaker, this just isn't about an agreement that's not being honoured. This is about what's doing best for the patients of the province and the entire health system. To the minister, Mr. Speaker: why should patients and their families have to suffer real pain that affects their quality of life because of the Sask Party's fiscal mismanagement?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, we supply a large array of services in this province. Many are insured services that are dictated to us by the *Canada Health Act*.

We also supply a number of services, Mr. Speaker, that aren't dictated to us through the *Canada Health Act*. Some are subsidized. Some are covered completely, Mr. Speaker, and chiropractic services would fall under that category, so would ambulance services, so would long-term care, so would home care, Mr. Speaker. Many of these services are subsidized by government. They aren't dictated by the *Canada Health Act*. We have to look at all of those services and decide whether we should cover them or not.

I remember not too many years ago when the opposition was in government. They decided they wanted to charge long-term care fees at 90 per cent, Mr. Speaker. Remember that, how they felt that was very appropriate, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, when the budget is read on March 24th, we'll know the answer to the chiropractic question as to whether they're subsidized or not.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 127 — *The Assessment Management Agency Amendment Act, 2009*

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 127, *The Assessment Management Agency Amendment Act, 2009*.

Mr. Speaker, this Act amends *The Assessment Management Agency Act* that provides the legislative framework for the assessment system in Saskatchewan. The major amendments in this Bill have come about in part because of a number of issues resulting from the 2009 revaluation and in part because of the changes to the education property tax system earlier this year. The Bill also proposes amendments related to technical changes that will improve the legislation, enabling the Saskatchewan . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. I'm having difficulty hearing the minister present his reasons for the Bill No. 127. I recognize the Minister Responsible for Municipal Affairs.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Bill also proposes amendments related to technical changes that will improve the legislation enabling the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency, SAMA, to become more flexible and efficient in carrying out its mandate.

Mr. Speaker, the amendments proposed in this draft Bill address the following issues: first, this Bill proposes to strengthen government's role related to assessment policy making and help to ensure future decisions are consistent with provincial goals and priorities. Second, this Bill proposes to change the composition of the board of directors by reducing the number from 11 to 7 members and adjust SAMA's funding in recognition of changes to the education property tax system. Third, Mr. Speaker, this Bill introduces amendments in several areas that improve the effectiveness of the Act on technical and administrative matters.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take just a few moments to highlight the more significant changes that this Bill proposes. The first issue I would like to raise is related to the 2009 revaluation. Concern has been expressed not all of SAMA's assessment policy choices are consistent with the provincial government's goals and priorities. Assessment policy, when implemented, inevitably affects the distribution of property tax. This has broad implications for the province's economy and the social and economic well-being of various sectors.

For example, heavy industrial manufacturing improvements experienced a substantial assessment increase due to SAMA adopting a new costing manual in conjunction with replacement cost increases in the 2009 revaluation. The new Marshall and Swift manual is the industry standard for North America. The change was made to more accurately reflect replacement cost. However this caused tax shifts not anticipated, impacted major businesses, and has proved to be inconsistent with economic and education property tax relief goals established by the province.

Legislative amendments to provide the opportunity for government to review and approve assessment policy and methodology changes are proposed. This introduces a new step for sober second thought, considering broader public policy beyond what the assessment appraisers recommend.

Mr. Speaker, this makes SAMA more accountable for its decisions and will ensure SAMA does its due diligence. It will make government policy accountable for assessment policy changes it approves, and involves a shift in responsibility. This is a fairly fundamental change for SAMA, Mr. Speaker.

[14:30]

Our goal is to ensure the effect on our province's economy is considered in making these decisions. Proposed amendments to *The Assessment Management Agency Act* include the addition of ministerial approval to apply to board orders regarding the following: methods of valuation; assessment manuals, guidelines, handbooks, and other materials required for property valuation; the base date for valuation; the method for calculating, preparing, and maintaining equivalency assessments; and codes, standards, manuals, or other reference materials pursuant to subsection 12(1.1).

The ministerial approval process is for assessment policy and leaves the bulk of SAMA operational activities unchanged. A transition amendment is proposed relating to all existing orders passed prior to this Act coming into effect. These orders would remain in force until they are amended or repealed in accordance with this Act.

Mr. Speaker, the second issue I bring forward is the proposed change to SAMA funding and the composition of the board of directors. School divisions have a significantly reduced vested interest in the assessment system. The province now sets mill rates for the education portion of property tax, and there's a much-reduced reliance on property tax for education.

The smaller board — 7 members as opposed to 11 — is a more accurate reflection of the interests in the assessment system. The two members nominated by the Saskatchewan School Boards Association and two provincial government members will be removed. The new board will be composed of seven members, composed of two persons nominated by the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association, two persons nominated by the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, two provincial government appointed members, and the board Chair who is appointed by the provincial government based on consultation with SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] and SARM. And I was proud to appoint Neal Hardy to that position.

Based on SAMA's numbers, this reduction in the board size will save almost \$100,000 per year. Mr. Speaker, the funding relationship will see amendments to match these changes to the education system, funding, and SAMA board composition.

In recognition of the changes to education system funding, the Minister of Education will no longer make payments on behalf of school divisions. Rather the funding payments currently made on behalf of the province and school divisions will be combined and made by the Minister of Finance. The share of funding from government is eventually to be 65 per cent, and the municipal share will be 35 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, situations have arisen where assessment appeal decisions have been set aside in subsequent years by assessment appraisers causing individuals to have to appeal repeatedly even though the facts have not fundamentally changed. An amendment to extend the effect of appeal decisions is proposed. This would require assessment appraisers to comply with SMB [Saskatchewan Municipal Board] appeal board decisions in the future years, not just the current years as the case right now, provided the facts of a property situation have not changed and subject to changes in market value. Some consequential amendments will be required to *The Cities Act*, *The Municipalities Act*, and *The Northern Municipalities Act* relating to this change.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the remaining amendments will help to improve SAMA's effectiveness and pertain largely to technical and administrative matters. Many of the key technical amendments were requested by SAMA to address issues that were causing challenges for SAMA in carrying out its mandated responsibilities. These relate to entry onto property, statutory immunity for SAMA employees, issues regarding municipalities opting back into SAMA services, and

reinspection deadlines.

The proposed change regarding right of entry onto property would allow assessment appraisers to enter onto a property for inspection after making reasonable efforts to notify the owner or occupant of the property. This is consistent with the authority provided to municipal employees in *The Cities Act*, in *The Municipalities Act*, and proposed for *The Northern Municipalities Act, 2009*.

An amendment is proposed to provide SAMA officials and employees with similar liability protection as provided municipal employees under *The Cities Act*, *The Municipalities Act*, and *The Northern Municipalities Act, 2009*. Mr. Speaker, providing SAMA and its employees with the same authority and protection that municipalities already have will improve the organizational flexibility and efficiency of the agency.

A provision is added to address problems associated with a municipality opting back into SAMA and subsequent budget issues. SAMA will have the ability and flexibility to charge for services beyond the 65/35 provincial-municipal shares where it would be unfair for all municipalities collectively to be expected to fund them.

As requested by SAMA, references to property reinspection periods are removed from the AMA [Assessment Management Agency] Acts. Subsequent amendments to the Assessment Management Agency regulations will remove the property reinspection deadlines that are currently set. This change is to better reflect industry standards. The deadlines have proved to be impractical. SAMA and municipalities need the flexibility to target reinspection activities to property that most needs it. Municipalities will have to work with SAMA to determine the timing of reinspections.

Mr. Speaker, the amendments brought forward today have been proposed after careful consideration to ensure the assessment policy for the province is consistent with provincial goals; to ensure the legislation is consistent with changes to the education property tax system, including the change to the composition of the board and the funding for the agency; and to make changes that will help SAMA to improve its effectiveness. Accordingly I move second reading of Bill No. 127, the assessment agency amendment Act, 2009.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Municipal Affairs has moved second reading of Bill No. 127, *The Assessment Management Agency Amendment Act, 2009*. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Ms. Higgins: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I have to say that while I looked at the Bill, the minister's comments actually caused a bit more, quite a bit more concern than what reading the Bill and having a glance at it has. So I'm going to have to go through and pay particular attention to a couple of areas, the minister's comments also. And I hope all the cheering from his side of the House was that it was the first Bill as a minister that he's actually put in place.

An Hon. Member: — No. Actually five.

Ms. Higgins: — Oh, five. Okay. He's actually been working a

little harder than I thought, Mr. Speaker.

But I hope it wasn't in support of all the comments that he made because when he talks about making SAMA more in line with government goals, he really needs to look back at the mandate of SAMA and what it was put in place to address, and the role that SAMA plays across this province and why it was put into place, Mr. Speaker. Because you don't have to go back very long and you will see that reassessment didn't take place over many, many, many years in this province. And it has nothing to do with who made right decisions or who didn't. But the fact of the matter is one of the roles of government is making good public policy decisions that will move the province forward.

And when we had run into a time, and I believe — I know some of my colleagues may be able to correct me on this, but I believe — we had been at 1965 assessment levels in this province. Saskatchewan's property values were considerably out of whack and out of step with what was happening in other places, not only across Canada, but beyond. So SAMA took this job to put in place reassessment. And I have to tell you, Mr. Speaker, after going through this a number of times, it is a painful process. It is a painful process for government who moves ahead with reassessment and making sure that the property values and the assessment rates that are in place across this province are consistent with standards that are recognized and met in other areas of the country.

You cannot leave Saskatchewan at the whim of politicians when it comes to assessment. There needs to be a process in place. So when the minister stands and says SAMA needs to better reflect the priorities of the government and the goals of the government, that causes a great deal of worry.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's surprising how the government was quite quick to make the changes to SAMA because they said education funding doesn't rely on education property tax anymore. But it does. So they have removed the members from the board, made some changes to the board of SAMA. Did that quite quickly, but yet we aren't going to see an actual funding formula in place for another two years in education. So meanwhile education is being really minimized, I feel, in this province when we see that their input is no longer required or no longer felt that it's required at SAMA. We're still talking at 10.08 mills is still the provincial rate. That still has a huge effect on the education system right across this province, but the government's saying, no, it doesn't matter. You're off the board — moved.

Now the minister also made the comment, and a question that came to mind for me was, well is the education system still helping fund SAMA? Because there was a reliance for education on the funding that came through the assessment that SAMA put in place. Education rightfully made a contribution towards the operation of SAMA. Now the minister says, no that's been changed. It's now going to come through the Ministry of Finance.

So my question to the minister is, does that mean that funding will go into the education system, or is he just shuffling the money? Is it just basically where you're running the money through? Is it the same money comes off the operating funding for the Department of Education that just moves into the

Department of Finance and is shuffled through to SAMA differently? Or is that money being reinstated to the Department of Education into funding education across the province? Because it's no small change, Mr. Speaker. It's not small change. And it can have a huge impact, especially when the government is saying quite clearly this year, zero per cent increase to funding. So that means there are many, many school boards across the province that are worried about the funding. They are worried about the funding because a zero per cent increase in fact is a reduction to services.

Because, Mr. Speaker, each of us will know that this government has approved considerable increases to utilities over the last two years, increased cost to your household budget. So if my income is going up or staying the same and I have a zero per cent increase, my costs are still continuing to rise.

And that's no different than the school boards who are looking after facilities scattered over their districts. That is no different than school boards who have increased costs to manage through their board budgets, multiple facilities to look after. And, Mr. Speaker, we are putting our faith in them in educating the children of this province to build a better future for all of us and to build a better future for each and every one of the smallest citizens in this province. So it's not small change.

And if we're just playing a shell game with the money, then that's a problem, Mr. Speaker. You're discounting the education system. You're discounting the people who have sat on this board and have contributed to SAMA and the assessments that have been done. And you are discounting each and every citizen in this province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, those are questions that we'll have to get into in more detail once . . . as we move along with this piece of legislation. And even more, we'll know when the budget comes out on the 24th how the money's been shuffled and if it is just a shell game. Because I have to say, Mr. Speaker, there is not a great deal of comfort with this government and their financial figures that have been released and the shell game that has happened with the budget of this province. And open and accountable has not been a strong suit of this government. So there's a number of concerns and a number of questions — well many, many questions — that are going to come out as this Bill moves forward.

Mr. Speaker, when the minister said to bring SAMA more in line with government goals and he repeated it a couple of times throughout his comments for the second reading for this Bill, and he talked about consistent with education property tax or the changes and the goals of the government. He repeated it again. And he talked about a sober second look.

Do you know what? SAMA is a group of very professional individuals who have worked hard in this province to make sure that the assessments were appropriate, and they have been more than accommodating. When it comes to answering questions, they are out, they have public meetings. They attend some very difficult meetings that I would . . . You know what? I bet that half the members on the government side wouldn't go to meetings as difficult as some of the ones that SAMA goes to. They send the bureaucrats out. That's what they do. They send

the bureaucrats out. And they do it over and over again. But you know what? Then they have the nerve to stand in this House and say, well SAMA needs to give some sober second thought to some of the decisions they have made. Gives them time.

Well you know what? That's inappropriate. It's inappropriate. And, Mr. Speaker, when we look at this Bill it just . . . I have to say the minister's comments raised more questions for me than what the Bill did. I had questions on the education side. I had questions on the education funding and how that is going to be dealt with, but the minister's comments really raised many more questions than I had before. And it really calls into question the changes that are happening to SAMA, and it calls into question political interference, Mr. Speaker, with an agency that has provided a professional service right across the province, the goals of the government.

This province has always prided itself on a very professional civil service and they have provided good public policy and good service to the people of this province for many years. And, Mr. Speaker, they are recognized for the public policy and the service that they provide. And there has to be a process in place. There has to be respect for the opinions and the expertise that these people bring. And I'm really nervous that that is not there.

[14:45]

And as I said before, you know, being government isn't just the fun stuff. It isn't just blowing, you know, 3 to \$4 billion, ending up with a \$1 billion deficit. Oh let the good times roll, Mr. Speaker. Part of it is making sure that you are providing and putting in place a good foundation for this province and everyone in it to be able to move forward. It's not about me and my friends; it's about every citizen in this province. And that's where this whole Bill just smacks many people right in the face and in the good sensibility that Saskatchewan people possess.

So, Mr. Speaker, there is a number of areas, gosh, that have just jumped up and questions that are just screaming to be asked. And when we look at . . . I guess another one of the comments that I scribbled down quickly as I was listening to the minister, that SAMA needs to look at the economic impact that needs to be considered by SAMA in their assessment.

And he also spoke about getting rid of timelines and timetables. Now I need to review his speech. I do need to review his speech to make sure that I heard everything correctly, and it will actually provide a number of questions for estimates and when we are . . . Not in estimates but in committee, when we are dealing on a more detailed basis with the Bill.

But there are some problems. There are some real problems with the comments that were made. Are you going to play politics with the assessment? And I know there were some problems with some of the classes and the assessment that took place and how it took place. I know there was problems with seed-cleaning plants where some adjustments were made. I know there was problems with hotel, motels and the assessment that took place there.

But there is opportunity to make adjustments and to either ease it in or review. And my understanding is that when the process to do with seed-cleaning plants was reviewed, they had realized

that there had been a factor that had been used that was incorrect. And if the process had gone too far and the taxes had already been paid . . . Now they have a term for it, Mr. Speaker, but it has to do with the tax roll. If that step had already been taken, then a reassessment and a review would be done before the next tax notice was issued. So wrong factor was used; SAMA realized the mistake was there. A number of facilities had their changes made this tax year. Others will have it made next tax year before the tax notices come out.

So the system isn't perfect, but do you know what? Of all the properties that they deal with, of all of the very complicated assessment processes that they go through to make sure that we have legitimate, accurate assessments done on all of the properties in this province, that's pretty small, the errors that we will see.

And SAMA has always been and the professionals that work there have always been more than willing to talk to people that are having a problem. There's a formal process you can go through of reassessment and appeals that you can go through, but SAMA itself and the people that work there, in my experience, have always been more than willing to sit down and explain some of the difficult decisions that they've had to make.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, this reassessment brings Saskatchewan up to 2006 values — 2006. That does not cover the boom. That covers a beginning of our economy to start to take off, prices starting to rise, but not that spike we had much after that. So if people figure that this assessment was so terrible and it's just so out of line with what's happening in the province, this assessment isn't even there yet. We're at 2006 values. That's what this assessment brings us up to.

So, Mr. Speaker, there needs to be a regular process of reassessment to make sure that the businesses and the residences and the values in this province are assessed at a current level, and there also needs to be a respect for the professionals that provide this service.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'm hoping it was in just the minister's comments — that we don't see this political interference directly into SAMA with adjusting a timetable or getting rid of a timetable, that somehow it should be up to the will of politicians to make these decisions and have an opportunity to make any type of adjustments in them.

Mr. Speaker, I have a number of other questions. But I want once more to be able to go through the legislation and have a talk with some of the interested parties about this Bill. And I know that there are a number of my colleagues that have an interest in looking at this Bill a little more closely, especially after the minister's comments. So at this time, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to adjourn debate on Bill 127.

The Speaker: — The member from Moose Jaw Wakamow has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 127. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried.

Bill No. 128 — *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Labour Mobility) Amendment Act, 2009*

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to take this opportunity to move second reading of *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Labour Mobility) Amendment Act, 2009*.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan finds itself in a unique situation regarding our labour market. While we know we're not immune from what's going on around us and the global financial contagion that has swept across the globe in recent months, and at the same time we certainly are aware that we have a very unique circumstance within Saskatchewan and within the country. That is, we continue to have the lowest unemployment rate in Canada. We know that there have been layoffs here within Saskatchewan. That's why we put in place a number of public policy instruments to help those people, and we've helped them by the thousands.

Today we have the lowest unemployment rate in the country and, most recently, we've had more encouraging news and that is our working people are earning more on average than ever before. In fact we've seen more than 55,000 jobs posted on the saskjobs.ca website since April 1st. Clearly there is a demand today and we anticipate that that will continue to grow for skilled workers. As economies in Canada and around the world enter this recovery, this is not going to be unique for Saskatchewan.

Compounding the issue is the demographic reality that will see a significant number of working people in our province leave the labour market in the coming years. Clearly we need to make sure that we're able to fill that void and that we're acting in a strategic fashion in order to meet what I call our talent challenge. To do that, we are helping to ensure that we're investing more in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and we can think of a number of initiatives where we are investing in First Nations and Métis communities, Mr. Speaker. We also want to make sure that we're encouraging our expats to come back home, Mr. Speaker, and we're encouraging newcomers from across the country and around the world to come. In fact most recently we've had more encouraging news where we've set a new population record for the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, this marks a philosophical shift. Under this government, the province is moving forward. That stands in stark contrast to when it was ruled by the members opposite in the NDP. Mr. Speaker, that's why I'm very pleased to bring forward *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Labour Mobility) Amendment Act* for the second reading today.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan employers and industries as well as broader community stakeholders — what the OECD [Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development] refers to as social partners — have long been asking government to develop new and commonsense and comprehensive solutions to address our ongoing labour market shortages. That, Mr. Speaker, is exactly what we are acting on. These amendments reflect our contribution to a vital

pan-Canadian framework that has been put in place by the leading decisions makers across this country, regardless of partisan stripes, to ensure full labour mobility for all Canadians.

Mr. Speaker, this is a thorough approach which is making it easier for employers to find working people, and new opportunities for working people to find meaningful employment right across the country. This legislation will ensure compliance with the Council of the Federation's commitment regarding the Agreement on Internal Trade, and especially noted under chapter 7.

Mr. Speaker, I should note that Saskatchewan has been part, as the members opposite will know, of the AIT [Agreement on Internal Trade] since it has come into effect in the mid-1990s. Since then all provinces and territories have been working towards eliminating barriers to trade, investment, and labour mobility within the country. Today, Mr. Speaker, we are taking the next step on that journey, a step that ensures that workers from across the country will be more easily able to bring their skills and knowledge and expertise to Saskatchewan and a variety of other Canadian jurisdictions. The amendments proposed in the Act will ensure that residency is not an issue to labour mobility and that workers certified in another province or territory may be recognized in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the amendments made in the Act are the result of a government-wide effort. The Act affects 37 regulated professions which are overseen by no less than 14 government ministries. Each of these ministries has and continues to consult with regulators to ensure that Saskatchewan will achieve full labour mobility as set out in the AIT. These consultations are absolutely vital to this ongoing process. Most importantly, they ensure that the health and safety of Saskatchewan residents is safeguarded. They also help to ensure that Saskatchewan residents will continue to see work done at the same professional standards that we've become accustomed to.

The AIT allows provincial governments to continue to set occupational standards as required and to establish appropriate levels of protection for the people of this province. While regulated professions across Canada have a high degree of commonality, this provision allows the Government of Saskatchewan to work with regulatory bodies to ensure that the best interests of our people right across the province remain safeguarded. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to move second reading *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Labour Mobility) Amendment Act, 2009*. And for that, Mr. Speaker, I would say thank you.

The Speaker: — The Minister Responsible for Advanced Education, Employment and Labour has moved second reading of Bill No. 128, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Labour Mobility) Amendment Act, 2009*. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And the first thing that comes to mind, you know, the minister stands and he says, well there's 55,000 jobs on SaskJobs listed on there. Now I haven't looked at it, Mr. Speaker. I'm not looking for a job, but I'm sure there are many, many across the province who have.

But I would have to say as I look through, I believe the minister

said this covers 37 professions. Would any of these jobs be filled by people within these professions? And who exactly or whom exactly is the minister looking to keep happy with this piece of legislation on labour mobility? Because you know, Mr. Speaker, in all the time I've been in the workforce and in public life, I have never heard concerns with people moving interprovincially to be able to find work and be able to qualify for a job in one province or another.

In fact the SaskParty used to stand up and say, whoa, everybody's moving to Alberta or everybody's moving here. So now all of a sudden we need a labour mobility agreement to what, facilitate that? Now the minister . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh to bring them back. So it's like the SaskParty's built a bit of a fence, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Once they're somewhere else, they can't come back.

Now I know the minister did make a mistake in his graduate tax legislation because he did not include other people who had received their education outside of Saskatchewan. And when they came to Saskatchewan to work . . . Or they may have been born and raised here, were educated outside of the province. And it could have been something quite easily that wasn't offered within the province of Saskatchewan.

But when the minister first put in his piece of legislation and talked about it being the best package in Canada, which we won't argue the fine points, but he ignored these people who were moving back to Saskatchewan until the member from the opposition, from Saskatoon, raised it a number of times in this House — that the minister had missed that piece entirely and had to make some changes.

And we're glad he did. We're glad that he's open to suggestions and that he actually . . . Now he can claim it for his own if he likes, but that's kind of an ego thing, Mr. Speaker. And it really doesn't matter because as long as things are being improved for Saskatchewan people, that's fine. If he wants to take credit for it, he can. But there is one other thing I would like him just to do, put a little bit of effort into. Now the minister is from the University of Saskatchewan. That's where he worked is my understanding.

An Hon. Member: — Alberta.

[15:00]

Ms. Higgins: — What's that? Oh, he's talking to me, Mr. Speaker. We won't get into that. But when he says this whole change has taken place in the last two years, well he really needs to get his head out of the sand and have a look because the economy of Saskatchewan has been doing well for a number of years. We have been a have province a number of years before the Saskatchewan Party was elected. And while he may have been doing some good work up at the University of Saskatchewan, I'm sure he isn't responsible for Saskatchewan being a have province because it happened long before he entered political life. So he really needs to kind of contain his ego, just a wee bit, Mr. Speaker, because it's getting a little bit out of control.

But, Mr. Speaker, when we look at this Bill, a number of the comments that the minister made, you know like, who is having

problems. And this is much like the . . . What was the trade agreement? Oh, TILMA [Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement], TILMA, that was it. They were hot-to-trot to sign TILMA and got a fair bit of push back on that. So now they've signed, it's called something else. I think it's the same thing though. Anyway it was a partnership . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well that's okay because if you want to stand up and debate, you're more than welcome to. You can explain it all to us.

But, Mr. Speaker, they won't release any information. They won't release any information on any of it, so it's all a secret. We need it really badly; we need this legislation really badly. We need to have this labour mobility. And the minister points to this 55,000 jobs posted on SaskJobs. Do we know, would any of these professions fill those jobs? Are any of these professions listed on SaskJobs? I don't know, Mr. Speaker, but it raises a number of questions.

And when I see some of the other, what should I say, liberties that the minister has taken when he explains some of the wonderful things that he's initiated and he's doing and his government is doing which are straying somewhat from the facts, then I have to start worrying about the legislation. And if his reality is getting that far out there, well maybe his reality with this piece of legislation isn't quite what we're expecting either, so it just gives us cause that there is a number of questions that need to be asked.

And when the minister is proudly standing up and saying, well it makes it easier for employers. And then I think about a couple pages later in his comments, then he finally mentioned employees. And it's kind of when you look at essential services and you look at the changes to *The Trade Union Act* and you look at the changes to the trespass Act or the implementation of the trespass Act.

You look at . . . I mean the comments with the Minister of Health today about chiropractors, how he bargains. Well if he's got the money, okay, he'll keep his word. If he doesn't have the money, well he's just going to ignore all the work that's gone on and the contributions that chiropractors made.

We look at the piece of legislation that was put in place for Victoria Park Capital, Mr. Speaker. Didn't like the agreement, didn't like what had been negotiated, but they sit down and talk about it and do it the way professionals do it? No. They just tabled a piece of legislation that yanked the agreement null and void.

So we've seen the kind of partnerships, we've seen the kind of co-operation that this government likes to put forward and how one-sided their views can be many, many times, Mr. Speaker — more times than what we would actually like to admit.

Anyway, I get back to my comments. The minister made the comment that this was easier for employers because we've seen, through the legislation I just mentioned, that he doesn't have great consideration for employees, nor is there anything comprehensive that really looks at . . . You need more than a piece of legislation. You need good wages. You need good health care. And we're struggling with doctors leaving this province, Mr. Speaker. They're worse, worse than it's been in

many, many years.

You need good housing. You need affordable housing, and you need housing opportunities for people where they need it. And it's not just Saskatoon and Regina where students, where employees, where families moving into our communities are having trouble. It's in Estevan. It's in Weyburn. It's in Shaunavon. Mr. Speaker, we could go to many, many communities in your area. We can go into the North, in the west side of the province or the east side of the province. Housing is, affordable housing is a real issue. Small communities, especially, because they have even less choice than what we do in communities that may be a little larger. So you can't just put in a piece of legislation and say we're going to have this mobility across Canada. Because we don't want people just driving across Saskatchewan; we want them staying here. But you have to have the necessities of life. It has to be attractive.

And you can't just whack everyone over the head with what you want them to do, like essential services, the changes to *The Trade Union Act*, Victoria Park Capital. I mean, I'm sure businesses across this province were real impressed with that one from this group that says they're a bunch of wizards of the business world, but yet they put in a piece of legislation like that. Mr. Speaker, that's appalling. And I'm sure there are many business people across this province that were not happy when that was done. Business for entrepreneurs? Give me a break. Why would they do that when they can just put in a piece of legislation that makes everything go their way? And that's what they've done.

In some areas, Mr. Speaker, in some areas of life and in communities, that would be considered bullying. And I would say, you know, have a look at the Education website. There is a whole program on anti-bullying programs that can be put in place. And I'm sure the Sask Party caucus could probably benefit from looking at that anti-bullying legislation and see what it means to actually really deal with the people of this province, and not just people who are like-minded. Because that's one of the challenges of government.

And it goes back to the SAMA legislation that we were talking about previously. Not everything's your way. We have to deal with the processes that are in place, and there's a reason for that. There's a reason for that, Mr. Speaker, because they have been developed over many, many years. Good times, bad times, these processes have been in place. Will they be refined and improved? I hope so. Will they be updated and made relevant to the way society operates and to the issues of our communities and the issues within the province? I hope so.

But, Mr. Speaker, when we see things thrown out like this — just put out like isn't this a wonderful idea, and darn I've done a good job — you need to look at the big picture. And you need to look at the whole picture because you have to make sure that you are addressing all of the needs of Saskatchewan people and not just what suits your agenda. And there are processes in place, and there are many other things that have to be looked at besides this.

And the minister has impact in a number of areas that would be a bonus to attracting people — not just people from other parts of Canada, but from around the world, to this province. And he

needs to look at the broad picture, not this one Bill like it's going to fix so many things and fill those 55,000 jobs that are listed on SaskJobs.

That's really stuck in my mind you know, Mr. Speaker, that 55,000 jobs on SaskJobs. I'm going to have to go in and have a look to see if any of these professions would actually fill those jobs or are any of these professions listed on SaskJobs? I don't know if anyone has a computer and they want to have a look if any of the 55,000 jobs that are listed, the minister says 55,000 jobs are listed on SaskJobs right now. So if any of these professions . . . Are any of these professions listed on those 55,000 jobs?

You know, so you can't fight or build your arguments from using some really bogus numbers . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well that's what your minister said. You know, he said 55,000. But my question is, are any of these professions listed in this Bill? Are they posted on that job site? Because if it isn't, well the minister is using some pretty bogus arguments to really support his Bill.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's a number of areas that we need to really look at. Also some of the self-governing, self-regulating professions, what their opinions are to changes being made. And as always, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Saskatchewan is well known or Saskatchewan used to be well known.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has always been known for the value that it placed on working people. Up until a couple of years ago anyway, Saskatchewan had a remarkable reputation for what we had done to ensure safe workplaces and value working people, no matter what the profession, across this province.

Well that reputation has suffered somewhat over the last couple of years under this Sask Party government. It is important. And I know that self-regulating professions have always taken great pride in being just that — self-regulating — and that they have set standards that they believe are important to the people of Saskatchewan and important to those professions here in the province of Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Speaker, to see the minister just roll this out, 37 professions that he feels need to be opened up. And I'm hoping he means opened up to consistent standards across Canada, not a race for the bottom. And that's always the fear, is that instead of opening standards and leading best practice across Canada, we will meet the lowest common denominator of all the regulations across Canada. And that's the fear. That we need to make sure that the standards are upheld because many of these self-regulating professions have put in place standards that they feel are important.

So is the minister committing to maintain that high professional standard that these professions have for themselves, or is he looking at downgrading to the lowest common denominator? That's the question, Mr. Speaker. It's a big one.

So I've got a number of issues with the arguments that the minister put forward and also numerous questions about the Bill itself. But there are a number of people that are active in these professions that we would like to do some further consultations

with, so, Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to adjourn debate on Bill 128.

The Speaker: — The member from Moose Jaw Wakamow has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 128. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried.

Bill No. 124 — *The Legal Profession Amendment Act, 2009*

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order, order. It seems that there are some members that would like to have a discussion, a bit of a dialogue. If they'd move behind the bar so that we could hear the member on the floor, that would be appreciated. I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of *The Legal Profession Amendment Act, 2009*. Mr. Speaker, this Bill is being introduced at the request of the Law Society of Saskatchewan.

The Law Society is the professional regulatory body that oversees the legal profession in the public interest. This oversight is performed by elected and appointed benchers who act as the governing body or by the professional staff of the society. The Law Society and the government recognize that it is in the interests of everyone that any complaint is dealt with as quickly and as expeditiously as possible. Accordingly the amendments will streamline the Law Society discipline process in a number of ways.

First, the Act will allow the benchers of the Law Society to delegate non-decision-making functions to the professional staff of the Law Society.

[15:15]

Secondly, and perhaps the most important change, is that the amendments will permit a hearing committee to impose any appropriate penalties including suspension and disbarment of the lawyer if that is the appropriate course of action.

Currently, Mr. Speaker, sentencing for serious misconduct is often a two-stage process. First, the hearing committee determines whether the complaint is well founded. Then, sometimes months later, all of the other benchers must gather to impose the penalty. Saskatchewan is the only jurisdiction in Canada that has this two-stage process for the legal profession. *The Legal Profession Act, 1990* is the only legislation in Saskatchewan that has such a process for a professional discipline. This will be amended, and a significant amount of time will be reduced in the discipline process.

Other amendments include clearly separating the investigative and adjudicative functions of the Law Society. This separation is already in place at the Law Society. It is important for the public to feel that their interests are protected and that an investigation and disciplinary decisions are made by different people. The amendment will make the current practice a legislative requirement.

Currently only a lawyer can appeal a finding of conduct unbecoming or a penalty to the Court of Appeal. It may be in the public interest however for a decision or a penalty to be appealed by the Law Society. Therefore the amendments will allow the conduct investigation committee to appeal a dismissal of a complaint or a penalty if the committee feels it is not appropriate for the conduct in question.

Other amendments remove the requirement for lawyers to have permission of the Law Society to resign their memberships. Further amendments include changing the rules for closing trust accounts when a small amount is held for a client who cannot be found, changing the limitation period for prosecution of unauthorized practice of law by non-lawyers from one year to two years, increasing the membership of the Law Foundation by two members. There are also, Mr. Speaker, several housekeeping amendments.

Finally, for the first time, the Law Society's dues and objectives will be clearly articulated in the legislation. For many years, the Law Society has had a mission statement that eloquently identifies its roles and purposes to govern the legal profession in the public interest.

Mr. Speaker, it is important that the legislature and the people of Saskatchewan recognize the exceptional value that lawyers and the Law Society bring to the province. The public is well served and will continue to be well served by these amendments.

Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to now move second reading of *The Legal Profession Amendment Act, 2009*.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Justice has moved second reading of Bill No. 124, *The Legal Profession Amendment Act, 2009*. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I want to thank the minister for the comments that he made on Bill 124, *An Act to amend The Legal Profession Act*. And when he made the comments right at the very beginning that it had been requested by the Law Society, and as I go through it, Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to profess any expertise in area of the law. It looks like a number of hearings, a hearing committee, a number of changes that have been made.

And, Mr. Speaker, I really believe that . . . well I know that I need to talk to a couple of my colleagues and some other stakeholders, other people that will have a better understanding of what has been done, where changes need to be made to facilitate some improvements for obviously something that has been an issue for the Law Society.

So, Mr. Speaker, at this point in time in order that my colleagues and I may have time to have a better look at the suggested changes or the recommended changes for *The Legal Profession Act*, I will adjourn debate at this point in time on Bill 124.

The Speaker: — The member from Moose Jaw Wakamow has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 124. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 100

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

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

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to enter into the discussions regarding the transfer of the assets and liabilities of the Doukhobors of Canada C.C.U.B. [Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood] Trust Fund and then the repeal of *The Doukhobors of Canada C.C.U.B. Trust Fund Act*.

Mr. Speaker, as I understand it, what the government intends to do is to wrap up the Doukhobors of Canada trust fund and transfer the assets and liabilities of the board and the fund to any person, agency, organization, association, enterprise, institution, or body within or outside of Saskatchewan that in the opinion of the Lieutenant Governor in Council is capable of representing the interests of the Doukhobors of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, we have had a chance to consult with some members of the Doukhobor community. And it's not at all clear that this is precisely what the Doukhobor community in our province is interested in having done with this particular piece of legislation.

And so, Mr. Speaker, when the minister stood in the Assembly and introduced the Bill, he indicated that there was no public policy reason for the government to be involved in this endeavour any more and that they were going to transfer the monies to some entity, but they weren't clear in terms of what entity they were going to transfer the assets to.

Now I understand that there is close to \$300,000 in assets. And historically what's happened is that the interest from the assets has been distributed between Doukhobor societies in Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia. And there was a man that basically . . . His name is Larry Ewashen, and he's the man that introduced in 2006 sort of a history of how this fund came into being. And I think what he found useful and what we are interested in is that this board made grants to recognize non-profit organizations who were dedicated to establishing and maintaining the heritage and culture of the Doukhobors of Canada.

And, Mr. Speaker, as a young person growing up I had the, I guess, the privilege to know a guy by the name of Jim Wright that wrote the definitive history of the Doukhobors, certainly in Saskatchewan. And that book was *Slava Bohu*.

And there is a proud history of Doukhobors who came to our province who settled in communities in the Blaine Lake area and in the eastern part of Saskatchewan around Veregin. And in fact we were very pleased that in 2005 that we were able to designate the Doukhobor Dugout House at Veregin as a provincial heritage site. And we thought that that was important to do during the province's 100th anniversary.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we know that the Government of Canada originally promised the Doukhobors that they could hold land in common and be exempted from military service and that many of those promises to Doukhobor citizens in our country were not honoured. And we also know that there was a split in the Doukhobor community that led to basically three different groups of people, and we had a number of people that moved to British Columbia in the area of Castlegar.

The Doukhobors that stayed behind were called independents, as they were willing to swear an oath to the Queen and they were open to the idea of private land. Mr. Speaker, according to *The Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan* virtually all Doukhobors in our province today are descendants of those independents, those Doukhobors that were prepared to swear an oath to the Queen.

Mr. Speaker, this trust fund was established by the NDP Allan Blakeney government in 1980 to administer the funds of the former Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood, a co-operative that owned a number of assets in Western Canada until it was foreclosed upon in the late 1930s. And the money that was left in the C.C.U.B. fund was combined with the proceeds of the sale of former Doukhobor reserve lands that had been held in an account supervised by the Government of Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, as I said, a document that's been provided to us by a BC [British Columbia] member of the board of the C.C.U.B., Larry Ewashen, notes that these parcels of land originally belonged to the communal Doukhobors who had left for British Columbia.

So when this trust fund was established in 1980, there was approximately \$267,000 in the fund. And the principal was to be invested forever, and the interest earned on the fund's investment was meant to preserve Doukhobor culture in our province. And organizations could apply for project funding, and that's what's important.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we will be very interested to hear from the minister exactly who in the Doukhobor community in Saskatchewan is asking for the dissolution of the trust fund and to get rid of the legislation because that's important. Because there are many older Doukhobors, who certainly we have come to know in opposition, who have worked very, very hard to preserve Doukhobor historic sites and culture. And they're very proud of that. And the money that this trust provides for them allows them to hold onto that Doukhobor heritage and to fund the historic sites that we have in our province.

And I think any of us that have ever gone to Veregin have been hosted by the Doukhobor community in Veregin who have taken us to their sites to show us what the Doukhobor community did and contributed to our province.

And I will be very interested to hear very clearly from the minister who exactly in the Doukhobor community is calling on the Government of Saskatchewan to get rid of this fund because we haven't been able to find people that we know in the Doukhobor community that are calling for this. And I think it's important that the minister clearly put that on the record because he didn't do that in his speech.

He was not at all clear with us in his speech why the government was going to dissolve this Act. He did tell us that there wasn't any compelling public policy reasons why government should continue to be involved in the trust fund. Well he says the government's role in the management of the trust fund is negligible. Well, Mr. Speaker, there are historic reasons why we have pieces of legislation. It does not mean that people in the ministries or the ministers spend all of their time worrying about legislation. But there are people in our province where pieces of legislation are important to them because of their historic significance and what those Bills mean to them.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the minister says that he consulted with the Doukhobors of Canada trust fund board regarding the proposed changes to the Act. Well let's understand that there are representatives from British Columbia, representatives from Alberta, representatives from Saskatchewan. As well the Government of British Columbia and the Government of Saskatchewan appoint someone to the trust fund board. As I understand it, he says, and we've been informed that they'll be proceeding to investigate a new corporate structure. Well I think if I was being told on a board that the government was going to blow up my legislation, I would be seeking to find some other structure. But the question is, is this the government's idea or is this coming from the community? And that's not at all clear that this is coming from the community.

Mr. Speaker, we know in this province that the Doukhobors have an interesting and proud tradition. There have been some brilliant books written about that tradition, in particular I think Jim Wright's book called *Slava Bohu* that talks about what Doukhobor people had to endure when they came to this province and where they came from and the promises that were made to them by the Government of Canada that were not fulfilled. We need to ensure that history is not repeated in a rush to adopt this Bill. We need to consult with the descendants of Doukhobor citizens to ensure that the Bill meets these needs. And we also need to consult very closely with the people of Veregin, the people of Blaine Lake to make sure that this is what they want us to do.

[15:30]

Because Allan Blakeney didn't introduce this legislation without having consulted with the Doukhobor community, and in fact he introduced the legislation with the insistence and support of the Doukhobor community in our province. So I will want the minister to tell us who exactly in the Doukhobor community in the province of Saskatchewan is asking for us to dissolve this historic piece of legislation.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I will take my chair. And I'm looking forward to being in committee with the ministry to hear from him who it is, the names of the individuals. Because certainly we know who the Doukhobor community is in this

province, who's actively involved with those historic sites, who's involved in ensuring that the history of the Doukhobors in our province is being preserved.

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

Ms. Atkinson: — Oh, I'm adjourning debate. Sorry.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

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 Regina Northeast.

Mr. Harper: — Well thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I didn't realize it was my turn so quickly, and here I was waiting and anxiously waiting for my name to be called. And my name has been called, so I'm up and want to say what a great pleasure it is to have the opportunity to enter into this particular debate — the debate on, soon as I find the Bill here, debate on the Act to amend certain statutes with respect to matters concerning professional discipline.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is Bill No. 103 and it's an interesting Bill, Mr. Speaker. I have had the opportunity to briefly, briefly go through it. And I'm certain it needs more work than that. But it's truly an opportunity to enter into this debate and to do so on behalf of the fine people in Regina Northeast.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, you will agree with me that whenever you or I or any member of the Assembly here have had the opportunity to travel this great province of ours here in Saskatchewan that, wherever we've travelled, whoever, whatever community we may have stopped in for either services or lunch, it's quite easy to strike up a conversation with somebody within that community. And you find them — people in Saskatchewan — to be friendly and warm and quite receptive.

And I can say the same for the people in Regina Northeast, Mr. Speaker, that there are no finer people in this great province than those fine people who have given me the privilege and the honour to be in this Assembly and to represent them here and to bring their thoughts and their concerns forward on this particular Bill, as I'm sure as the days go on we'll have the opportunity on other Bills. But on this particular Bill, Mr. Speaker, it is certainly my pleasure to be here.

This is a Bill that certainly governs the disciplinary actions, I

guess you'd say, of professional agencies and professions. And it's a little similar to the experience I had a number of years back when I had the privilege of being the government Co-Chair of the Saskatchewan Construction Panel. And I hope the Construction Panel is still in existence and still operating well in this province . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And my colleague across the way indicates that it is, and I'm sure that with him at the helm as the government Co-Chair, I'm sure that it's in very capable hands. But we had the opportunity at that time, Mr. Speaker, to look into an issue that was brought to our attention by the architects in Saskatchewan here, and it was a limitation of liability issue.

And at that time in this province, as in other provinces, there was no real limit to the responsibility of individuals who may have been involved in construction projects, either presently or in the past. And that brought a fair amount of concern to a number of professional agencies that were involved with the Saskatchewan Construction Panel, not the least of which was the architects. But they sort of headed it up, I guess you would say, in wanting to make some changes to that Act and to their ongoing liability issues.

I can remember one of the gentlemen who was representing the architect profession on the panel used to say that the limitations existed to 10 years past death. Well I don't know if it went quite that far, Mr. Speaker, but there certainly was no limit to the liability issue at that time in this province. So the Saskatchewan Construction Panel sort of headed up the initiative to look at what was done in other provinces. What was the liability issue in Manitoba, what was the liability issue in Ontario as far as length of time is concerned, and how long was somebody involved in a construction project in Manitoba liable for that project? Was it two years after the completion of the project or was it 10 years after? What was the average?

We looked at what was going on in Manitoba as far as the legislation was concerned. We contacted Ontario and got briefing notes from Ontario in regards to the limitation of liability issue in Ontario and the same in Alberta and British Columbia. And it was an interesting issue, Mr. Speaker, because when you say that there was no limit to the responsibility or liability issue where the responsibility of individuals involved in the construction project — and that's exactly what it was — it wasn't, and I want to make this clear, it wasn't isolated just to the architects. It wasn't isolated just to the designers of the project.

The responsibility fell upon everybody involved in that project, whether it be the architect, whether it be the designer, whether it be the individual contractor who took on the contract, the general contractor, or any of the subtrades that may have taken on their responsibilities, whether it be the plumbers or the electricians or the carpenters or whether it be the individual who worked on that project. They were all liable. They were all liable and that created a problem because of the issue of ongoing liabilities and the ability for professions to get insurance to cover those liabilities since there was no end to it. There was no end to the liability issue.

So it was through the initiative of the Saskatchewan Construction Panel, and primarily headed by the architects, that the government, the previous government took note of that and

certainly did a consultation process across this province. It was a lengthy consultation process. I believe it took nearly a year or thereabouts for the Department of Justice to consult with all the various aspects of those people who would be affected by any change and then brought back a report that indicated that, that basically indicated and suggested that the rule of thumb today in Canada here was a limiting of that liability to 10 years. That was what was used in Alberta. I believe that was what was common practice in Manitoba. Ontario, if my memory serves me correctly, was longer. I believe Ontario was about 15 years.

But here in Saskatchewan, we chose to limit that liability to 10 years so that after 10 years, a project was 10 years old, individuals involved in the construction of the initial stages of that project were no longer liable for it.

It was really unfair because individuals who were responsible for designing it, designing the project, for simply being the contractor involved in the project, perhaps just a general contractor, not physically involved in the construction of it, but the general contractor, the subcontractors and subtrades that were responsible for that issue was liable on an ongoing basis, for basically forever and a day. And that liability continued with them despite the fact that they had no control over the maintenance. There was no control or input on their part as far as the maintenance of the project or the maintenance of the building was concerned.

And as you know, Mr. Speaker, and I'm sure all the members here in this House would agree, that any project, any construction project, any building built or any other project, it has to be maintained if you're going to expect some longevity out of it. And here we had a group of individuals who were responsible for the construction of the project, who were responsible for the building of the project, responsible for the designing of it, and yet they had no input into the maintenance of that project but yet they were liable for it. They were liable for it. So if there was a failure in that structure, there was a failure in that structure, they would be liable for it even though that failure may have occurred as a result of the lack of proper maintenance. So certainly it wasn't fair.

And there was the ongoing issue with many of the professions to be able to carry the proper insurance that they would in their profession because of the ongoing liability. As I said earlier, one of the architects, one of the colleagues at the time on the Saskatchewan Construction Panel, would jokingly suggest that the liability at that time was 10 years past death. Well unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, that may have been some, a grain of truth to that.

But that, I suppose, is one example of being able to hear from a profession or professions and to identify by them an issue or problem that they were facing within their own, their own business world, and to be able to identify that and work co-operatively with government, and government with them, to do a consultation process that brought back meaningful results and were able to then identify the proper legislation, to modernize the proper legislation that was satisfactory to the professions that were involved.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would like to think that in some way that this is basically, this piece of legislation, this particular Act is

headed in the same direction and of the same intent. Of course immediately, Mr. Speaker, when you look at these changes . . . And these changes are quite wide-ranging. From my count, Mr. Speaker, I believe that these changes will affect some 40 or maybe even more self-regulated groups within our province.

Well when it affects that many groups, Mr. Speaker, I would have to think one would have to suggest that it's fairly wide-ranging and one would want to know what effects it has on each group and how perhaps it affects each group differently and what the results of these changes will mean to each group in the short term as well as the long term.

I note, Mr. Speaker, that this Act means that you can pursue disciplinary action against someone in a profession even after they've resigned, and I think that's fair. I think that's fair. I don't think that any individual or professional should be able to duck their responsibilities; if they find themselves in gross negligence that they should be able to duck that responsibility by simply resigning from their profession or from their profession's association.

I think that there should be a window of opportunity in the event a situation should arise and an individual decides that the best way to duck that responsibility would be to resign and to leave the profession; that there should be a window of opportunity for those affected if there's somebody affected negatively; that they should be able to recoup some compensation for their losses or for the negative effect that the actions of an individual may have had on them or their business or their lifestyle.

And I note, according to the changes here, it would suggest that that opportunity will exist for two years after resignation. Well again, Mr. Speaker, I think the intent is good. I think the idea of having the ability to follow the actions of an individual — to follow them even though they've resigned — for a period of two years is good, but my question is, is it enough? Is two years long enough? Is two years perhaps satisfactory for one particular group of professionals, but perhaps not satisfactory for another?

As I've already indicated it, these changes will affect 40-odd groups, Mr. Speaker. So does that mean that we have a cookie-cutter type legislation that applies to everybody equally? And how does that work? Because I would think that there may be some groups that you would want a longer period of time to be able to effect some action. This is on an individual who may have resigned from that profession and may have moved on to doing something else, but their actions while in that profession have had some really negative and long-term effects on you as an individual or perhaps your family or perhaps in your business, and you would maybe want to have the ability to have that followed for a greater period than two years. And maybe that cookie-cutter suggestion isn't correct in all professions.

[15:45]

Maybe two years is too long in some others. Maybe there'll be those who will say that we don't need it two years or two years is far too long; that's an anvil hanging over somebody's head longer than it can be useful to the public.

So those are the questions that immediately come to my mind, is that, what are the effects? What group of individuals have . . . advice has the government received from what groups to suggest that the cookie-cutter model of two years is enough time to be able to pursue individuals after they've resigned from an occupation or from a profession to be able to receive satisfaction for perhaps any wrongdoing that they may have done when they were in that profession? What magic advice did the government get and from who that would suggest that two years is adequate? That's one of the questions of course, Mr. Speaker, I would have.

As equally, Mr. Speaker, I think it would be fair to ask the government who from these professions, from these 40-odd professions, which professions — not necessarily the individuals — but what professions contacted the government and asked for these changes. And what reasons were given to the government that convinced the government they needed to enter into this discussion and to look at making these changes to the disciplinary process here to limit the ability for individuals to seek compensation after an individual has resigned to two years? Or what organizations said that this needed to be done in order to modernize the laws and bring things up into line to best affect the individuals served, but also best affect the individuals within their organizations?

So, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of questions that just at first glance at this particular piece of legislation that comes to mind. And it's a wide-ranging group, as you can imagine, if you have 40 various professions that are affected by the changes in this legislation. You can understand, I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, that it has to be a wide range of professionals. And I wonder, you know, how the government came to the conclusion that the two-year limitation was the correct amount of time and whether this cookie-cutter approach would simply be satisfactory to all the professions.

I also would like to ask the government, you know, how did you arrive at these 40? Why is it just these 40? Why is it that these ones made your short list of 40? And what professions did you omit? What professions did you not include in the list of 40 that would be affected by the changes of this legislation, and why were they omitted?

There's a lot of questions that come to mind and I'm sure that if we got into a frank and open discussion about this that the government would, I'm sure, be forthright and provide us that information, as to what criteria they used to determine who would make their list, their short list of 40, and who would be given the opportunity to not to be on that list. And it, you know, raises some very interesting questions because it's a wide group of professions that we have already on the 40, the list of 40. And why wouldn't we have others that have been left off?

And, Mr. Speaker, I think it's fair to say that the regulated bodies that we're talking about here and basically the 40 professions that we're talking about are all self-regulated bodies. And these self-regulated bodies, they do their own disciplinary actions, they carry out their own disciplinary actions, and it's basically an internal process. And as a process it's usually triggered after they receive a complaint from a citizen.

And it's been my experience, Mr. Speaker, that from the organizations that I have been involved in, the self-disciplinary organizations that I have been involved in or equated with or had any dealings with, that they do a very good job, a very good job of regulating themselves. In many cases I personally think that the level of regulations or the level of tolerance that they have for their own members is less than that which would be outlined in many governmental regulations that would govern the operation of these professions.

So I think that, you know, we have a tremendous track record in this province by the professional organizations here that would indicate that they do a very good job of self-regulating their members. And they do a very good job of disciplining their members when necessary.

But they also do a very good job of investigating complaints from citizens who have had a dealing and felt they were wrongly treated or wrongly done by by the profession or by the professional within that organization and that they've put their complaint forward. And for the most part, I find the organization themselves have a very rigid disciplinary process that they immediately pick up on the issue brought forward by the citizen, the complaint brought forward by the citizen and immediately start an investigating process that is very rigid, very thorough.

And at the end of the day, I think have probably a greater disciplinary effect on their members than that of many government regulations that are set, whether it be in Ottawa or whether it be in the province here, to regulate agencies and to regulate professions. So I think it's something that the professions really aspire to because they want to ensure that they have confidence in, that citizens of Saskatchewan have confidence in those various professions.

And I certainly don't want to see anything that would erode any of that confidence that members in various professional associations, any suggestions that perhaps they can dodge disciplinary action by simply resigning their membership.

I think that the disciplinary actions of professional organizations which are self-regulated certainly ensure that their members are providing the best of professional services to their clients. But at the same time, they can't duck any misfortunes or issues that may arise as a result of perhaps misinformation or a miscue, I could say, by individuals within their association. That they quite quickly take disciplinary action on those individuals and have the ability to follow them so it doesn't end, their responsibilities don't end just upon the member's resignation but it follows the member for a period of time.

Now I don't know, Mr. Speaker, if within the regulations of each organization, each professional organization that they have that limit of two years. I don't know that. I would think that many organizations may have different staggered periods of time that they can follow the actions of a member, or the action of the member follows the member.

I would like to know of the government who they consulted with, what was the level of consultation that brought about the determination that two years was the magic number, and that cookie-cutter number would be able to be applied to the various

professional organizations. And that that would ensure a reasonable length of time, an adequate length of time for individual members of society — if they had an issue with that professional organization — that they would be able to take it to the organization. The organization would have the time then to follow it through with the member — even though the member may have resigned, but follow it through with the member and ensure that the member was held accountable for their actions, even though they may have resigned, for their actions while they were a member of that professional association.

So I'm sure, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we want to ensure at all times that the integrity of the organization is upheld and the confidence that people have in this province in various self-regulating agencies and organizations and associations are upheld because that's key. People need to have confidence in their professionals that they are dealing with.

I'm encouraged, Mr. Speaker, that the minister is willing to look at perhaps sharing some of this information that has been gathered locally here, perhaps on a national level, to ensure that those professions who are international or interprovincial at least, here in this province, would have the ability to operate here in Saskatchewan, but also that information would be able to flow with individual members who may be members of Saskatchewan but move on for whatever reasons to other provinces. And that information and that history would follow them and be available to professional organizations outside of Saskatchewan. So I think that's quite good. And I think that's something that most professional organizations would welcome.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the government if they carried out extensive consultations with the group of 40 that are listed here, on the self-regulated groups that are listed here, on the information provided to us. And if they have, to what level did they carry out that consultation. And what was the results of the consultation? It would be interesting because it's vast and varied, the number of organizations that we're talking about here.

And I would think that they would have in some cases even competing interests. And how that was dealt with by the government through its consultation process and how they were able to arrive at some of the recommendations — that is, that went from recommendation level to changes to the statutes here, to changes to the Act here that is embodied in this Bill, in Bill 103.

And we wonder in that consultation process, was there an assurance by the government individuals doing the consultation that certain provincial standards would be maintained and certain provincial standards would be set as the benchmark for all the professional organizations to adhere to, to ensure that these standards would be in place to be able to protect Saskatchewan people, and Saskatchewan people would be able to, in good faith, be able to deal with the organizations knowing that there was a higher standard that they were being held accountable to? And I think that would be very important, Mr. Speaker.

Immediately comes the question, when you look at a Bill and the changes when a government brings it forward, have other provinces gone down this same road? Has this particular

initiative been in existence in other provinces? In other words, have other provinces brought in similar type legislation? If they have, what has been their experience? What was the experience in developing that legislation? What was their experience after that legislation was introduced?

And was other governments contacted and discussions carried out between officials as to whether or not those provinces who perhaps have already implemented such legislation, are they willing to share their experiences? And are they willing to make recommendations on perhaps changes that they would make based on their experience after the legislation was introduced and discussed in their legislatures, but also after their legislation took effect? Because often we do the best job we can as human beings to try to anticipate what the effects of certain changes may be, but often we're not able to identify all of those effects as a result of all of those changes. So sometimes one can learn from other people's experiences.

And I'm just wondering if this government has taken that opportunity to contact and to talk to the governments who — in other jurisdictions, other provinces here in Canada — who have perhaps introduced similar type legislation and have had the opportunity to proclaim it and have had the opportunity to start to analyze some of the effects of their legislation and how it has worked in a very positive way for the various professional organizations within their province. And what has been some of the negatives that they have identified? And from those negatives, what are some of the changes that they would have made if they would have that opportunity to make the change? Or when that time of opportunity does come and they want to amend their particular piece of legislation, what would those amendments be? What would they look like?

[16:00]

So, Mr. Speaker, there's a number of issues that arise from around this particular piece of legislation, and the number I suppose is as great as the number of groups or bodies being affected. And we have, you know, we have the certified general accountants. Now, Mr. Speaker, it's one of the groups that's being affected here.

My question is, what was the consultation and what was the experience of the government officials in their consultations with the general accountants? Was there recommendations for changing in the system of accounting? Was there a recommendation for changing in the system that that reporting was done, and if there was, what were those changes? And how would they go about making sure that they are able to maintain a high level of professionalism within their association, and to do so while still providing an effective service, while still providing a service that's affordable to the general public.

Because as you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I think probably you're involved in your farming operation. You rely fairly heavily often on your accountant to be able to provide you the information to help you make certain financial decisions, whether it be investing in some aspect of your operation as other business people do. I know that they rely quite heavily on the advice of their accountant as to whether the timing is right for you to make that investment or whether you're maybe taking on a little bit too much, too large an

investment, and maybe leveraging your operation. Or perhaps the accountant, in his opinion or her opinion, is that it's time to maybe cut back or dispose of some assets. There's all types of various good information and good suggestions that accountants will have.

And I think many people across this great province, including yourself, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I know I have on occasions relied quite heavily on the advice of my accountant because, I suppose it's because they look at things from a little different point of view. They're not quite as close to the issues that many of us are. And so that we want to be able to rely on that independent information or view that the good folks have.

I noticed, Mr. Speaker, as I glanced through this — and I just want to take a second look just to make sure that I didn't miss it because, as I had indicated, 40 is a large number and a large number of organizations. And we see that the rural municipal administrators are a part of that, urban municipal administrators are part of the 40 that are affected by these changes.

But we also see that there's a lot of professional organizations out there that are not affected. One of them I see is not mentioned here is the Saskatchewan road builders association is not on this list.

And I think that's interesting because they are truly professionals, Mr. Speaker. When I, in my role as Highways critic, I've had the opportunity to view first-hand a lot of the work being done by the members of the Saskatchewan Construction Association, the contractors . . . the Saskatchewan road builders association, pardon me. And the number of the contractors out there that are actually moving dirt and rebuilding highways and resurfacing highways, they do a very professional job. And I take my hat off to them because it's a neat job.

It's something that I really find myself often just gazing at the choreography, I guess you would say, of machines working on a construction project moving dirt — the one weaving in, another one weaving out, and working back and forth. And in no time at all, they've left a very finished product behind them. It's a marvel to me to watch man and machine work that way and to be able to choreograph themselves in such a way that they don't run into each other. I'm sure that if I was operating one of those machines, that would be one of my biggest fears, would be running into somebody or driving over something.

But they do so in a very professional, very professional way, and they leave behind a very quality finished product that is certainly then . . . You know, the earth is moved, the ditches are made, and done to a certain slope that has been surveyed. And they've got little marks on those stakes over there, and these guys are operating this big, heavy equipment. And just a glance at that stake, they know what they're doing, and they know how deep to cut the particular cut or how much fill to lay in there. And in no time at all, it's done, and it's done to exact measurements.

And I marvel at that because these are great big, awkward heavy-duty equipment, and yet those operators are able to do such a fine job, such a fine job. It's a marvel to watch. I often really take time to watch an operator on a backhoe or on a track

hoe, the ability to reach out and reach 20 or 30 feet away and be able to just do some really fine work.

I mean digging a hole is one thing. I think probably even I could dig a hole, although it might end up in three or four different places, but I think even I could do that. I watch a professional do it, and they do it with such a fine degree of accuracy and able to reach out and able to leave a smooth, quality, finished job. And I marvel at that, Mr. Speaker. I marvel at their ability to be able to be so skilled, so skilled as to be able to operate those big heavy machines and do such fine, delicate work with them. It's something that I find myself often in awe of.

But those are perhaps some of the professionals that I would have wondered why the government hadn't included them in their list, why they hadn't talked to the Saskatchewan roadbuilders association and have them included in their list of professionals, because they truly are. They truly are.

And I'm sure, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you've had that opportunity to watch that type of work being done in the construction industry, whether it be in the local municipal level or on a highway project. And I think we've all had the opportunity of travelling in Saskatchewan and travelling on one of our many highways when there's been construction on that highway. And we've had to slow down and some cases stop, wait for a flagperson and a truck or car to follow us through the construction area so we can get through it without doing any damage or any harm to our vehicle. But it's also that we don't impede the operation of the workers at the job site.

I know that whenever you're in coffee shops, and so on and so forth, there has been some people who had suggested that here in Saskatchewan we really have two seasons — one season is winter and the other one is construction. And that happens because we do have a short construction period here. And when we have a lot of infrastructure to maintain, both in the city level here but also within the province, you have a short period of time to do that maintenance. And it simply has to be done.

But in reality I have yet to run into anybody who really had a strong and earnest complaint about the time they may have had to spend waiting for a tow vehicle to come through so that they could follow them through the construction site. And yes, sometimes it's a little bit inconvenient, perhaps when in a bit of a rush as many my colleagues would be to get to a meeting perhaps or meeting with some group, and you have to spend 10 or 15 minutes waiting at a construction site. But end of the day you know that as a result of that construction you're simply going to enjoy a better infrastructure in this great province of ours.

And we also know that we have a limited time in which we can do that construction because of the climatic conditions of Saskatchewan. We have, you know, significant period when the ground is frozen and winter is upon us. And it's tough to build a road at that time. But I take my hats off to the professionals who do a marvellous job of being able to fulfill their contracts, to be able to build those roads, both on a municipal level and on a highway level, to ensure that we enjoy a good, solid, and strong infrastructure for our motoring public.

It's not only essential for those of us who travel Saskatchewan a fair amount for political purposes or perhaps for business, but it's also very important for the flow of commerce, as in today's world we're seeing much of our commerce, our trade is being done on the truck, back of a truck really. And a lot of our commerce and a lot of our goods and services flow across this great province of ours on the backs of semi-trailer units. And that's very important that they have an artery, I guess you'd say, of commerce, that they have a good infrastructure to be able to move that.

Because in a lot of cases in today's world the inventory is no longer stored in warehouses at convenient locations across this great country of ours. Warehousing is much further and a lot of the service, a lot of the goods and services is delivered in a just-on-time basis. And I've had many, many people within the various industries tell me that changes that they've noticed over the last number of years is the fact they don't have a warehouse locally, whether it be in Regina or in Saskatoon, that they can get their goods and services out of there overnight. The warehouses may be in Edmonton or Calgary and the goods and services are flowing from there, and they're flowing from there on the backs of semi-trailer units.

And it will come in overnight all right, but it's just in time. It's sort of the just-in-time service and we're seeing more and more of that in all various retail levels. We're seeing more of that happen with the retail systems across this great province. We're seeing that happen in the grocery systems, and we're even seeing that in the automotive system. We have dealers today will have parts and shipments coming in basically overnight and will come in overnight. And they'll come through on that infrastructure that's so required.

And in order to maintain that infrastructure, you need to have professionals doing it. And this is why I'm wondering about whether or not the government had looked at all professionals, all professionals in this great province of ours when they came out with the changes to this Act as in this Act in 103. Or is it just isolated, these changes are just isolated to these 40 various professions?

And I wonder why just these 40 when there are so many professions across this great province of ours that are so important, so important to our economy, so important to ensuring that our economy continues to grow and continues to be strong and provides the services to Saskatchewan people that in many cases we've become accustomed to.

And so I wonder, when I'm looking at this list, if the government has really, really sent out the information that's required to all the professionals in this province that, we want to talk to you all about your limitations and what you require within your profession to be able to limit your, the ability for professionals to have action follow them, not only after their resignation but up to two years after their resignation. So I'm wondering if that type of liability issues or that type of discussions really took place with the various professions across this great province of ours.

And I can understand, Mr. Speaker, that this Act affects some 40 self-regulated groups around the province, and we will definitely want to hear from all of those various groups as to

how this piece of legislation or these changes will affect them and their organization. And basically I would like to know, is the government taking into consideration some extra provisions that would perhaps be available to special cases that may arise? I can't just think of any right off the top of my head, but we always should have that. I would think that government would want to have that on behalf of professions that are being named here, on behalf of the members of the professions, but also on behalf of Saskatchewan citizens who may have an issue with one of those professions.

That there may be special circumstances that arise, special cases, special circumstances arise that something does not fit the cookie-cutter mode, doesn't fit that. That we need to look at ways and means to ensure that there is something in the legislation that would allow for special circumstances to be given due consideration. Although maybe at first glance doesn't seem to fit the mould, but special circumstances suggest that in this case or that case, perhaps two years is not long enough; that an expanded period of time may be required to be able to satisfy the particular case that may arise.

So those are some of the things, Mr. Speaker, that we would need to ensure that the government has included in its legislation and has given some thought through that process. And if so, how does it affect each and every individual group that's within the 40 listed?

[16:15]

But I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that I'm sure that it's a frustrating process, probably a very frustrating process, for both the wronged individual and the professional body when someone, rather than facing discipline matters, simply would resign and duck their responsibility. And as I've already said, Mr. Speaker, I think that that's a time limit that allows for individuals not to be able to duck their responsibility by simply resigning. That a two-year time limit there that, that responsibility, the individual can still be held responsible for their actions when they were a member, although they may have resigned, but within that two-year frame. If action is started, compensation could perhaps be reached by the wronged individual or group and that the professional body would hold a member accountable and take the necessary action to ensure that fair and reasonable compensation is arrived at.

And, Mr. Speaker, that, you know, that is good. But once again I wonder why, why more professions weren't included in this group, why more professions weren't consulted with, why more professions weren't included in this legislation to ensure that Saskatchewan people would have that protection and that ability to seek compensation when they have been wrongly, wrongly done by, by an individual within that profession or while they were in that profession before they resigned.

Mr. Speaker, I would have to say that we are largely in favour of this idea. There's no question about that. But it questions me, or my questions I guess you'd say I would have for the government is, once again, why did you limit these 40 particular professions and why wasn't the consultation process much, much, much broader than that? And if it was, if it was, who all did you talk to and why didn't you include all of them in this particular piece of legislation?

Was there objections by various other professional organizations? Did they want to not be covered? Did they want to have the ability for their members to be able to duck their responsibility after two years or before two years by simply resigning? Or did they say that they felt that their own self-regulatory regulations were strong enough to be able to satisfy those situations where perhaps the member would try to duck his responsibility or her responsibility by simply leaving the profession by resigning, leaving the profession and therefore their responsibility not follow them?

And did the professional organization say, no we feel that our self-regulating regulations are strong enough that we can pursue this matter even though one of our members or former members has become a former member. We still are able to pursue this matter with him or her into a future, a limited future whether it be two years or three years or five years, but a limited future. But they felt strong enough that their regulations, that their disciplinary actions would be able to follow the individual through.

This is one of the questions, Mr. Speaker, that I would like to have answered because I think I have the greatest of faiths in professional organizations. I do. I've had the opportunity in my lifetime to deal with many of them, and I have found them to be very professional. But on top of that, Mr. Speaker, I've found them to be very . . . found them wanting to assure that there was absolutely no question as to their integrity and to the integrity of their members.

And that if there was, that they themselves, to ensure continued faith in their organization, they would take extreme measures to do investigations of complaints that were levied against one of their members by a citizen of this great province. They would take extreme measures to investigate — fair measures, but extreme measures — to investigate, to ensure that they turned over every leaf and followed all the information that was required and to be able to make an informed decision, sometimes in favour of their member, of their association, sometimes in favour of the citizen who lodged the complaint.

And on those occasions when they found in favour of the citizen who lodged the complaint, they ensured that the proper disciplinary action on their member was taken, was taken, was put into place. Proper compensation was received by the citizen who levied the complaint who was found to have been wronged by that profession and that professional, and that fair compensation was received.

So, Mr. Speaker, like I said, I'm basically in favour of this particular legislation. There's a lot of questions that come to mind about whether or not it actually goes far enough, or does it go too far. Those are the kind of questions that I would like to know what various organizations that the government has consulted with, and what their reactions to that consultation process was.

And we see when we look at the list of those occupations affected by Bill 103 that the list is varied. I mean agriculturalists, architects, assessment appraisers, the Canadian Information Processing Society of Saskatchewan, certified general accountants, certified management accountants, certified management consultants, chartered accountants,

chiropractors . . . Which I find quite interesting chiropractors would be one of the groups that was consulted by this government, when yet this government seems to have difficulty being able to arrive at a funding agreement with the chiropractors.

But community planning professions, dental, dieticians, engineering and geoscience professions, forestry professions, funeral and cremation services. And, Mr. Speaker, that's something that as I can say for myself as I get older, that's something, an issue that becomes more and more of a concern to me and I want to make sure that I have all those services lined up.

Interior decorators, land surveyors and professional surveyors, the League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents. Now those are the people, Mr. Speaker, who have the responsibility of ensuring that our children are receiving the highest level of education and that are doing so by the professionals that we have within our educational system that deliver those lessons to our students. And what they really are doing, Mr. Speaker, is preparing the leaders of tomorrow. The students of today, as you'd agree with me, I know, are the leaders of tomorrow. And we want to ensure that we provide, we as today's society provide our students with the best of education, the best of knowledge. We want to provide them with the best of tools to be able to meet the challenges of the future, a very changing future.

And I think somebody once said, and I'm kind of searching my memory as to who it was — I can't think of the name right off the top of my head — but somebody once said that the amount of change that we've seen in our world in the last 10 years, we will see that much change in the next two. And I believe that may be the case with technology and the rapidly changing technology. We're seeing a lot of these changes, so we must ensure that the professionals that we are dealing with here in our educational system are given the ability to provide the best of tools to our students who are the students of today but will be the leaders of tomorrow.

And, Mr. Speaker, we have licensed practical nurses, which is by the way a group that I have the greatest admiration for because they provide ongoing care and services to those individuals who find themselves in the hospital setting. And sometimes we have all experienced perhaps a hospital setting — some of us for a very short period of time, others for a longer period of time — and we know what wonderful people they are that provide us that comfort, provide us that service, provide us that care.

And we certainly want to take our hats off to them at every opportunity because they certainly deserve the recognition for the quality of care and quality of service they provide us.

Management accountants, Mr. Speaker. There now again, as the economy booms, as our economy grows, as people work throughout our systems here, as businesses are established and businesses grow, businesses expand, in many cases businesses flourish, that is done a lot of the times upon decisions made after key information is received by the management team that's making that decision.

But key information is received from the accountants that are doing the books, are keeping an eye on the cash flow. They're keeping an eye on long-term investments and short-term capital and so on and so forth. And we find these as being a very important part of business, a very important part of providing the information required to make the right decision for business — to ensure that business grows but stays strong while growing and doesn't fall upon hard times because of misinformation or a bad decision made because the information wasn't available to them at the time.

And, Mr. Speaker, the list certainly goes on and on and to the point where there's, what I have on my list is from 39 to 40 professions that are being covered by this particular Act.

I notice that there are other professions that are not covered by the Act and it's interesting, Mr. Speaker, why certain professions would be covered and certain ones wouldn't. And those are kind of the questions that I would like to have the government be able to answer.

But I think it's also important that we, we in the opposition have the opportunity to speak to many of the groups that have been identified as being affected by the changes, and that we'd like to know, you know, first of all, was the consultation with these groups done? Did the government talk to all 40 of these groups? And what was their response? What was their thoughts on, first of all, the process that the government used for consultation?

But more importantly, what was their thoughts and their recommendations as they put forward to government through that consultation process? Were they taken up by government? Or was this just a shell game that the government was using a bit of a smokescreen, went out and did the consultation, but already had their mind made up that here were going to be the changes?

And it was going to be a two-year change regardless of what the other organizations may have wanted, that they were going to cookie cutter everybody into one simple restriction of a two-year limitation to the ability for individuals to seek compensation or seeking a righting of a wrong that they may have experienced from a profession.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I think that there is a lot of questions to be asked here yet and a lot of debate to take place on this particular Bill. And I would hope that in this process the government would be a little more forthcoming with some of the information and some of their experiences through their consultation process.

But with that, Mr. Speaker, I will move adjournment of debate.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Regina Northeast 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: — Yes.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 117

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Heppner that **Bill No. 117 — *The Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Heritage Act*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Furber: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased to enter into debate this afternoon on Bill 117, an Act respecting hunting and fishing and trapping. It's a very simple Bill in theory in that it names a day where we all respect the heritage of hunting, fishing, and trapping in Saskatchewan and pay due respect to the pioneers and the folks that still practice those things today. And so it gives me great pleasure to stand here today and enter into this debate because I have on many occasions participated in each of them.

When I was a young boy about eight or nine years old, I had a friend that lived down the street from me that lived right on the edge of the city of Prince Albert, about a block away from the river. And I'd get together with the buddy of mine and he had a trapline just out of town. And so we'd walk . . . And my mom's going to find this out for the first time, nearly 30 years later, that I'd cross the river when it was frozen or partially frozen. Now on those occasions when I would cross it then, I probably wouldn't make it today. I'd probably fall through the ice. But that's more a statement on how much I've grown as a person than it is on the ice itself.

[16:30]

But I would hook up with my buddy at his place, and we'd walk across the river, and we'd walk his trapline. And we'd walk for hours and in the cold, and he talked about how his father had had that line for a long time. And so you learned very quickly the pride that one has in doing something that's been passed down from generation to generation. And I very much enjoyed it. You know, at times I thought we were doing something a little bit devious so that always appealed to me as well, part of my nature perhaps.

But we would walk those lines. And you know, whatever you'd find in the trap, you'd bring home and they'd look after it from there. And so it provided a little bit of income for the family, and it enabled a cross-generational passing down of experiences. And I'm, you know, glad to have been able to take part in it, and learn about that part of Saskatchewan and our history, and understand in some small way what has taken place over hundreds of years in Saskatchewan.

If you go up and you look at the settlement patterns of . . . Well Canada generally, it's settled by sort of how our great country has been exploited for goods and services. And when I say exploited, I don't mean in a negative way. I mean utilized. And so if you look at how we settled Saskatchewan, it was settled largely by rivers that were engaged in trapping.

If you have ever had occasion to attend to Stanley Mission, the oldest building west of Winnipeg . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . What's that?

An Hon. Member: — Tell them about that bear you ran into.

Mr. Furber: — And so I've spent time at Stanley Mission. It's a gorgeous church and a great place and a beautiful part of the country. And so what they've done up there is have trapping historically since the land was settled and much previous to folks from Europe ever coming over. In fact Stanley Mission's celebrating 150 years very shortly here. So I've had experiences there.

Additionally I've travelled up in northern Saskatchewan right along the Churchill with my colleague from Regina Rosemont. And we spent time on a canoe trip once with our partners and ended up camping at a site where we had seen a bear during the daytime. And you know, you run into black bears often up there — it wasn't too much of a surprise — but we assumed that when we had spotted it the first time, that would be the last time.

And what had happened on this occasion was we went out for the day and had a bit of a day trip and hung out and caught some fish and did some canoeing of rapids and the like. And we got back to camp and what I'd found was that we'd been . . . Well the folks that were there before us had been gutting fish at the camp for a period of time, and it's like an aphrodisiac to bear. And so the bear came back that night and we had the very sturdy protection of a nylon tent. And I still have claw marks on me from the member from Rosemont jumping over me to get out of the tent to see where that bear was and what it was doing.

So the bear came back into the camp and we had an interesting experience — myself with a hatchet in hand, the member from Regina Rosemont protecting himself in the best way he could, and another woman with a flashlight trying to locate a bear in the dark in the bushes in northern Saskatchewan. And the member for Regina Rosemont would appreciate it if I told the story about how he . . . well he was bigger than the bear and was much meaner looking, but couldn't wrestle the bear, in fact forced it to run away through various means. I don't know if it finally got his scent or what happened, but the bear ended up leaving, and so we went back to the tent and tried to get to asleep. And I do recall that we woke up in the morning very early, as you usually do when you're camping, accompanied by some crows and whiskey jacks.

And when we woke up, we'd found fittingly that this bear had eaten only the member from Regina Rosemont's food. Now I say fittingly because he had to stay for a few more days, and we were leaving that day. And I largely blamed him for the bear coming around in the first place. I don't know what the reason was, but I assumed that it was coming after Trent for one reason or another.

And so I have experiences with hunting and fishing, well trapping and fishing in northern Saskatchewan. And I had spent a lot of time in my childhood right around Kindersley, Saskatchewan where I was born, my grandparents' farm, hunting geese in the fall. And you know, we'd sit in blinds and hang out all day, and you know, you'd be awfully excited hanging out with your uncles and grandpa. And they'd tag one and you'd run out there and grab it and bring it back. So you learned sort of stories from the day when hunting wasn't done exclusively for sport but out of necessity. You know, my

grandpa would tell me stories about how they would hunt in order to provide some protein for the family in tough times.

So interesting that this Bill, an Act respecting hunting and fishing and trapping, is really about Saskatchewan, and it's about how it was settled. And it's about how stories are passed on, and it's about how we appreciate the land today. I have great experience in Cypress Hills, in the Great Sand Hills, in northern Saskatchewan enjoying the land and enjoying some trapping, fishing, and hunting all over the province. And so I think, with some experience in each, I appreciate a day that we would honour hunting, fishing, and trapping in Saskatchewan and honour the history that it provides the province.

But it's important to recognize a few things, I believe. One of which is that unless you have these lands protected and in good standing, nobody wants the fish in a lake that's poisoned. And you can't hunt animals that don't exist. And you certainly can't trap them either. And so we have to do more to protect the environment.

And certainly I believe that when you make a promise to protect the environment, you should, ought to keep that promise. When you say as a party when you're running an election that you're going to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 32 per cent by 2020 and then a year later, after you find out that you've been elected on that promise, you back away from it. And then you introduce *An Act respecting Hunting, Fishing and Trapping*. Well I don't think that walking away from a promise with the environment respects hunting, fishing, and trapping in Saskatchewan. In fact I think it is entirely the opposite.

And when you see a government where they know full well that 70 per cent of the emissions coming out of Alberta end up in Saskatchewan . . . They know that. You don't have to do much testing to find it out. In fact they haven't done much testing. We know it from Alberta's testing. And so what have they done about it? What have they done to ensure that Saskatchewan is either, one, properly compensated or, two, that it stops?

You know the Environment minister is here. I think folks should ask her what she's done to ensure that that stops. Because I have also been fishing by Dillon, Saskatchewan and up by La Loche, and those are the areas directly affected with west winds moving pollution into Saskatchewan from the oil sands.

Now you can't have *An Act respecting Hunting, Fishing and Trapping* if you don't have pristine lands in order to do that with. And so how is it, as a government, you can walk away from your promises to the environment and at the same time introduce legislation where you say you want to introduce *An Act respecting Hunting, Fishing and Trapping*?

Now additionally, when you introduce legislation — we've had this discussion many times in this Chamber already — it's important that you consult with people. And in fact in many cases the Supreme Court of Canada demands that you have a duty to consult with First Nations and Métis people. And I would ask, because it seems absent in this case again, how much of their duty to consult have they carried out? Because it is no secret that the first people in Saskatchewan to hunt, fish, and trap were First Nations peoples. And so I think that while

you have a legislated duty to consult, you certainly also have a moral duty to consult. Because when you take into account one, traditional territory, and two, traditional practices, I think that that speaks to the necessity to provide the duty to consult.

And I would argue that that hasn't taken place in this case. If you look at who was invited to the legislature when they first introduced this Bill, it was the Wildlife Federation and it was the Trappers Association, but it wasn't First Nations and Métis groups and it wasn't peoples that represent those groups. And if you look strictly at their history of consultation on things like Bill 5 where you had the now Health minister say before the election that, you know, we don't need essential services, not in this case — and then without any consultation whatsoever, after the election it's introduced. It speaks to the character of a government when you introduce legislation that directly affects living people in Saskatchewan, real people in Saskatchewan, but you refuse to consult with them.

The same is obviously true with educational assistants, as we found out very recently. There was zero consultation done with that group that's directly affected by up to — by doing some quick calculations — 80 per cent of their workforce being eliminated by some terrible policy brought forward by the Minister of Education. And when people find out about this plan to reduce EAs [educational assistant] by up to 80 per cent or more, the minister has the nerve to go to the Saskatchewan school boards and tell them, well you know, I know that education is important in Saskatchewan. And being that you're elected on the school boards, you know that education is important to Saskatchewan, but I have great difficulty selling that to my cabinet colleagues.

To which I respond, wow. That's the Deputy Premier of the province of Saskatchewan and he's saying that his cabinet colleagues don't support education in Saskatchewan.

Now how is it that the — by title — second most powerful person in that government would take away his own responsibility for the policy coming out of his own department, ministry and walk away from that responsibility and put it on the backs of everybody else's in cabinet, including the Premier, saying that, well I guess I value education in Saskatchewan, but the other folks in cabinet don't?

And so I would question that approach. And I'd be very upset if I was another cabinet member being sold out by the Deputy Premier of the province of Saskatchewan. But that's what's taken place in this case. And so they do that and they absolutely refuse to consult with anybody directly affected by these decisions.

And so now, well now that the House Leader, the House Leader for the government asks, what's that got to do with this Bill? And obviously he hasn't been following because I've talked specifically about how they refuse to consult with anybody on even the smallest legislation.

You can't trust them on policy coming out of the Deputy Premier's ministry. And again, I can't help the House Leader for the government with his credibility problem. I can't help him. He asks what consultation and what talking to the people of Saskatchewan about a Bill has to do with a Bill.

And so maybe therein lies the problem — that you can explain it to them very simply and straightforwardly and they still don't understand it. And he wants to enter into debate about Bill No. 117, *An Act respecting Hunting, Fishing and Trapping*. He wants to enter into the debate. And he can't understand why you should consult with the people of Saskatchewan when you introduce legislation that directly affects them.

Now I know he's jealous that he isn't one of the people being blamed by the Deputy Premier as not caring about education. I know he's jealous about that. And I don't blame him. But he had his opportunity for three months to be a cabinet minister and he should be happy with that because I know he enjoyed it. And now he sits three rows back — you can barely see him — and he's chatting about, he wants to know what consultation has to do with the Bill. Well I'll continue to discuss Bill No. 117, *An Act respecting Hunting, Fishing and Trapping*. But I do have more to talk about when it comes to consultation because now I've mentioned a couple of specific examples.

But let's talk about Bill 80. Bill 80 directly affects a number of folks working in the province of Saskatchewan. It affects people who built this province. And when I say literally built this province, I mean it. They built this province stick by stick, brick by brick. They do the wiring. They do the steelmaking. They do everything to build the province of Saskatchewan.

And so this government, without any consultation, decides that, well I think we should introduce legislation that helps to gut the industry, that ensures that many different negative things take place for the working people of Saskatchewan. And you've got a Premier who says, before he's elected, on the radio, that we're going to go to war with working men and women in Saskatchewan. And so he does that. And they do it without consulting.

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

Mr. D'Autremont: — Point of order, Mr. Speaker. The member is talking about everything except Bill 117. I would ask that you direct that member to direct his comments to the Bill.

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

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much. To respond to the point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, several times I've listened very careful to the member talk about and reflect on the fact that it's about consultation on legislation and how through the lack of consultation on various pieces of legislation, this is in fact indicating that they haven't done proper consultation on this Bill as well. So I think it's been very clearly ruled back to the legislation many times.

The Deputy Speaker: — I know on adjourned debates we've allowed a bit of leniency when we've been talking about it, but I would remind the members to discuss the Bill that is before on the order paper that is up for discussion right now, which is Bill 117, *The Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Heritage Act*. And that is the Bill that is on the floor being debated right now, and I would encourage the member to continue on that debate.

Mr. Furber: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that it's an

absolute necessity that on any Bill, including Bill No. 117, *An Act respecting Hunting, Fishing and Trapping*, that you consult. I think it's important. And I think that it's not obvious to the members opposite that it's important. It's frustrating. And I think it frustrates many people in Saskatchewan.

Another group that was frustrated by a lack of consultation in Saskatchewan just this week was people who support women who are in crisis in Saskatoon. There were a group of men and women who were reduced entirely by 75 per cent and they did it without consultation. So again a pattern of a complete lack of consultation as is seen in Bill No. 117.

Now why it is that these men and women think it's appropriate to introduce a Bill like No. 117, *An Act respecting Hunting, Fishing and Trapping*, without consultation, is sad. But it's not surprising, as I've demonstrated many different times when they haven't consulted. In fact they refused to consult with their own officials on many occasions.

They refused to consult with ministry officials when it came to potash. In fact the only people they consulted with there were a few companies in Saskatchewan that produce potash, but they refused to have any consultation with their own departments, their own ministry where they could've done it. They wouldn't have guessed that potash would go from \$3 billion in revenue for the province, as the Energy and Resources minister believed, down to 2 billion as the Premier suggested and the Minister of Finance suggested, down to 100 million, now at negative \$204 million. They refused to consult in that situation in the same way that they refused to consult on Bill No. 117, *An Act respecting Hunting, Fishing and Trapping*.

They also refused to consult with an area of the province that's quite famous for having great hunting, fishing, and trapping. That's the town of Big River. They didn't consult with Big River on their saw mill. Well that's not entirely true. The Minister for Energy and Resources consulted there and told them that if the saw mill was purchased by somebody, that they have an allocation. He did say that. He did say that, and then he backed away from it because now they've got no allocation. And on one other occasion they consulted there. In fact the Premier went there and told them that they would have an allocation of 400 000 cubic metres. And then ministry officials said after that . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well that's not true. In fact, no decisions have been made on the allocation. And so that's another part of the province where you have to balance the environment, forestry with hunting, fishing, and trapping because it's important.

Now it's unfortunate that this government has chosen to walk away from its responsibility with respect to the environment on another front because, as I detailed before, you can't have hunting, fishing, and trapping in Saskatchewan without pristine lakes and lands that support the wildlife that you need in order to do those activities. And so when you walk away from your responsibility as a government, you walk away from the people of Saskatchewan.

Any modern economy that's doing well in Saskatchewan or doing well in this world does well because it has three pillars. And we've heard this from the Leader of the Opposition many times. One of them is strong businesses because you need

business, the economic driver of a jurisdiction. You also need strong unions because you have to ensure that workers are able to earn a decent wage to be protected and to work in a safe environment.

And you also need strong government and this is where they fall down. This is where they fall down because instead of providing leadership on an environment file, they walk away from that responsibility. And they do it in various ways. They do it, as I'd said, because they don't care about monitoring. In fact, they're allowing the Government of Alberta to reduce monitoring of oil sands.

The Deputy Speaker: — We're discussing Bill 117, *The Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Heritage Act*. And I know the member may mention the name every five minutes, but that doesn't really talk about debating the Bill. I would ask the member to discuss the Bill that is on the floor right now in front of the legislature.

Mr. Furber: — I think it's very clear, and I've made it clear on several occasions during this speech that you have to have a clean and good environment in order to respect properly hunting, fishing, and trapping in Saskatchewan. I think I've detailed that. And if you want to have any integrity at all when you introduce Bill No. 117, *An Act Respecting Hunting, Fishing and Trapping*, you have to have the proper environment in which to do it. The two are absolutely interconnected and directly linked. And so I believe that you cannot walk away from your responsibility with respect to the environment and introduce this legislation at the same time — absolutely not.

Now one way that they'd walked away from that responsibility that directly affects hunting, fishing, and trapping in Saskatchewan is by moving away from their responsibility to do assessments with respect to the environment, assessments that are done in industry. And they're going to walk away from their responsibility as a government in order to have corporations fulfill that role. And so I don't think that you can have a healthy environment for hunting, fishing, and trapping in Saskatchewan if you walk away from that responsibility.

Now one good and interesting thing about this legislation is that the date that they've chosen, November 15th each year, and I'll quote from the Bill, "November 15 in each year is designated as 'Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Heritage Day' in Saskatchewan." Well I think November 15th is a great day to choose. Just happens to be my nephew's birthday, and so I know he'll be extremely pleased, once this Bill is passed, to celebrate his birthday and to share it with the tremendous heritage we that have in Saskatchewan respecting hunting, fishing, and trapping.

And so if you look at another way in which hunting, fishing, and trapping is directly affected, it's through the forested lands in the North. Many, many traplines exist on those lands, traditional territory for First Nations, Métis peoples where they participate in the same industry that their forefathers have participated in for centuries.

And so when you have a government who while in opposition claims that there's a "let-it-burn" policy and when they get into government they say that they're going to change that policy

. . . When they're in opposition and that there's no possible way that the forest should renew itself, and then when they're elected they walk directly away from this policy, or from this supposed change in policy and continue absolutely . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — The time being 5 o'clock, this House now stands in recess until 7 p.m. later tonight.

[The Assembly recessed until 19:00.]

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