



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

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The Honourable Don Toth
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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

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Wilson, Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Yates, Kevin	NDP	Regina Dewdney

[The Assembly resumed at 19:00.]

EVENING SITTING

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Elhard): — Order. It now being 7 p.m., we will resume debate on Bill No. 124, *The Legal Profession Amendment Act, 2009*. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Fairview.

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe I've made the remarks necessary and reviewed the legislation. And other than . . . There's still more to be said, probably on the \$3 million and the \$19,000, but I believe that the comments I had for Bill 124 I have made. And with that, I would adjourn debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Elhard): — The member from Saskatoon Fairview has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 124, *The Legal Profession Amendment Act, 2009*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Bill No. 115

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 115 — *The Queen's Bench Amendment Act, 2009 (No. 2)/Loi n° 2 de 2009 modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur la Cour du Banc de la Reine*** be now read a second time.]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Elhard): — I recognize the member from Prince Albert Northcote.

Mr. Furber: — Thank you Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to join in the debate this evening. I appreciate the reading of the Bill in French, a feat that I, at one point in my life, could have duplicated reasonably well but unfortunately, without practice, not anymore. Now he was absolutely correct. This is a discussion regarding Bill 115, *An Act to amend The Queen's Bench Act, 1998, to make certain consequential amendments and to appeal The Laws Declaratory Act*.

Now interestingly, when you look at this Bill, there are a number of items in the Bill that one might refer to as innocuous in that some of the changes are fairly simple. If you look at one of the clauses, it says:

S.S. 1998, c.Q-1.01 amended

2 The Queen's Bench Act, 1998 is amended in the manner set forth in this Act.

And so they simply are stating that they are amending the Act.

Short title

1 This Act may be cited as *The Queen's Bench Amendment Act, 2009 (No. 2)*.

And so certainly there are some things that you'll obviously agree to in legislation. One of them might be as simple as a name change, and we don't have issue with that. And you might think that this entire Bill is innocuous at first glance if you looked at it in a silo and if you had sort of no idea about what was going on in other parts of government and if you fail to understand motivations and other legislation brought forward, previous promises that were made and broken.

And I'll refer specifically to some of them because there's a very important part of this Act that I'd like to discuss briefly here, and that is the language on page 6. Like I said, at first blush it talks about things that seem fairly innocuous and wouldn't be cause for alarm. But you have to understand some of the history around politics in Saskatchewan in the last few years.

Now we had proposed by other jurisdictions an agreement called TILMA [Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement] a number of years ago. The members opposite, the Saskatchewan Party, then in opposition, stated very clearly that they believe that we should sign on without looking into the detail, without consulting with the public. It was their knee-jerk reaction to sign on, and they called for it immediately after it was proposed.

Now what a responsible government will do and what was done at that point was, we took some time to study the agreement or the proposed agreement. And what we learned was a number of things, one, that certainly what is allowed in TILMA is an opportunity for other entities, be they corporations or trusts, to sue the government for a lack of economic progress. And so you might have a situation where somebody wants to build a hotel on the banks of the mighty Wascana. And if the Wascana Centre Authority, the city of Regina, and — by extension, I guess — the province denied that opportunity, the company that put forward the proposal could in effect sue different levels of government. And the penalties — now I'm going strictly from memory on this — but I believe the penalties to government could be up to \$2 million. And so you have a situation where a corporation could come in and say well we want the hotel. The Wascana Centre Authority said well that would be right in front of the legislature, and we don't agree with that, and so we're not going to allow it. The company could then sue that level of government for up to \$2 million for stifling the progress, for stopping the economic opportunity.

And so we propose that it was too onerous and virtually impossible to manage an agreement where you could . . . It was so open-ended that you could sue a government of some jurisdiction — be it municipal, provincial, or otherwise — for a huge financial sum for simply not complying with your wishes.

And so we certainly did some homework there and found that it's not something that we were interested in, and stated that quite clearly. In fact we did as, again, responsible government should do, and that's we took it to the people, and we held open discussions where people could present a case one way or the

other — pro or against. And we found out that the vast majority of people who presented also opposed the idea and opposed it for a number of reasons.

Certainly a jurisdiction like Saskatchewan who, at this point in our history and beginning five or so years ago, led the country in job opportunities on many occasions, so you need to have some ability for labour movement and mobility. And so we agree with some aspects of it, but it was so onerous in terms of the penalties and in terms of how open-ended it was for a corporation to sue a government that the people sort of agreed that it was something that they didn't agree with.

Another level where people didn't agree with it was because it had enormous direct potential to cause the decomposition or the decommissioning of our Crown corporations. And so it would cause an opportunity where a corporation could sue the provincial government because it had created, in their mind, an unlevel playing field for a Crown corporation in spite of the fact now that they all compete in an open market situation.

But that was another reason, certainly, that we believed at that time — and so did the vast majority of people in Saskatchewan — that TILMA wasn't something that we were all that interested in signing on to. And you might look at this legislation, if you didn't know the history of TILMA and the like, and think that it's not that big a deal. But we have an interesting situation now where the Saskatchewan Party government, at that time when they found that there was both overwhelming evidence and opposition against the TILMA agreement, before the last election, said that TILMA is something that we're not interested in signing. We won't do that.

But very interestingly, we have asked questions, as members of the opposition, very recently as to whether or not this government has signed on to an agreement called WEPA [Western Economic Partnership Agreement], whether they've signed on to what amounts to an AIT [Agreement on Internal Trade] agreement or something that is very similar if not identical to the TILMA agreement. And you know what's happened, Mr. Speaker? We can't get the answer. In spite of the fact that you submit a written question and you submit it to the office where it's a yes-or-no answer . . . It doesn't take any research. Either they've signed on or they haven't. Either the Premier's signature is on that document or it isn't. And so it's exceedingly frustrating for an opposition and for the people of Saskatchewan upon whose part we're asking these questions, because they deserve to know if their government has signed on to an agreement that exposes them to these negative principles. And so I find that very interesting.

And then of course, Mr. Speaker, you see this legislation introduced. And if I could, I would read the part of the legislation that I think causes some issue. On page 6 it says:

“Interpretation of Part

89.1 In this Part:

‘award’ means an award or order for costs, or for a monetary penalty, made by a presiding body pursuant to a Domestic Trade Agreement.

And so that enables what I had talked about briefly earlier, where you have an entity of some kind — corporation, trust, individual — who is able to sue the government and get an award for costs or a monetary penalty up to the \$2 million that I'd mentioned that is made by a presiding body pursuant to a domestic trade agreement.

So this is exactly what we were afraid of back in 2005-06, I believe it was. So again this legislation is not perhaps what it seemed. Certainly the Saskatchewan Party said that we should sign on in a knee-jerk fashion and learned later that it's not something that they were interested in doing, so they said they wouldn't do it. But I would argue that this document says otherwise, and it says otherwise in legislation because it's enabling an individual, a corporation or trust — some entity — to get an award for costs or for monetary penalty.

And additionally on page 6 it says:

‘certified copy’ means a copy of an award certified to be a true copy by the official or body designated in the regulations as responsible for administering a Domestic Trade Agreement.

Now it goes on to say that:

‘Domestic Trade Agreement’ means:

(a) the Agreement on Internal Trade entered into on or about July 18, 1994 by the governments of Canada, the provinces and the territories.

Certainly something that's happened in the past, and you think well it's, you know, not that big a deal, but then it goes on to say:

any other agreement established pursuant to Article 1800 of the Agreement on Internal Trade described in clause (a); or

(c) any other Domestic Trade Agreement designated in the regulations.

And so what this does is open up an opportunity for the Government of Saskatchewan, perhaps municipal governments, to be sued by a corporation in a TILMA-type agreement.

Now they can call it what they want. They can change the acronym. They can move a couple of letters around, but the spirit of that agreement is identical. And here we have legislation that proves that they've gone back on their word, that they started out in a position where they said, do it. You don't need to even read it. Just sign it because it's going to be good for trade. Then they find out that all the evidence is to the contrary. So is popular opinion. And just prior to the election, they say it's not something we're interested in doing.

Now we have a Premier who won't tell the people of Saskatchewan whether he signed it or not, and they introduce legislation that enables it to happen. And so you have to ask yourself, what's the motivation? Why would they bring forward this legislation now? What's the purpose? And I think any reasonable person would believe that they have an agenda.

[19:15]

And again it continues:

“Filing of award

89.2 If an award is made against the Crown, the person entitled to the award may file a certified copy of that award with the court if the Domestic Trade Agreement permits the award to be enforced in the same manner as an order against the Crown made by the court.

It goes on to say,

“Enforcement of award as judgment or order

89.3 On the filing of an award in accordance with section 89.2, the award [And get this, Mr. Speaker. This is the very important part. The award] is enforceable as if it were a judgment or order of the court”.

And so it solidifies very clearly for the people of Saskatchewan that this opens up the province of Saskatchewan and its municipalities to a TILMA-type agreement. And I don't know if they thought that they could sneak this past or if they have some hidden agenda that they want to put forward. I would argue that — unless they come forth and admit that they've already signed the agreement or say unequivocally that, no, they haven't signed the agreement — that there's a hidden agenda because by definition an agenda that you won't tell the people, is hidden.

And so certainly the people of Saskatchewan don't agree and would find it exceedingly frustrating to learn that the opposition in the province of Saskatchewan can't get answers from the Premier's office on this. It can't. We asked the question, but you won't answer it.

Well as I've mentioned, it's a simple answer. It doesn't take six staff members 24 hours a day for three weeks to figure it out. It's a simple yes or no. He can scratch his head for three minutes and say, gee I think I remember signing something like that when I was in Vancouver. I think I remember that. And put that on paper and send it back to the opposition so that we can take it to the people. I would ask this government what the Premier of Saskatchewan is afraid of when he won't answer a question, a written question, on a simple question like, did you sign the agreement or not.

And I think quite clearly you don't have to be a lawyer from Meadow Lake to understand that this opens up the province of Saskatchewan for that TILMA agreement. Now they can call it whatever they want, like I said, but it doesn't change the fact that that's what this is. And so it is yet another example that this government, the Saskatchewan Party will do and say anything.

The Minister Responsible for Agriculture, the member from Melville-Saltcoats, said quite clearly after he got some tough questions in the rotunda one day that, you know, when you're in opposition you can do and say anything, and for a number of years I did just that. That's what he said. But when you're in government, you got to get it right. You got to be responsible.

And so now you understand how you could say that, no we're not going to sign on to TILMA before an election and, after an

election, introduce Bills like Bill No. 115 that opens up directly the province to an opportunity to be sued for being in contravention of a TILMA-type agreement. And so this legislation, as I said, is not what it seems. But this isn't the only example of when that's happened.

The Minister for Health, the member from Indian Head-Milestone, before the election was asked directly, do you think that essential services is something Saskatchewan needs? And he said no; it's not required. Within a couple of months of taking office, they introduce essential services.

And so it's a direct parallel to what's going on with Bill No. 115. It's exactly the same thing. And it speaks to credibility. The member from Prince Albert Carlton took out an ad in the newspaper in Prince Albert that said “A vote for Darryl is a vote for the mill open and people working.” Now as we've learned in the intervening time since then, the two and a half years that they've had to do something in the forestry industry, there's been nothing done. And so again a direct parallel with Bill No. 115, where you say something before an election, and right after the writ's dropped, you abandon the principle with which you made that promise. They abandoned it.

Now in some cases the motivation is clear. The motivation is clear. In this case, it hasn't become crystal clear until now. It's written right here. It's written right here, and it says Saskatchewan as a government is now opened up to a judgment that is enforceable “as if it were a judgment or order of the court.” And so what we're doing as a province is holding a gun to our own head.

We're opening up the province for a TILMA agreement. Now why would any government, any body — whether they're a Crown corporation, whether they're a private corporation, whether they're an energy trust, whether they're a small-business owner — why would anybody who governs a body, company, entity, open themselves up and make it clear that any award on an internal trade agreement is enforceable as if it were a judgment from the court? Why would you do that? And enacted in legislation where you say yes, we agree that we will accept a judgment of a court when it comes to an internal trade agreement. It is absolutely senseless. And it's contrary to what was said before the last election.

Now we can go on in terms of credibility on legislation, regulations, and budgetary issues because I got a call from a chiropractor outside of Prince Albert who said directly that she talked to the Premier at his golf tournament. So she was a supporter. She bought a pass and attended the golf tournament and asked him directly, the Premier of the province, asked him directly: will we be de-insured? Is this something you're going to continue to insure? And you know what the Premier told her? He told her yes; we're going to continue to insure. And she phoned my office absolutely livid because, in the same way that they've done with Bill No. 115, they've gone back on their word. And this case . . . well I believe it's him in this case as well because it's going to be his name as a signator on TILMA. But again it's the Premier of the province of Saskatchewan who goes to his own golf tournament and tells a chiropractor something that turns out to be absolutely false.

Now you have to ask yourself, did he have control over whether

or not chiropractors would be de-insured? As the President of the Executive Council of Saskatchewan, the Premier of the province, would he have been able to say, well you know, Mr. Health Minister, I think that's something that we should continue to fund because I made a promise? I made a promise to a chiropractor at my golf tournament in Waskesiu that that's something I wouldn't do, so we can't do it. We'll find the money somewhere else. Maybe we'll find savings in communications. Maybe we won't send so many of our operatives into different entities of government — be they Crown corporations or ministries — as communication people to shadow the real communications people that work there. Maybe if we didn't send so many of those people in there, we wouldn't have to de-insure chiropractors and I wouldn't have to go against the word that I'd given that chiropractor.

Now again if you can't trust the Premier of the province to keep his word on something as simple as that, how would anybody trust him on Bill No. 115? How would anybody trust that he hasn't gone to Vancouver and signed on to an agreement? I think it's virtually impossible for the Premier of the province to convince anybody because he won't answer the question. We asked the question, in a simple written question of which they have five days to answer. They have five days to jog the Premier's memory to find out whether or not he signed his name on the dotted line. And he won't answer the question.

Now he also won't answer the phone of the chiropractor, but I'll pick up my phone and I'll answer it, and she tells me that he's gone back on his word directly. And so when it comes to the small things, if you can't get those right, how can you get the big things right?

There are numerous other occasions when this has happened. They made a promise — I don't know if it was a solemn promise, but certainly it was a promise — to provide 1 per cent of PST [provincial sales tax] to municipalities. Now how is it that you would think that you have any credibility when you say that the reason you're providing the 1 per cent of PST is because it's a direct measure of government's ability to pay, because the more PST the government takes in means the more opportunity they have to pay, because there's a direct correlation between economic development opportunity and income for the provincial government to the PST. It rises and falls with the fortunes of the province. And it certainly has done that here because over the last two years they've had record revenue, record revenue.

But you know what? They've also had record broken promises, and they can't keep this one.

So again when you can't trust them with a promise on Bill 5, you can't trust them on the pulp mill, a chiropractor can't trust the Premier at his own golf tournament, you can't trust them on PST to municipalities — how could you trust them to get it right on an interprovincial trade agreement? How could you trust that, when they won't answer the question out of the Premier's office and when they introduce legislation that directly allows the Government of Saskatchewan and opens it up to be sued by an entity and have that suit be enforceable as if it were a judgment or order of the court? Why would you do that if you hadn't already signed on to WEPA, TILMA, AIT? I think that the answer is clear.

Now there are other examples, and I'll certainly continue to list them. Before the last election, the members opposite at every opportunity talked about the duty to consult, the duty to consult with First Nations-Métis people on things that directly affect them. It has become the mandate of the federal courts to do it, to follow the duty to consult, and to ensure that that happens.

Now I question — and the members opposite can certainly correct me if I'm wrong — but I would question that they haven't consulted First Nations-Métis people on this TILMA agreement that they're bringing forward the legislation for. Certainly I would welcome any of them to suggest that they have and to provide the list of the date and time when they've met with people to discuss it. But I can guarantee you because they, on many occasions in opposition, said that you need to complete the duty to consult, you need to follow through on it, you need to do it . . . But on every occasion, as the government, they miss an opportunity. And do you know what I've found, especially lately, but since the start? That this government never misses an opportunity to miss an opportunity. And so they've done so again here.

If you want to talk strictly about consultation, there are certainly other occasions with which they've also failed to consult with people on different Bills. We had what can only be described as a fiasco here when we voted off the Bill regarding the horses of the Bronson Forest because, as a good opposition does, we did our homework. And we did something the government refuses to do on virtually every piece of legislation they bring forward: we consulted. We went out and talked to lawmakers, First Nations and Métis groups in the area, municipalities — be they rural, small urbans. And you know what they said? They said that you ought to include the duty to consult as part of that Bill. And so when we put it forward, we asked the government if they would agree to it, and they said no. We had a vote here in the House. And it's on record for anybody who wants to see it. They said no; they didn't want that in the legislation. Now the motivation for that is absolutely baffling, but they didn't want it in there.

[19:30]

And so we called for a standing vote. And you know what happened in the standing vote? They consulted with each other. The only consultation that they do on any Bill, they consulted with each other and they figure out, well you know, this actually might make some sense. It might be a good thing to put into legislation that the Government of Saskatchewan has a duty to consult on the horses of the Bronson Forest Bill.

And so you'll note that there's no reason, no reason whatsoever to trust the Saskatchewan Party government has done their work, their homework on Bill No. 115 as it relates to consultation with any group. And certainly it would appear that they have gone back on their word in terms of TILMA. I think the evidence is here, and I think that's what's gone on.

And so it's painful that on virtually every Bill that we speak to we talk about what's gone on with consultation, and we learn that when we do our homework, as we do, but there's been none. Time and time and time again, they refuse to consult with people on legislation. One only has to look at the record on a committee that they had last week, as it relates to changes to

health. They had people running all over the place because again they didn't even consult with their own officials to figure out what the order is that the changes should be presented in. And so if they can't get the small things right, how can they get the big things right?

Now there are some other portions of this Bill that might be of some interest to folks in Saskatchewan, including references to law from 1870. And one would ask or might ask how that's relevant today. Well it's relevant because as a province . . . and I believe that we're in the same boat in terms of this situation as Alberta is, and I believe that we're in the same situation as Alberta is as a province because we were both part of the North-West Territories and joined confederation in a similar fashion. But what has happened here — and folks at home might be interested to know this if they don't already — is that we sort of adopted British law. And it was the British law that was written. I believe it was written in sort of 1886 or that time period, and I don't know if it was finalized in and around 1870 as the laws that we adopted, but it's something right around that time period. Now so you might read page 8 and wonder why they'd have a reference to it, but it says the following, quote:

Repeal of certain provision

9 Section 11 of *The North-West Territories Act*, being chapter 50 of the Revised Statutes of Canada, 1886, as it existed on September 1, 1905, is repealed to the extent that it applies to matters within the legislative jurisdiction of Saskatchewan.

So that's sort of it in a nutshell, Mr. Speaker, because that's the portion of the Act that says that we're governed by laws that were adopted into the North-West Territories in 1886 from Great Britain. Now it's in the Bill 115 here, and it's important for a couple of reasons. On rare occasions even to this day, there are opportunities or occasions, as rare as they might be, where something is brand new. There's a situation that we find that there hasn't been a ruling on in Canada, in the Commonwealth since that time. And so you go back. And it does happen, I'm told. You go back to the law that was enacted in 1870.

And so it's again seemingly innocuous or housekeeping in terms of the Bill, but when it's used on occasion, it's vital. And so when you have a democracy and a legal system that's based on precedent, it's important that you continue to have the laws on the books in one manner or another because, as you may know or will understand, there aren't a number of books at every library from 1870 on the laws of the province of Saskatchewan. So it's important to keep those current, and this Bill does that on page 8.

Now section 4 of the Bill is a section regarding the identification and change in law as recommended by the Law Reform Commission of Saskatchewan. Now the Law Reform Commission of Saskatchewan is a commission that was started sometime in the late '70s. And it was brought forward because government at the time believed that we could use as a jurisdiction a body that would look at cleaning up the laws of the province, whether it's making them current, whether it's removing redundancies, whether it's ensuring that Bills are properly numbered in clauses, subsections and the like. And so a body was struck to make sure that that would happen, and it

was the Law Reform Commission. And so they, from time to time, will make recommendations to government for changes. And so it would appear that section 4 does just that in this Bill. And so that's something that we certainly agree with.

Now again a good deal of this Bill is housekeeping and would suggest that there isn't much to it. And again if we didn't have the historical perspective and the understanding of what's gone on in politics in Saskatchewan and with the Saskatchewan Party over the last few years, you wouldn't perhaps be all that concerned with page 6.

But that's not the case because as we've learned over the last number of years . . . when you have a government who will say one thing before the election and do something exactly the opposite right after, when you've got a Premier in a province who will tell a chiropractor at his own golf tournament something that turns out to be false when he had full control over the item the entire time, when you've got a now Minister of Health who would say that essential services aren't needed and then one of the first acts of the new government is to bring in essential services legislation which turns out to be notorious, and notorious not in a good way.

This government has become fond of international attention whether it's in New York for terrible posters that depict great tragedy, whether it's in international courts where they get ruled against for legislation that, as we're learning here now, they said people of Saskatchewan didn't need. We didn't need Bill 5 according to the Health minister. And within 30 days of taking office, they bring it in. They bring it in and were ruled against in an international court.

Now I don't know how you can pretend that that ruling doesn't exist, how you can pooh-poo it and say well you know, it's not that big of deal. We've had better days. Saskatchewan, you know, shouldn't be too concerned about the ruling of the ILO [International Labour Organization]. But what some people may not know is that the ILO is a part of NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization], and so when you have a ruling against a government by an international body you ought to be concerned. You ought to be concerned. But this government shows no concern. And so when that's the notoriety that we get on an international stage, it concerns me that we might be seeking the same notoriety and end up with the same notoriety on this Bill because we might be one of the only jurisdictions in the world that would open ourselves up to be sued by corporations because we don't adhere to an internal trade agreement.

And so I think the people of Saskatchewan have already certainly weighed in on whether or not they support the idea of a TILMA agreement. They quite clearly don't.

And so when you've got a body like the United Nations — sorry, not NATO — when you've got a body like the United Nations making rulings against you, you ought to be concerned about it because they're an organization put together to oversee basic human rights in the world. They're made up of a number of nations. The representative group that ruled against the Saskatchewan Party in this issue was made up of business representatives, made up of independent representative from many different jurisdictions, and made up of . . . One quarter of

the folks on the ruling body are labour groups, groups that represent working people throughout the world. And so when you've got a group like the United Nations making rulings on fundamental human rights in Saskatchewan, you should ought to be concerned about it as a government. You shouldn't ignore it and pretend it didn't happen.

And so I have grave concerns about the TILMA agreement as we appear to be moving legislation . . . as the Saskatchewan Party government seems to be forcing legislation forward that would open us up for this very, very negative result in a suit against our province. And with that, Mr. Speaker, I would move to adjourn debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Elhard): — The member from Prince Albert Northcote has moved adjournment on debate on Bill No. 115, *The Queen's Bench Amendment Act, 2009*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Bill No. 130

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 130 — *The Enforcement of Money Judgments Consequential Amendments Act, 2009/Loi de 2009 portant modifications corrélatives à la loi intitulée *The Enforcement of Money Judgments Act**** be now read a second time.]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Elhard): — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

Ms. Atkinson: — I'm pleased to enter into the debate regarding Bill No. 130, which is *The Enforcement of Money Judgments Consequential Amendments Act*. As I understand it, this Bill is to ensure that the enforcement of money judgments is something that can be dealt with when, certainly when we hear from frustrated creditors who've obtained a court judgment which states that they're entitled to compensation or restitution, but they find it very difficult or impossible to enforce. So we know that this Bill is to assist those creditors in enforcing the judgment.

We also hear from worried debtors that they will be left without sufficient income to support themselves and their families without the use of the family vehicle to transport themselves to work and so forth. And there are also concerns about the powers of sheriffs when it comes to enforcing judgments, and of course how they interact with the public in the course of enforcing the judgments.

[19:45]

There's no question that this is a difficult, emotional issue for everyone involved, whether you are the debtor or the creditor or the sheriff who is attempting to enforce judgments.

Now the minister in his comments said that the legislation was needed to modernize the legislation in the province, and we certainly agree with that. There is a need for clarity when it

comes to enforcement of money judgments. And we know that the government has also brought together, in one piece of legislation, rules that have in the past been scattered throughout several pieces of legislation, and we agree that it's important that all of the rules are congregated in one particular Bill.

But the minister promises that this is more than just consolidation, in his remarks. He says that the two Bills — because this is the consequential amendment Act — but the two Bills will remove a host of procedural burdens and legislative inadequacies in the process.

Unfortunately the minister in his remarks, which were very swift and speedy, did not explain in any kind of succinct manner what those burdens and inadequacies were. So he didn't provide the public through the Legislative Assembly any detail. And he didn't explain how this new Act and this companion Bill of 129 will address problems that citizens have had in the past. And we think it's prudent when ministers bring pieces of legislation into the House that they provide some context, some information, so that . . . in words that the ordinary person on the street can understand. And in this case, the minister didn't provide any examples of situations where people would not have been able to enforce a judgment in the past and will now be able to do so. So he didn't tell us how this legislation was going to assist people who in the past weren't able to enforce a judgment — how this legislation would make it possible now.

So we think that that's problematic because he didn't outline any specific provisions in the two Bills that would make it easier for creditors to enforce judgments. Instead, you know, we're once again, Mr. Speaker, in this unfortunate position where the public and members of the legislature have to take this government at its word. And we know that sometimes that's a very tricky situation for the public because of word that has been given in the past is not the word that is actually implemented when the government gets around to implementing policy.

And we know this because the government gave its word prior to the election that there wouldn't be a need for essential services legislation, for instance. And then within days, this government broke their word and brought a Bill into the legislature, declaring most people who work in the public service essential.

And, Mr. Speaker, we know that this is a government that, when they came to power, they promised that they were going to certainly address rural health care. And in fact what we've seen in rural Saskatchewan is a significant increase in doctor vacancies in rural Saskatchewan and we know that regularly on weekends, plastic garbage bags are put on signs indicating to the public that their rural hospital is not available for services. So this is a government also that promised that there was so much more we were all going to be. But unfortunately, as there's so much more that we're all supposed to be, in the constituency that I represent the cost of living has increased dramatically for people, particularly people in the service sector and people living on fixed incomes.

And I have to tell you in my 23 years as a legislator in this province, I've had more tissue given to constituents who are having a very difficult time making ends meet. And these are

proud people, Mr. Speaker, proud people who go to work every day or worked every day in their lives. And they are dealing with some fairly dramatic increases in rent because they aren't homeowners, and it's making it almost impossible to get by.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's problematic when you see men and women who are proud men and women who have given their lives to the workplace. They've set aside a little bit of money for their retirement, but basically they were in lower paid, not professional jobs, lower paid private sector jobs. And they are in the position where their rents have increased so dramatically, and they have no place to go. There is absolutely no place to go in terms of finding a cheaper apartment.

And I can say to the members of the legislature with certainty that in my 23 years in the Legislative Assembly, I . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well you can say it's too long, and maybe, you know, that's up to you. But in my 23 years representing the people of my constituency, I have never had as many people come into my office that are finding it very, very difficult to make ends meet. And I think from a public policy point of view, that's something that we should all be worried about because we need to represent all of the people, Mr. Speaker, not just some people, which takes me to my next point.

Now as I said earlier, this government has broken a lot of promises. This government came to office with a lot of promise and there were a lot of people that voted for this government because they thought their life was going to get better. And in fact, Mr. Speaker, their life has not gotten better.

And when I say that people have come into my office in tears because of their rent increases, some of these people work in health regions and they have not had a collective agreement for several years. They've been deemed essential service and they don't have the ability to withdraw their labour, which I think really should be a basic human right. I really believe it should be a basic human right that, you know, at a point if the majority of the people in the workplace determine that they want to withdraw their services to put pressure on the government, they should have that right. And people in this province who work in the health sector, the public sector, no longer have that right because of what this government did and promised they would not do.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what I'm trying to say is that Saskatchewan people have very little reason to take the Sask Party government at its word that this legislation is going to improve the enforcement of money judgments. And they need details.

And that's the other thing that I'm hearing daily from constituents, that what they thought they were voting for is not in fact what they got in the end. And I'm hearing that from constituents, and I'm saying this very clearly to the members opposite, that what people — some people — thought they were voting for when they put their X beside the Sask Party brand, they thought that they were going to get a government that listened to them, was going to pay attention to them and was going to honour them. Honour them, Mr. Speaker. Honour them. And they do not feel particularly honoured at the moment when they have a very difficult time making ends meet. They've seen their rents increase dramatically. Their utilities have gone up. And they're not really sure that the government

is working hard on their behalf.

So when I say that Saskatchewan people have little reason to take this government at its word that this legislation will improve the enforcement of money judgments, of course the proof will always be in the details. And the details were not provided by the minister when he entered this legislation into the House.

Now the minister did specifically mention that Bill 130 will amend *The Enforcement of Maintenance Orders Act*. And when you look at that section of the Bill you see that where maintenance orders are in arrears, maintenance orders would be added to the judgment registry being created under Bill 129. And I think all members of the legislature, if they have any experience with their constituents, will know that maintenance enforcement does comprise a significant portion of the casework that comes into our constituency offices. And once again, Mr. Speaker, this is an extremely sensitive, often difficult and emotional issue for everyone involved. In many cases, maintenance and disputes over maintenance goes on for years, and so some attempt to link the payment or nonpayment of maintenance to the issue of custody or access to the children, and there are hard feelings on all sides of this issue.

Now I can say that my experience with the maintenance enforcement branch has been an excellent experience, and I think the branch has done a lot of very good work over the years, certainly collecting money for payees. And in many cases, we know that the people who are receiving maintenance are women who have children, and we also know that in many cases their involvement has allowed an impartial person to deal with the issue of maintenance and allowed former spouses to concentrate on other matters in their interaction, such as the well-being of their children. And then of course in other cases, people decide that the problem is the maintenance enforcement office itself, and that certainly has not been my experience on most occasions.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's good that the legislation maintains the priority given to the enforcement of maintenance orders over a number of other money judgments. However we'll have to look at the legislation very carefully. And this is where it will be important for the Minister of Justice to be forthright in his comments.

And I think that it would be, it's important, Mr. Speaker, that when comments or speeches are being written, second reading speeches are being written for ministers, I certainly would appreciate if there could be some more emphasis on content so that the public and members of the legislature could have a second reading speech that provided us with some details so that we understood the implications of the legislation that is being presented by the government, and also we could understand some of the public policy implications or public policy that the ministry is trying to address.

So once again, Mr. Speaker, we'll have to look at this legislation carefully to ensure that in fact there is a strengthening of the maintenance enforcement framework rather than a weakening of the legislation. And with that, Mr. Speaker, I would move adjournment.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Elhard): — The member from Saskatoon Nutana has moved adjournment on Bill No. 130, *The Enforcement of Money Judgments Consequential Amendments Act, 2009*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Elhard): — Agreed. Carried.

Bill No. 112

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 112 — *The Justices of the Peace Amendment Act, 2009/Loi de 2009 modifiant la Loi de 1988 sur les juges de paix*** be now read a second time.]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Elhard): — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Riversdale.

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, I am happy to rise and enter into debate on Bill 112, *The Justices of the Peace Amendment Act, 2009*.

I want to start by talking a little bit about the role of the Justice of the Peace here in Saskatchewan. Yes, justices of the peace are not in fact judges and are not usually lawyers, but they do play a very, very important role in our society.

Some of the duties of the justices of the peace include administering oaths for criminal charges laid by the police or the public. They confirm or cancel police-issued processes, including promises to appear, appearance notices, or recognisance orders. Justices of the peace review and sign court-issued processes like summons, warrants for arrest or undertaking. They review, justices of the peace review and issue subpoenas compelling witnesses to attend court. They administer oaths for affidavits, affirmations, and declarations. Justices of the peace also consider applications for search warrants.

Justices of the peace can release people under conditions who have been arrested and are being held in custody. They can also conduct show-cause hearings, or we also call them bail hearings, to determine if someone should remain in custody until they're dealt with by the law.

In the absence of a Provincial Court judge, justices of the peace also have a role to play. They can accept guilty pleas from . . . in sentencing an accused person charged with an offence punishable on summary conviction. Justices of the peace can receive an accused person's election for their mode of trial. They can grant an adjournment of a matter.

[20:00]

So actually in Regina and Saskatoon, there are specially designated and trained senior, currently there are specially designated and trained senior presiding justices of the peace, and they have the authority to conduct trials for offences under various provincial statutes including traffic, liquor, and wildlife offences. In Regina and Saskatoon, they can also conduct trials

for offences under various municipal bylaws, including things like parking, noise, and domestic animal violations.

So sort of in reviewing what some of the things justices of the peace do, what these proposed amendments to Bill 112, *An Act to amend The Justices of the Peace Act, 1988*, one of the proposed changes is allowing practising lawyers to become justices of the peace. Historically, practising lawyers have not been eligible for appointment as JPs [Justice of the Peace]. So the government's proposed legislation right now is suggesting that practising lawyers be appointed as justices of the peace provided they are not practising criminal law, and they are not otherwise in a conflict of interest.

There's also some other . . . so if people aren't . . . so people becoming justice of the . . . That's a hard word to say here tonight, justices of the peace. So there's no conflict of interest. No person who is an employee of the Government of Saskatchewan or a Crown corporation can become a JP nor can an employee or a member of a police service within the meaning of *The Police Act* or the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police]. A person who is a member of the Corps of Commissionaires can't become a JP nor can a member of the board as defined in *The Police Act, 1990* or an elected member of a council or a municipality. So these are one of the proposed amendments in terms of who can't be a Justice of the Peace.

But this proposal now allowing practising lawyers to become JPs actually may in fact allow the opportunity to increase the pool of justices of the peace. In looking at some of the comments of my colleagues on this particular piece of legislation, one of the former ministers of Justice actually said this was a very hard position to fill sometimes in rural Saskatchewan. And so a move to increase the pool by allowing practising lawyers to become justices of the peace, on the face of it, it looks like a very good thing to do.

Actually I think it's not just justices of the peace where there seems to be a labour force shortage. All across Saskatchewan and all across Canada, this province and this country are facing labour force shortages — actually all around the world. We have an aging population. Baby boomers in about 2013 were sort of set to retire en masse. That's when the real crunch would start. It's getting harder and harder to fill existing positions. So it's not just with justices of the peace; it's all across the board here in this province. So allowing the pool to be a bit bigger is, I think, probably a very good move.

This Act, one of the other amendments allows for justices of the peace, changing the retirement age from 65 to move it up to 70, which is a good thing. Actually a few years ago the former NDP [New Democratic Party] administration removed the mandatory retirement age. We recognize that the older we are, that many of us, many people still have very valuable contributions to make. So in this, making this provision of retirement age from 65 to 70 actually puts justices of the peace in line with Provincial Court judges. So this is a good move for sure.

Not only though, I mean we recognize, we definitely recognize that more mature citizens in our province have many contributions still to make. And often a Justice of the Peace tends to, can be a second career for some people. So moving this age up is a very positive move . . . [inaudible interjection]

... Sorry, it's very easy to get distracted by the noise around you.

The mandatory retirement or the notion, the notion actually too of when the NDP administration removed the mandatory retirement age, it actually wasn't just about — and this can apply here — it's not just about recognizing that more mature members of society have something to contribute, but that not everybody wants to leave the workforce when they're 65. There needs to be mechanisms to ensure the people have the opportunity, not to just, you reach an age and it's done, and you retire fully and completely at that moment.

I think about my own family. My mom was at home with seven kids, so she worked non-stop all the time, but my dad retired, took early retirement when he was about, well, in his 50s. Sorry, I can't remember the age he retired. I know I was 18 when my father retired, and he is approaching his 80th birthday in the next couple years here and still has much to contribute.

But that opportunity to be able to provide employees who are nearing the end of their work term but aren't quite ready to go yet that opportunity to slowly step out of the workforce, so they still have some chance to be engaged but can mentor, make room in some respects for new employees, but also provide some mentoring. So this notion that we don't just push people out of the workforce at 65 is a very good one. And the NDP addressed that a few years ago.

This Act, or the amendments, one of the things that this Bill 112, *An Act to amend The Justices of the Peace Act* does actually is some housekeeping items around gender-neutral language — changing his and her, or changing him to her, those kinds of things.

I spent many years as a reporter, and when I first started my job as a reporter, I actually thought people were a bit silly for being sticklers around gender-neutral language. I thought, what's the difference if you say his and you're referring to everybody? So early in my career I really believed that gender-neutral language was one of those just politically correct, silly things. But as I gained a little bit of experience, and actually when I became a mother, was when the notion what language does for us as a society really hit home for me.

I was an at-home mother for seven years with my daughter, and this is when, in those very early days, language became very, very important to me. When I tell people that I was at home with my kids, they'd say, oh you're not working. Or there's always the comment, are you a working mother? Well you know, yes, every mother, I would argue, is a working mother. So language, I learned early in my role as a mother that language really does make a difference. So addressing the gender-neutral language here, I think, is a good move.

What often happens with language, it shapes how we think about ourselves. But language also shapes how others perceive us. So again the more often people talk about mothers who don't work, you begin to internalize that a little bit. So again addressing this gender-neutral language, it might seem like a small thing or just a housekeeping thing, but it's really very important.

I have a friend who has a daughter with Down's syndrome. And when we talk about, again, language and we refer to people who have special needs, I know that statement or that language drives her absolutely insane. Her children have needs just like every other child has. Her daughter who has Down's syndrome doesn't have special needs; she just has needs as all her other children do.

So language is absolutely critical. And as I said, it might just seem like a housekeeping detail, but I think that that's a very positive step for sure.

So I just want to again ... So these might not seem like big changes, and I think on the face of it, we're in support of all of the things that these amendments the government is proposing. But I think that there's much to be said about some of this. In my short time in this legislature, there are small things that this government is proposing that have some pretty good ramifications for ensuring we have a pool of justices of the peace, but my big concern here is, who has this government consulted with?

And if it's not on this Bill, it's on all kinds of other things. We've seen that this government has a track record of cutting then consulting, or making changes without really talking to the people who are impacted by the changes, whether it's Bill 80 or just recently the Saskatchewan Communications Network. This was a government who has decided to get rid of a key pillar of the film and television industry without talking to the people in the film and television industry.

This government has a track record of not talking to people who are impacted by decisions. When you're making changes to legislation that have ramifications on all the rest of the province, you need to know what you're doing and the impact it will have on those people.

So again, SCN [Saskatchewan Communications Network] might just seem like a public broadcaster to the government, but it is a key tool for leveraging funds from outside of this province and a key pillar of the film and television industry. There's multiple prongs to the film and television industry. And this industry over 20 years has been built and grew up, and has languished the last couple of years, in part because of what's gone on in the rest of the country and the world — the economic crisis.

But other jurisdictions have worked to address some of these issues and are head and shoulders above us. And so for this government to kick the film and television industry when it's down, and will be chasing film and television producers out of the province, it's a very sad day here in Saskatchewan. And there's a lot of people who are dreading May 1st.

Aside from the film and television industry, there's a lot of viewers in rural Saskatchewan for whom SCN has proven to be a very important connection to the rest of the province. And SCN actually was a vehicle for sharing some of our Saskatchewan stories. We spent almost \$8 million on the Olympics to promote Saskatchewan abroad, and SCN does that on a daily basis to Canada and the rest of the world. So we spent \$8 million for two weeks. And SCN — a small, a meagre investment — that has been doing this for a long, long time.

So again, one of my big concerns with this legislation is although the changes seem fairly modest and reasonable, you always want to make sure that the people who are impacted by changes have been consulted. And again, this government doesn't have a great track record in that regard.

Dutch elm disease is another one. My sister is an urban forester in Saskatoon, and on budget day was absolutely appalled to hear that this program was being cut — 20 years of investment in saving our elm trees in Saskatchewan potentially down the toilet in a very short amount of time. Again this goes to the need to speak to people who are impacted by decisions. Good public policy is shaped and made when we make sure we're talking to the full depth and breadth of people who will be impacted by public policy.

So again on the face of this, this Bill looks like it's reasonable. And changing the mandatory retirement age for justices of the peace from 65 to 70, putting them in line with Provincial Court justices, I think is a very good idea. Again, we recognize the contributions that our more mature citizens can make.

I think the housekeeping details that I talked about, the gender-neutral language, again, I can't emphasize how important that is. It seems like a minor issue, but language says a whole bunch, sends all kinds of messages to people. So I think that that's a very positive change.

Allowing for barristers or lawyers to be able to be justices of the peace is also a very good move. I mean we need to increase not just justices of the peace, but we need to ensure that we're addressing labour force shortages, and this seems like a very reasonable way to do this. And from my understanding, in rural Saskatchewan justices of the peace can be very hard to find, so any vehicle that allows that opportunity to find more or increase the number of potential justices of the peace I think is a very good move.

[20:15]

So I believe that my colleagues will likely want to wade into this debate and probably have much to say, so at this time I'd like to move to adjourn debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Elhard): — The member for Saskatoon Riversdale has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 112, *The Justices of the Peace Amendment Act, 2009*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Bill No. 104

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 104** — *The Summary Offences Procedure Amendment Act, 2009 (No. 2)* be now read a second time.]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Elhard): — I recognize the member for Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, it's with pleasure that this evening I rise in this Assembly and to join in on the debate on Bill No. 104, *An Act to amend The Summary Offences Procedures Act*. Mr. Speaker, we've looked over some of the information that has been provided in this Bill. And it's an opportunity for people to weigh in in their opinion to debate a Bill that will actually allow our police officers and our police force to mail out offences, tickets to people. Should they be violating that thing?

No one is opposed to making sure that people follow the law. I think that's very clear that's the role and that's why . . . And I see the Saskatchewan police chiefs have supported this and it's come forward from themselves. And I think that's good to see, that we see opportunities where we allow some input from agencies that have an impact. But that's interesting, Mr. Speaker. We see this opportunity for them.

And I just want to go back and reflect different opportunities where people haven't had an opportunity to give their opinion or to be consulted or to make sure we've checked out with the experts out there, are we moving Bills and are we making laws that are fair to everybody and that everybody has a right to be heard? And, Mr. Speaker, this government, when it comes to that area, falls very short of that amongst the people in our province. We know that.

People trust a government. They elect the government. And I think when they elect that government they put trust into that government. They want a government to do the best it can on behalf of all people. And the people really expect that from the Sask Party government. They expect them to make sure that whatever it is that they promise and they say they will deliver before an election, they expect that to happen after an election if they're successful, Mr. Speaker. It's a trust thing. If you make promises and commitments, it's something you should fulfill.

And we have an opportunity here to amend an Act. But again I want to go back to that 104, a Bill to amend. Well it's about trust. And I say that. It's about making sure that people have an opportunity to debate it. And that's the role of the MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] in this Assembly. But you know it goes much deeper. And I want to go back to that.

Some people really want to feel like . . . First Nations, Métis, Saskatchewan residents, voting members, anyone that really will be impacted by any type of Acts that we amend in this House and laws that are passed, again I want to go back to this very clearly: I want to make sure that they've had an opportunity to give input, to talk to their MLAs that represent them. And I think it's an obligation of the MLAs to make sure they're going out and talking to the people and listening to the people. That is how we find out. I know we're elected in this House, Mr. Speaker, to represent and to do the best we can. We're provided documents and Bills.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, it's sometimes troubling when I hear people telling me that they feel like their trust has been, the trust that they put into a government has turned their back on them. And it is a trust. This government and the Sask Party government has an obligation to those people and all people in the province, Mr. Speaker. And trust is something that's . . . Once you lose the trust from a people or from an individual, it's

hard to win that back.

And people make mistakes, but sometimes you can come forward and say, I've made a mistake. I'm sorry and it won't happen again. And you can gain the trust of people. But if you constantly apologize and you apologize and you still go out and do the same mistakes without consulting people, they no longer feel the apology is sincere. And they start to feel like they're being taken advantage of.

And, Mr. Speaker, there is opportunities. And people really want to feel like when they're saying their piece and they've put their concerns forward to their MLAs. And whether it's members opposite or the government, there's a trust. They elect us, all of us, and there's a trust that we will do what's best for our province with laws that we pass, with I guess, amendments we make to the Bills, like Bill 104. These Bills are what the law is of the land.

And we have an obligation and a job to do as MLAs, and I take that job very serious, like I think some of my colleagues do and I hope the members opposite do. These are serious times. People are looking at the government and they want to reach out. But I know a lot of them are losing their patience. The trust factor, the duty to consult and accommodate and just to be heard, and when you don't give those people an opportunity to be heard — whether it's a Bill like 104 or it's any legislation that we want to pass in this House or whether it's a program, Mr. Speaker — I think the people want to be heard and have a right to be heard.

And we have an obligation as MLAs to do all we can to fight for those individuals, to make sure that laws that we pass and Bills that are passed in this House and debated, and I guess, at the end of the day, come into being the law. And there's a process for that. But when that all happens, they want to be sure, Mr. Speaker, that we have gone through a process. And the process sometimes is a long debate and people have questions. And some people have different questions and they wonder, and other people will raise them.

I look at an Act like this, 104, and it's going to give the police an opportunity, should there be an accident and they can't serve someone with a ticket immediately, but after they do their investigation, they find grounds to lay charges against somebody. Well before, they had to go out and they had to find that individual. And they may look at the last address and they might try to find them and a lot of time is used up. And sometimes, you know, the time that's used up actually takes away from emergency services that those police officers could be responding to, versus trying to track down someone to give them a summons or a ticket.

But it has to be done. Somebody has broken the law. An investigation happened and at the end of the day charges need to be laid. And that's a process. There's a law for that, which we passed in this House, and we make it very clear. We ask the police force to do their job, you know, to do a competent job. And I think they'll try to do the best job they can to make sure that someone that has broken the law faces the charges and goes before a judge, and to just allow them an opportunity.

And I mean, we're going to debate that and I think we're going

to go through quite a bit of discussions. And I've heard members talk about it before. But to actually have an opportunity now to, via mail, to mail out a summons or a ticket to someone's last address, well that is another opportunity where they don't have to utilize their resources. And manpower is huge and we know the cost of that. So in some circumstances, it's all right to do that, and I think it makes sense.

But I wonder, have we consulted? And who has the government talked to? And have they thought this Bill through? And is there a good rationale to why we are going this route? And are there pros and cons? I think there is to every situation. I don't think everyone will be happy when they receive a ticket in the mail. And maybe it's, I don't know, it's speeding. It's cameras that's caught them, red lights. We're seeing different things happen, whether it's an accident and after an investigation is complete, again like I said, then in the mail is a ticket.

I think some people will be very upset, and I just have to assume that because maybe they're not expecting a ticket and didn't realize it's coming, but now it was mailed to them, versus having it handed to them or later. So there's going to be different pros and cons to it. And you know there's so many examples that I could use. Any time you're going to affect people in our province, and I think this one will affect a number of people. Now you know people who, you know, everybody makes a mistake, a wrong judgment. You know, sometimes that happens. You know, you make a mistake and you should've stopped at the light, and it was an amber light and you went through it, and all of a sudden it went red, and you get caught in the moment. And you have to face those. And sometimes you made a call and you maybe tried to hit the brake, but you didn't. For whatever . . . you went through it. And that happens.

Sometimes we're travelling on our highways and, you know, we're busy to get to a meeting, our feet are kind of heavy. And we think, well you know, we've got to get to this meeting, sir, and I'm on my way, and we try to find our excuses when we do get pulled over.

And sometimes, you know, I'm seeing signs more and more, Mr. Speaker, with aircraft. That they're using aircraft to monitor speeds and they're giving warning signs and they're telling you. So I'm assuming after that process has happened and an aircraft has caught somebody speeding, I'm just having to assume that they have to go and locate the individual and serve him with a summons or a ticket, whatever it is at the time.

I guess maybe this Act . . . And I think we'll find out as time goes on. Well is this Act and the amendments in this Act, is it going to allow the police just to mail that ticket out? And, you know, I realize a police officer sees someone doing a violation, they put their lights on and a siren sometimes, and they pull them over and, you know, they give them a ticket. And they have a conversation and the police officer might ask, why were you doing this or what was your reason? And maybe they were going to an emergency. Their wife's have a baby; I don't know. Things happen and there's different things. They're rushing to a hospital for an emergency or something's gone on why they're in a hurry. You sometimes have an opportunity to talk to the police officer and sometimes, to be honest with you, they'll make a judgment call and maybe you get a warning or you get a lesser charge that you could be charged with. So I think that

police officer has an opportunity, and he'll decide which charge is warranted at the time. And I assume they have some flexibility, so I will just go with that.

But if that happens and you're speeding and radar picks you up, and that's what I'm wondering about this, Mr. Speaker, and you receive a ticket in the mail with this . . . If we pass this Bill and now you get a ticket in the mail, is it going to be kind of surprising? Well where was I speeding? Are people going to have a process to appeal it?

And I was looking through some of the information been provided and people are going to have an opportunity to appeal it or go before a judge if you don't want to do the voluntary payment. But what happens if you truly say you didn't receive the ticket in the mail? And then I look at registered mail. They're sending it maybe registered mail and you have to sign for it at the last address you gave, whether that was on your driver's or for whatever reason. So there's a lot of things, Mr. Speaker, to take in account here. And to be sure, what's the intent of this amendment?

And, you know, we hope that all our citizens are law-abiding, and that's what we want to encourage. And I think we want all of us to follow and obey traffic laws. And sometimes I, you know, a person like I said earlier, gets in a hurry and, wrong move, should have hit the brake instead of hitting the gas to get through that amber light, and it's red. So there's different situations that will come up.

So whether a person receives that and wants to appeal that before a judge and have an opportunity to argue, like I was saying, if it's a police officer who pulls you over, you sometimes would be able to say what your reasoning was, why you were speeding a little too much, or he gives you a warning. And there's different circumstances I think that would happen.

But this way, you would receive a ticket immediately. And then you would have to go before a judge, and there'll be a court date and I imagine a voluntary payment, I'm assuming. Or you go before a judge and you say why, you know, I'm appealing this or I disagree with this. And I was not speeding; I don't know why I got this. Where was I speeding? Well, you know, there's different ways that the police use now to determine whether you're speeding or not. And I said aircraft, whether it's radar in their vehicles. So there's different measures.

[20:30]

So I think we may have some people who will argue that and fight it. And I want to make sure that we have to ensure that those individuals make sure that they have a right to be heard. And if they disagree with that ticket, they have a right to argue that ticket out, to make it very clear that they feel that it's not warranted for them to have that ticket, that no, I wasn't speeding. But they're going to receive that ticket now, if it's just for speeding, Mr. Speaker, or will there be other violations? A police officer sees you not wearing a seatbelt. Maybe you didn't stop three seconds at a stop sign. Are you going to receive a ticket in the mail for that?

Going through a red light, will you receive a ticket for that? Like if this is what this is, so is it a judgment call by the law to

say an argument of nay or yea? I know I didn't; it actually was green when I went through it. And I get it later. So that's what I'm talking about. And I know that we have to make sure that those individuals have that process to be heard by a judge or to appeal that ticket saying, no I did not do that. Because — I'll be honest with you — I guess mistakes happen. Nobody's perfect.

So what if somebody gets charged and it is an error, done in error, how do we determine that? The person saying, I wasn't speeding; I didn't go through a red light. So there's a lot of things to take into consideration when we are changing the way we were handing out tickets by our law enforcement officers.

And I mean they do an excellent job and I, from what I know, most are right upfront and if they see things happening . . . But there has been circumstances where, you know, they're busy too and something gets by and they charge somebody and maybe it wasn't so. And I've seen judges throw out things. And I know where somebody goes to court and they fight it or appeal it and a judge will throw it out for whatever reasons he finds that the charge is not warranted and he throws it out. And our judges have that process.

So that's part of that appeal process that I really think that people have to have that process and I want to ensure that that's going to happen. I think a lot of people are going to have questions making sure that process happens, Mr. Speaker.

But, you know, I want to go back to this, talking about trusting and making sure that people feel comfortable and the laws that are passed and the individuals that they elect to pass those laws to represent their best interests. And this is a trust issue and I want to use some examples of that.

People, you know, listen to individuals. When we are running for re-election or we want to get into politics, we knock on individuals' doors, Mr. Speaker, and we ask them to trust us. And we say it's going to be different. Trust us. Support us. It isn't going to be the way it was. We're going to be different. We're going to do the things that the people ask, and here are our promises. We're going to write them down. And you'll see them in black and white. And you know when people find out that these are not black and white, well you misunderstood me, or no, I'm not keeping that promise or whatever the answer is. Mr. Speaker, it's a trust issue.

It's the same thing with the ticket. The people will trust that this House will make laws and we'll amend Bills to make sure that they are taken care of and that the laws are fair, that we give them an opportunity to be heard. And, Mr. Speaker, it's so important to make sure that when we tell people we'll do something, then we should make sure that we accomplish what we promise people.

You can go out there and I guess you can say, we will try, and some people will buy that. We will try our best to do this; we will try our best to do that. But when you tell people you're going to do something and you turn your back on them, it is a trust issue. And I'm sorry the government has had an opportunity and have turned their back on some of the promises and commitments they have made to people.

So there's questions and examples, Mr. Speaker, that I'm using

when we look at Bill 104. And we're going to give our men and women in uniform an opportunity to mail out tickets so that their time is utilized dealing with more serious emergency calls that they have to deal with but, Mr. Speaker, you know, it's a trust thing. We're entrusting the men and women that represent our law enforcement to make sure that they're following the law that are provided for them and to work within those areas of the law that give them the authority to lay charges and present tickets on individuals. But we are changing the way we do that, and by amending this it is going to give the law enforcement to mail out tickets.

And it's going to be interesting to see at the end of the day, as individuals receive those tickets in the mail. And I hope I'm not one of those individuals. And I imagine my colleagues on this side hope they're not individuals that receive any of them, but, you know, sometimes things happen and people see us doing, I guess, breaking the law or speeding, whatever it is. And all of a sudden you're going to get again, you're going to get that ticket in the mail. And I think some people are going to be pretty upset because they're not going to believe, well when was I speeding? When did I go through a red light? Some people won't believe that because they thought they had lots of time or I wasn't speeding.

So I think, Mr. Speaker, there's going to be opportunities. And I think my colleagues want to talk about the amendment we're making to this Bill and I think it has to go further. And there's a lot of discussion that needs to happen. Yes, lots of discussion that needs to happen: making sure people feel like they were consulted, that their input was listened to, that their concerns were addressed. There are many concerns. And we're making changes that will affect people's lives, and when we do that I think it's important that we debate it properly and we go through the discussions as maybe painful as it is sometimes.

And we have to use examples, Mr. Speaker, because I know sometimes the members opposite aren't listening. So if you use examples and you refer to their promises, they listen to you all of a sudden. They pay attention. And that is nice to see. I do appreciate that.

So going back, and I want to reflect on some of the past things I've heard some of my colleagues talk about — broken promises, commitments. And when you make a promise and a commitment, the idea of that is to make sure you fulfill that. Whether that's with funding; whether it's property tax relief; whether it's taxes; whether it's PST, getting 1 per cent — those are promises you make to the people of our province. You have to ensure that you follow through on that. You can't say after the fact, well no, we've made such a mess of the finances that — you know what? — we can't do that. Well that's a broken promise to the people. And they don't appreciate that and they don't forget it. They don't forget it, Mr. Speaker.

So when I see that, you know, we're going to go and change Bill 104, and we're going to give an opportunity for our law enforcement to mail out tickets. And you know, I know they're busy. They have a job to do and I respect the work they do. Do I always agree with them? No, I don't. I don't always agree with the way they handle things. But you know what? Overall I have to admit, they have a hard job and I think they do their best that they can.

And we're giving them some tools, Mr. Speaker, an opportunity so that it will take and give them more time to focus on the emergency calls that they respond to. And they're going to be able to respond to more calls, and I hope that this assists them. And to see the Saskatchewan police chiefs' association bring this and support this, then there must be a reason why they wanted to bring this forward. There must have been problems with making sure that people are at home or finding or locating someone that's getting charged or a ticket being served or a summons.

So I imagine it's been a tough job to find those individuals, and I know they use other resources, they're not always police officers, to try to locate those individuals. And it's not an easy job to do that. And sometimes, sometimes it takes away from response time that they can respond to other emergency calls because they have their staff out serving tickets, summons. And I don't think that's the idea of law enforcement.

But I'm going to go back to a few comments, Mr. Speaker, and about the trust issue, because I think that's so important. I want to make sure it's very clear that the members opposite understand the trust thing. This is a Bill. We're going to change it or propose to change it, but we're going to debate it and we're going to talk about it, and my colleagues want to talk about, and I know there's people back home really wanting to know, to make sure that I represent them well and we make sure that Bills we pass, we debate in this House. And that's part of that process, Mr. Speaker. We have to debate those Bills. Whether the government likes it or does not like it, it doesn't really matter. Those Bills and amendments . . .

An Hon. Member: — It's our obligation.

Mr. Vermette: — It's an obligation. That's right, it is an obligation — an obligation. You're right. And it is an obligation that we have to make sure, Mr. Speaker, that we're doing the job that the people have asked us to do. And that means members opposite over there as well, Mr. Speaker. And, you know, we've seen examples of that, where people have complained and they come in this House, and they're very concerned that their MLAs and the people representing them aren't hearing them and aren't bringing their message to the government. So they come here and they share their stuff with the official opposition and we'll make sure that we hear those concerns. And that's a trust thing. They trust we will do that for them and they can count on that.

So, Mr. Speaker, trust is a big thing. Trust is a big thing. You know, trust is probably one of the biggest things that will, I think, make a government successful or take down a government. And I think that government is going to be taken down.

You know, Mr. Speaker, we can go around and we can do all the cheerleading I've heard these guys do for two years now. And yes, well every now and then . . .

An Hon. Member: — I think they lost their pompoms.

Mr. Vermette: — Well, you know, that's a good point. I want to correct that, Mr. Speaker. I take that back. You know, they've got rid of the pompoms. I think . . . And they have

actually lost the smiles. They are frowning more now. And there's a reason why they're frowning.

And, you know, I want to use an example. I want to use an example, Mr. Speaker, because I want to make sure I'm referring to Bill 104. I want to stay on that point, Mr. Speaker, Bill 104. And it's a trust issue. Bill 104 is a trust issue. We're going to allow our police enforcement officers to mail out tickets to our Saskatchewan people. And those people have put trust in us that we will ensure that we've talked about this Bill, and that we've made sure that they're protected and that they've been, I guess, consulted and that they've had an opportunity to be heard. They want that. And they think by electing us, and us in the official opposition, for now in the official opposition, they want to make sure that the official opposition holds that government accountable. And we will. Mark my words, we will.

We have a job to do and we will do our job to the best of our ability for the people we represent. And you know Bill 104 is going to give some opportunities for our law enforcement to get the job done. And I referred to some of the situations that come up in emergency situations where, Mr. Speaker, this Bill will allow the enforcement officers to mail it out. And they can respond to more urgent calls, emergency calls, and they don't have to focus on trying to locate somebody when there's been an accident and a collision, and they can't determine until the investigation is done who's going to be charged. So they can mail out the ticket. Before, they had to do it the other way. We know that.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think, like everything else, there's always the trust issue. Trust is huge. And you know I want to emphasize on that. Trust is truly a thing . . . And I want to use an example to Bill 104. We're entrusting that the police will, with these amendments to this Bill, will do the best of their ability and will be honest to the people. And we know that, and we trust that. We trust that, and we pass this on. We put the trust in them. But I'll tell you, the Saskatchewan people don't put that much trust in that government.

Now you know I've had an opportunity to speak to this Bill and the amendments and, you know, there's other things. I know I'm missing something, so I don't want to miss anything, so I'm going to make that sure that I go over my list of things to make sure because, you know, it's important. I want to be very thorough. I talked about the police chiefs, and it came from them as a recommendation. I think that's very positive.

[20:45]

You know, I went into this area here, and we talked about an accident. And I talked a little bit about the accident. And after an accident, sometimes it could take up to four, six hours, eight hours for an investigation. And you have to call in a special unit, and that unit may not be within 20 minutes. It may take them four to eight hours to get to the scene. Well if they get to the scene and the people have been taken to a hospital or somebody's gone home, who do they charge after they do their investigation? Well I mean they would have to go out and actually locate the individual and serve them with that ticket.

I think this is going to give them an opportunity to mail out the

ticket to them. I think that's what it'll do, but I'm not sure. But I know, as my colleagues ask more questions and we debate this Bill, that'll come very clear. It'll come clear to us. Those are other issues, Mr. Speaker. My colleagues really want to get into this. They're really dying to get into the debate on this one, like you know, they really want to get into it. But at this time I think I'm prepared to move adjournment of this Bill.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Cumberland has moved adjournment on the Bill No. 104, *The Summary Offences Procedure Amendment Act, 2009*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 134

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. McMorris that **Bill No. 134 — *The Opticians Act*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is my pleasure to be able to rise and offer a few comments and my observations on Bill No. 134, *The Opticians Act*. I see from the minister's comments on the second reading that he says, "In developing this legislation, the government has consulted closely with the Saskatchewan Ophthalmic Dispensers Association." And I'm frankly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was quite surprised to read this. Surprised because this seems to be the exception when bringing forward legislation from this Sask Party government rather than the norm.

We see a basic lack of consultation with respect to almost every single piece of legislation that this government brings forward. Or even the cuts to the budget; we see that there were budget cuts made without any prior consultation to any of the experts that had any involvement with respect to how those cuts would affect the people of Saskatchewan or have long-standing financial implications for the province going forward.

My colleague had already mentioned earlier about the budget cut, for instance, of \$500,000 to the Dutch elm disease program. We now see that the Sask Party government has already backtracked on that, knowing full well that it was a gigantic mistake to have made that cut of that program and the \$500,000 that that program cost because of course the \$500,000 were used in such an amazingly efficient way that they actually prevented the spread of Dutch elm disease into the urban areas from the rural areas and provided the close monitoring and removal of those trees that were infected.

So we can see that there were high efficiencies built into that \$500,000 worth of funding that the Sask Party government now themselves recognize was a problem. And the Minister of Environment has now backtracked and has conceded that, well they were able to find \$100,000 to put back into that program. And I'm not really sure at this point, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as to whether or not that program is now going to exist with

\$100,000 worth of funding, or it's simply going to be \$100,000 worth of funding just to provide the monitoring under some other program, department. We're not really sure at this point, Mr. Speaker, but there are many more questions that need to be answered about it. And we'll certainly ask all the questions that need to be asked.

But as we see, there were no consultations done on this and that's why the government now has to backtrack. And quite frankly if the government was smart about the issue and could swallow their pride for just a millisecond, the bright thing to do would be to reinstate the full funding of \$500,000 to the Dutch elm disease prevention program and ensure that Saskatchewan people will be able to . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Just to remind the member I'm pretty sure we're on *The Opticians Act*, Bill 134. I would ask her to continue on with that discussion.

Ms. Morin: — It's my delight, Mr. Speaker, to inform the Assembly as to why I was making comments about the Dutch elm disease program, and that has to do with the fact that there is a consistent lack of consultations when this Sask Party government is bringing forward legislation, Mr. Speaker.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, there are many other examples I can give on the modus operandi of this government and its lack of consultation with bringing forward any legislation to this Assembly. And as well as I stated earlier also, making budget cuts.

Well let's look at for instance Bill No. 5. Bill No. 5 is a really, really good example of this, Mr. Speaker, because prior to the November 2007 election they were telling everyone that was asking, will there be essential services legislation? And what did the Sask Party government say? The Sask Party government said no. Matter of fact, the current Minister of Health said no, we don't deem that necessary. Within 30 days of being elected, Mr. Speaker, what did the Sask Party government do? They introduced essential services legislation.

Let's talk about another example of consultations that didn't take place prior to legislation being introduced. Let's look at for instance Bill No. 6, Mr. Speaker. And it was an amendment to *The Trade Union Act*, Mr. Speaker. Now again, we see from a UN [United Nations] agency, which is the ILO, we see that the ILO themselves are rendering a decision stating that that legislation was not necessary. And furthermore, even more contemptuous, is the fact that that legislation was introduced without prior consultation with the stakeholders that it would most directly affect, Mr. Speaker. So we see again there is a lack of consultations when this Sask Party government decides to do what it has its mind set on doing.

Let's look at another example, for instance Bill 80. Bill 80 is something that the current government, the Sask Party government, wants to ram through. And boy let me tell you they have tried everything under the sun in the last session and in this session to ensure that they succeed in destroying the lives of the tradespeople in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Now of course they're going to throw their spin on that as to why they deem it necessary to make these changes to *The Construction Industry Labour Relations Act*. However, Mr.

Speaker, any thinking person in this province, any thinking person except for the members of the Sask Party government can see that this is unnecessary legislation, unwanted legislation, and will only cause hardship for the trade industry, the trades people in Saskatchewan.

And now why, why, Mr. Speaker, would a government, a Sask Party government who claims, who claims that they want to see the economy grow in this province, why would they do something to damage the lives of working people in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker? People ask that. Why? Do you know why? Because the Premier, prior to the last election, made it very clear in no uncertain circumstances that he was going to war with the working people of this province, Mr. Speaker. He was going to war with them, and guess what? Guess what? He actually kept that promise. That is a promise that he actually kept. He is going to war with the working people of this province of Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, we find that, we the NDP opposition find it absolutely reprehensible. And we're going to make sure that we do everything in our power to protect and assist the working people of this province, Mr. Speaker.

Now let's talk about another lack of consultation that took place. And that was on for instance a Bill that was passed unfortunately in the last session called Bill No. 43, and it's the trespass amendment Act, Mr. Speaker. Now the trespass amendment Act seems innocuous but whoa, whoa, whoa, because it's not so. The trespass amendment Act, the changes to the trespass amendment Act mean that the Sask Party government, if they decide at any given point in time that people shouldn't be able to express their freedom of expression or their opinion or want to make known that they're not happy about the decisions of the government, that they can say to them that you're not allowed to express your opinion on public property, wherever it may exist.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is reprehensible yet again. And I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that they take a good look, a very good look at the decision from the UN and the ILO as to what it feels about the trespass amendment Act because they even rendered an opinion on the trespass amendment Act. And, Mr. Speaker, be sure that there will be more to come on that particular Bill, Mr. Speaker, because yet again we see a Sask Party dictatorship that thinks that they get to simply do whatever they want, whenever they want. And it doesn't matter if there's been consultations or not, doesn't matter who it's going to affect, how it's going to affect them. They are going to carry through because they feel that they have the divine right — no pun intended — to do whatever it is they want, whenever it is that they want, Mr. Speaker. That's what this Sask Party government feels.

Now so as we see, they actually talk about the fact that they have consulted the Saskatchewan Ophthalmic Dispensers Association with respect to *The Opticians Act*. And as I said, I'm very relieved to see that at least someone's being consulted with respect to one of the pieces of legislation that we're seeing come forward in this legislature.

Now I want to acknowledge the important role that opticians play in the province. They certainly serve an important role in

the health system in serving the health needs of Saskatchewan people as health professionals experienced in providing accurate and appropriate vision, not to mention that they do so much more than that, Mr. Speaker. They're a very concerned group of individuals, for not just the optical health of individuals in the province in Saskatchewan people, but also for ensuring that the equipment they use is always updated so that they can provide the best care possible, as we see today in today's *Leader-Post* about another clinic receiving some updated equipment.

And furthermore, Mr. Speaker, the opticians are able to diagnose other health-related issues through our appointments with our opticians as to what might be going elsewhere in our medical lives through these appointments that we have with these health professionals, Mr. Speaker. I know of various circumstances where opticians have referred people to their doctors with concerns that they have noticed when the patients have been in their offices. And sometimes unfortunately those concerns lead to a diagnosis of cancer and other health-related issues that are very serious, Mr. Speaker, and they were first picked up in the offices of the opticians of Saskatchewan. And quite frankly, for that I am extremely grateful, and the people who are fortunate enough to have those health issues detected at an early stage by the opticians that they're visiting are very grateful as well obviously, Mr. Speaker.

I know from my own personal experience, Mr. Speaker, we have a wonderful optician by the name of Dr. Diana Monea who has provided excellent care for my family and I. I of course have to wear glasses and contact lenses. My husband now unfortunately has had to succumb to reading glasses within the last six months. Not something he's particularly happy about, but something that does seem to happen to all of us as we age, Mr. Speaker.

[21:00]

And my daughter is a very wonderful circumstance of the wonderful care that they provide for the people of the province, Mr. Speaker. My daughter was born premature and had to be intubated because she was born premature. And so she had a situation, Mr. Speaker, where she was cross-eyeing. She was cross-eyeing with both eyes actually, Mr. Speaker, and luckily enough because we have such wonderful care from Dr. Diana Monea and because she was able to help us with early diagnosis, she referred us to a specialist.

And that specialist informed us that the only way to correct my daughter's situation was either through surgery or through the means of corrective lenses potentially. And I am happy to report that we went with the option of corrective lenses and we were very successful with that, Mr. Speaker. My daughter still wears glasses because she understands the importance of maintaining good eye health. But she no longer cross-eyes and has perfect vision. So she's fortunate enough that she doesn't have to wear these corrective lenses when she's playing sports which of course makes that situation so much easier.

So I want to personally thank Dr. Diana Monea for the wonderful care that she provided to my family and I because she is a cherished member of our team in terms of our lives and maintaining good health, Mr. Speaker.

So we see from this Bill that it's going to be called *The Opticians Act*, and the reason for this I was given was that the title, optician, is for the profession of ophthalmic dispensers, and it's to be consistent with other jurisdictions across Canada, Mr. Speaker. And quite frankly, when you have changes like this that are of a positive nature in terms of being on par with the other jurisdictions in Canada, that only makes good sense, Mr. Speaker.

Of course the Sask Party would like to stoop to the lowest common denominator on other issues with other jurisdictions across Canada, Mr. Speaker, and needless to say, those aren't things that we in the NDP opposition want to see the government stoop to. Sinking to the lowest common denominator is not something that the people of Saskatchewan are looking for or want out of the leadership of their government, Mr. Speaker, and yet the Sask Party government seems to think that that is something that is desirable. It is something that they seem to think that that's what they would like to have.

As my colleague from Prince Albert referred to earlier in the Bill that he was speaking of, sinking to the lowest common denominator when it comes to environmental regulations or labour mobility regulations or other trade regulations that might have harmful effects on the people of Saskatchewan by having those blanket agreements.

And then having a lowest common denominator situation that is enforced through those blanket agreements, Mr. Speaker, is not something that the people in the province of Saskatchewan are looking for. They've made it clear through consultations that were held on the issues, Mr. Speaker. And unfortunately their voices seem to be no longer heard by the Sask Party government because now we see that they won't be open and accountable with respect to being forthright on what they are going to be doing in those blanket agreements, Mr. Speaker.

And as I said earlier, we're going to continue, as well as the member from Prince Albert had already mentioned, we're going to continue making sure that we ask the hard questions and pressing them to be open and forthright with the people of Saskatchewan. That is what they . . .

An Hon. Member: — It's a trust issue.

Ms. Morin: — And it's a trust issue. That's a very good point. It's a trust issue, Mr. Speaker. People of Saskatchewan can't trust a government that they don't know is working on their behalf in a true fashion, Mr. Speaker. And what we have now is a complete lack of trust by the people of this province, Mr. Speaker, because we've a government that is not being accountable to the people of Saskatchewan. We have a government that is not being transparent to the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and therefore it's a government that cannot be trusted by the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And it's very, very disconcerting that this is something that has already come to fruition in such a short time since they've been elected, Mr. Speaker. But unfortunately this is where we stand today.

We also see that it is going to change the name of *The Ophthalmic Dispensers Act* to *The Opticians Act* to reflect the

title used by the profession of ophthalmic dispensers in Saskatchewan. Again, Mr. Speaker, this standardizing measure makes sense, and given that there was consultations prior to the change being made, we are optimistic that this is something that is desired by the Ophthalmic Dispensers Association of Saskatchewan.

Now it also changes, makes a change to the regulatory bodies named from the Saskatchewan Ophthalmic Dispensers Association to the Saskatchewan College of Opticians. And again, this is apparently going to reflect the trend amongst the regulatory bodies for this profession with other jurisdictions across Canada, Mr. Speaker. And again as I said, if this is something that is desired by the ophthalmic dispensers, this is something we certainly wouldn't want to stand in the way of, and we'll certainly support.

Now the change from association to college more accurately reflects the regulatory function of this professional organization, is what the minister said in his second reading speech. So we are going to trust that the minister is accurate in his assessment of what this is going to do.

Now it also talks about the fact that the Bill is going to include new provisions clarifying that the duty of the regulatory body is to serve and protect the interests of the public, not the interests of its members. And, Mr. Speaker, this is obviously something that will be . . . I mean, it is obviously always welcome news to the public that there is someone that is going to be looking out for them. And we're certainly hopeful that this the case in terms of what the minister has said in his second reading speech.

He goes on to say that the Bill will also appoint three public representatives on the council of Saskatchewan College of Opticians, one of whom will serve on the discipline committee. He goes on to say that doing so will give the public a greater voice in regulation of opticians. Now, Mr. Speaker, this is again another one of those welcome changes, if in fact this is the case.

The public always wants to ensure that they have input where they desire to have input and that that input will then be, would obviously be respected, will be listened to, and will then be incorporated. So if in fact this is the change that is going to be taking place through this Bill, then again that would seem that it would be something that would actually be a positive move in the right direction, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I found this quote by the minister in his second reading of *The Optician Act* to be very interesting, and so I want to quote him directly. He says:

. . . this government is committed to an accessible, quality health care system. We will provide leadership in making the changes needed to strengthen and sustain the system for the future.

Mr. Speaker, I find this to be highly, highly, highly hypocritical of the Minister of Health especially to be saying. If it was anybody else on the Sask Party government benches it would be hypocritical enough, period. But for the Minister of Health, for the Minister of Health to be saying that he is going to be, that he wants to provide leadership in making the changes needed to strengthen and sustain the system for the future is ridiculously

hypocritical.

Does the Minister of Health not realize that it was his decision and his Sask Party government's decision to de-insure the chiropractic services for the people of Saskatchewan? And does he not understand that although those services were looked at, Mr. Speaker, in 1991, when the NDP came to power in 1991, they were left with a massive, massive deficit of \$15 billion or more, Mr. Speaker? The province was on the verge of bankruptcy. The only reason, the only reason we didn't have to declare bankruptcy was because at that time . . .

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

Mr. D'Autremont: — Point of order, Mr. Speaker. The member on her feet talking used words that are unparliamentary, Mr. Speaker. On page 146 of Beuchesne's, Mr. Speaker, to call someone hypocritical has been ruled out of order on February 21st, 1961, June 22nd, 1961, July 5th, 1961, Mr. Speaker. I request that the member withdraw those remarks and apologize.

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

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, I'll withdraw the remark of referring to the Minister of Health as a hypocrite. I'll withdraw that remark.

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

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, that remark, what the minister said in terms of wanting to provide leadership in making the changes needed to strengthen and sustain the system for the future is absolutely disingenuous, Mr. Speaker. It is absolutely disingenuous.

That remark, that remark is something, Mr. Speaker, that that Minister of Health, that Minister of Health knew full well, knew full well when the chiropractors had a negotiated agreement with the Government of Saskatchewan, knew full well that the government was not going to honour that agreement. He allowed them to believe all the way along that they would not suffer the de-insuring or delisting of that service, Mr. Speaker. So that comment, Mr. Speaker, was entirely, entirely disingenuous because that is not the opinion of the Sask Party government. It is not the opinion of that Minister of Health, Mr. Speaker.

They are not wanting to be leaders with respect to providing the best health care in the country. They are willing to sink to lowest common denominator, Mr. Speaker. That's what that Sask Party government and that Minister of Health are willing to do — sink to the lowest common denominator. Now why, why do they need to sink to that lowest common denominator, Mr. Speaker? Because they need to find the money to cover up their fiscal incompetence when it comes to the management of the province . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — I would remind the member we're discussing Bill 134, *The Opticians Act*. I would ask her to discuss that Bill.

Ms. Morin: — So when referring to Bill No. 134, *The Opticians Act*, Mr. Speaker, and the minister's comment in his second reading remarks, I'll just repeat that so that everybody is clear as to why I'm talking about this particular issue at this time. The Minister of Health said :

... this government is committed to an accessible, quality, health care system. We will provide leadership in making the changes needed to strengthen and sustain the system for the future.

Now, Mr. Speaker, can you tell me how that Minister of Health can say that he is going to strengthen and sustain the system for the future when they make cuts to the surgical care centres in Regina? Gone. Thirteen long-term care facilities, gone. The children's hospital, the funding to the children's hospital, gone. So tell me how that Minister of Health can say that his comments were anything but disingenuous, Mr. Speaker, when he says that he is going to strengthen and sustain the system for the future.

I wonder how the patients of the chiropractors of Saskatchewan feel about the leadership with respect to health care of that Sask Party government and that Minister of Health, Mr. Speaker. I suggest it is quite the opposite of what he deems leadership in his comments, Mr. Speaker.

So here we are. We have a Sask Party government that can't be trusted. We have a minister who is entirely disingenuous with his comments. He seems to think that it's okay to say whatever he wants, whenever he wants, when it suits the purposes, Mr. Speaker.

He came back this evening from a convention, Mr. Speaker, and thought it was quite humorous when we asked him how the SAHO [Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations] convention went, Mr. Speaker. Well you know what? The 25,000 health care workers in this province don't think it's so funny, Mr. Speaker. They don't think it's so funny at all. As a matter of fact, going without a contract for two years is absolutely deplorable. And this is what he calls the leadership in health care. And this is what he calls strengthening and sustaining the system for the future when he refers to his comments for Bill No. 134, *The Opticians Act*.

It is completely disingenuous, Mr. Speaker, and the people of Saskatchewan, they won't be fooled, Mr. Speaker. They're not fooled, Mr. Speaker. They might have been fooled prior to last election, Mr. Speaker, but you know what, Mr. Speaker? The icing has come off the cake. They're not fooled any more, Mr. Speaker. They're not fooled any more. They know full well what this government stands for. Well for the most part, except for the part that they're not being transparent about. But they know that they're not working in the best interests of the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. They know that the comments that the minister made with respect to Bill 134, *The Opticians Act* are not, are not genuine and are not accurate and certainly cannot be trusted. These comments cannot be trusted, Mr. Speaker. These comments cannot be trusted.

[21:15]

When you have a minister who will say one thing one day and

then say quite another the next day, how do you trust, how do you trust that minister, Mr. Speaker? When you have that minister who represents, who represents the Sask Party government and is speaking on behalf of the Sask Party government —and best yet, Mr. Speaker, is speaking on behalf of the President of Executive Council who is none other than the Premier himself, Mr. Speaker — how do you trust that Sask Party government when you can't trust what's coming out of the mouths of the ministers that represent that Sask Party government, Mr. Speaker?

So, Mr. Speaker, when I look at the comments that the minister made in Bill 134, *The Opticians Act*, you know, at first when looking at it I wasn't too alarmed by what I read. But needless to say that, you know, because we talk about the fact that there's a trust issue here, Mr. Speaker, and that there is therefore a significant lack of trust for a whole host of reasons, I know that I personally would want to speak to a number of ophthalmic dispensers just to ensure that everything has been appropriately covered off. I want to ensure that there isn't something that maybe should be amended to strengthen the Act. I want to ensure, Mr. Speaker, that I have spoken personally and that my colleagues have spoken personally to a number of the ophthalmic dispensers in Saskatchewan, simply because I no longer have that feeling of trust, Mr. Speaker.

And when I look at some of the other Bills that we've already looked into and some of the other Bills that I've certainly looked into, that trust did not become any greater. As a matter of fact, that trust was diminished more, Mr. Speaker. There is very little to none, no consultation being done with respect to the people, the experts, or the stakeholders that have expertise on the issues that are being brought forward by the Sask Party government. Or as I referred to the budget cuts, there was little or none, little to none consultations that were done with respect to the cuts that were made to the budget, Mr. Speaker.

So the trust factor is gone, Mr. Speaker. And because the trust factor is gone, there needs to be a full review done with the ophthalmic dispensers of Saskatchewan and some individuals that I know, individuals that others know, to ensure that they are actually seeing what they want to come to fruition to be part of this Act and that the Act is going to cover off the appropriate asks that the association has, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, as an opposition we are not overly concerned with the actual contents of the Bill thus far, but there certainly needs to be some careful scrutiny done because of the disconcerting statements that the minister makes with respect to being committed to an accessible quality health care system and yet making the cuts that we've seen and yet making the health care system in Saskatchewan fall to the lowest common denominator, as the Minister for Health likes to refer to when he was talking about the delisting of chiropractic services, Mr. Speaker. When the minister was asked why he felt that he could do this and that why, you know, he felt it was all right to do this, he talked about the fact that other provinces didn't have these services insured as a subsidized service. He also referred to the fact that there are other health care issues, for instance dentistry and other services, that are not insured by the government and therefore that it was all right to cut the chiropractic services.

What's really interesting about this . . . And I just realized I didn't get to finish my thought because of the uproar from the members opposite not wanting to hear what I had to say at that point in time, Mr. Speaker. But when the NDP opposition looked at the issue of chiropractic services and whether it could be afforded at that time in the early '90s because of a number of efficiencies that needed to be found because of the bankrupt situation that the province was left in by the Conservative government previous, there was a careful review done. And it was shown that it was going to be substantial, substantial future financial implications, Mr. Speaker, substantial future financial implications by delisting chiropractic services, Mr. Speaker.

And this is the same that we're hearing from the chiropractors now, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the services being delisted, and so obviously this is information that the Sask Party government should've had, that the Premier should've had, and that the Premier should've taken strong note of with respect to the decision that he made and that his cabinet made in delisting the chiropractic services in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, again, we're seeing some hypocrisy. Well we're seeing a lot of hypocrisy when it comes to the whole notion of health care in this province, Mr. Speaker. When we have 25,000 health care workers that have gone without a contract . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Remind the member to talk about Bill 134, *The Opticians Act*.

Ms. Morin: — Yes, well when we're speaking of the Bill 134, *The Opticians Act*, and the fact that the Minister of Health himself made comments in the Act that his government is committed to an accessible, quality health care system and that they will provide leadership in making changes needed to strengthen and sustain the system for the future, one has to wonder then why this Sask Party government is allowing 25,000 health care workers to be without a contract for two years, Mr. Speaker. Because that surely to goodness is not going to be sustaining the health care system for the future, Mr. Speaker.

When we see and speak to health care workers in this province, you know what they're telling us, Mr. Speaker? They're telling us that they're frustrated. They feel disrespected. They feel devalued. And quite frankly a lot of them are saying that they're not going to continue on, that they're going to seek employment elsewhere. Now that employment elsewhere, I asked them, well what does that mean? Are you going to leave the province? Are you going to seek alternate forms of employment? And quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, it's both. They are now looking at a different career choice or seeking employment outside the province where they don't feel that they are so disrespected and undervalued by the government that they are working for, Mr. Speaker.

So when you have the Minister of Health making the comments that he did in Bill 134, *The Opticians Act*, which is clearly reflective of what the Premier's thoughts are in terms of, you know, saying one thing and doing another, Mr. Speaker, it becomes confusing for the people of this province. It becomes confusing, quite frankly, for the people who have to sit in the opposition and listen to this every day, Mr. Speaker.

We're trying to make headway of what the Sask Party government is doing or what they want to do, but they clearly have no vision. They have no plan. And because they have no vision or plan, Mr. Speaker, we see them lurching from decision to decision based on covering up their financial mismanagement to the province, quite frankly, and therefore making bad decisions because they are lurching from decision to decision.

I mean the two most glaring obvious examples now are, as I said, the \$500,000 for the Dutch elm disease program which had a high level of efficiency built in.

We're also seeing the delisting of chiropractic services which we know is going to have serious cost implications for the health system in Saskatchewan, cost implications, Mr. Speaker, quite frankly that are going to be very difficult to absorb. It is well known to everyone, Mr. Speaker, that the Health budget is a substantial cost factor to the people of Saskatchewan. We are so very grateful and thankful that we have this wonderful system of medicare, Mr. Speaker, but clearly it does come at a cost. And, Mr. Speaker, that cost is something that we want to ensure is used in its best fashion, obviously.

So by delisting chiropractic services we are hearing now that the cost implications going forward are going to be significant, Mr. Speaker. We're hearing of a higher increase of use of visits to doctors' offices, visits to emergency rooms because in a lot of cases people simply won't be able to afford to have their regular appointments with their chiropractor. And given that that's the case, Mr. Speaker, you're going to see a lot more people in a lot of pain.

It was only just a week and a half ago that we saw a woman on the front steps of the legislature and, Mr. Speaker, it broke my heart, quite frankly. It was on not the previous Thursday but the Thursday before. There was a woman on the front steps of the legislature sitting in a sleeping bag on the front steps. And, Mr. Speaker, it was a cold day. It was very, very chilly, but she sat out there in tears with her documentation and her records. She was on two pages worth of medications for pain, Mr. Speaker.

And we asked her, we said, you know, why are you here? Why are you sitting on the cold front steps of the legislature? Mr. Speaker, and through her tears, she was able to explain to us that she's been suffering in pain for 18 months or more, Mr. Speaker, with respect to such horrible back pain because she was waiting for surgery, Mr. Speaker.

Now this surgery unfortunately was something that she kept getting the runaround on and kept getting different stories on and finally felt that she had no other choice but to resort to the desperate measure of sitting on the front steps of the legislature to see if she could just attract any attention in helping her with her situation, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, she did attract attention. Anyone that walked by, Mr. Speaker, couldn't help but stop, couldn't help but stop and talk to her and be compassionate and empathetic because it was such a devastating situation to have witnessed, Mr. Speaker.

The sad part, Mr. Speaker, is that despite the fact that the minister's office was well aware of this woman sitting out there, despite the fact that, I'm sure, people all over the building were

well aware of the woman sitting out there — there were probably about half a dozen of my colleagues out there with her then, sitting with her and providing some accompaniment and some solidarity in her situation — but not one single elected representative from the Sask Party government came out to hear her story, to ask her what was going on, to be just even just the least bit compassionate.

You know, Mr. Speaker, it would have gone a long way. It really would have. I mean if she would have seen someone from the Sask Party government — some elected official, some MLA or the Premier — come out and ask her what's going on, what's wrong, I'm sure, I'm sure she wouldn't have felt nearly as hostile as she ended up feeling in the time that she was sitting out there. Because she just wanted someone to hear her story. She just wanted someone to listen to her, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, it was really, really sad that the only people that would come out to listen to her . . . Because as I said, we found her — well actually my colleague from Prince Albert found her — on the front steps. We found her on the front steps. This was not someone that we brought here, you know, to set up some display or anything. She came here on her own accord. She wanted to talk to somebody. She wanted to explain her story. She wanted to explain the plight that she had gone through. She had the full support of her doctor in what she wanted to do. He granted her permission to give his number, his name and number to anyone that wanted to speak to him, and she was able to provide that to a number of individuals, Mr. Speaker.

And ultimately it was after a few, I think it was about three, hours that we sat out there with her, Mr. Speaker. And as I said, it was a very cold, it was a very chilly afternoon, Mr. Speaker. There was finally — after she refused to come into the building to speak to somebody because she knew that she needed to stay visible; she knew that if she came into the building that she would likely be ushered away into some office and perhaps not be able to have someone take her seriously and simply be, you know, shoved aside again — but she was able to finally be able to talk to some people from the Ministry of Health. There was very, very helpful people from the ministry that came to the building and, Mr. Speaker, they were able to accommodate her in terms of helping her from falling through the cracks any further, Mr. Speaker.

So it was, like I said, a heart-wrenching situation, Mr. Speaker. It was a heart-wrenching story. It was surely to goodness something that was a very difficult decision for her to come to, as well as all the supporters that came with her, some good neighbours of hers.

And the one woman and her two beautiful children who, I found out through the story that I was told, that actually sat with this woman night after night and day after day as this woman was retching from all of the medications that she had to take, Mr. Speaker. And this 14-year-old girl sat with her and took care of her and provided her the companionship and the care that she needed when she was suffering so badly from this situation. And when I think of my own 13-year-old daughter, I don't think my daughter would have been able to do that, Mr. Speaker. So I give that girl a lot of credit. She has a lot of spunk, a lot of strength, and obviously a tremendous amount of

compassion.

So, Mr. Speaker, the story ends well. We are hoping that she is successful in her situation and we'll see some good health going forward into the future.

So, Mr. Speaker, Bill No. 134, *The Opticians Act*, as I said, doesn't necessarily cause us huge concern in terms of what we're seeing from the content of the changes and such. But as I said, many of my colleagues want to ensure that we're being thorough in this Act . . .

[Interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: — I would ask the member from Prince Albert Northcote not to be yelling from his seat when one of his members is speaking. Recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

[21:30]

Ms. Morin: — Well unfortunately the volume is kind of loud on both sides of the House right now, Mr. Speaker. I'm having . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — I would ask the member not to comment on the Speaker's rulings. Member from Regina Walsh Acres.

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do appreciate the ability to be able to speak to this Bill a little further, Mr. Speaker.

So as I said, Mr. Speaker, we have a situation where we're hearing from the Minister of Health himself in this Bill 134, *The Opticians Act*, that you know, the government is talking about being committed to an accessible, quality health care system and wants to provide leadership in making the changes needed to strengthen and sustain the system for the future. But we're seeing two different stories, Mr. Speaker.

And consistency would be nice so that there would be a little bit of predictability built in for the people of Saskatchewan in terms of knowing what they can expect from this Minister of Health, this Premier, and the Sask Party government with respect to the health care services that they so desire in this province and the medical professionals that have provided amazingly good quality health care in this province, Mr. Speaker.

We are so very fortunate for the health care professionals that we do have in this province, Mr. Speaker, and are certainly hopeful that we are going to be able to encourage many more to come to this wonderful province of ours to provide medical services and health care services in this province because we do treasure the fact that we have a wonderful system of medicare. We do treasure the fact that we have many other health providers that are not necessarily insured by the medicare system but provide the quality care that we all need and desire, Mr. Speaker.

And when we look at *The Opticians Act*, Bill No. 134, one of those services that they provide — that from my understanding

from my own doctor, Dr. Diana Monea, is that a lot of people in Saskatchewan unfortunately don't know — that the cost for appointments for children are actually covered off by the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And clearly, Mr. Speaker, this is something that, you know, we'd even like to see expanded. We'd like to see the fact that it wouldn't be so costly for the people of Saskatchewan to be able to get appointments to have a review done with their opticians because it would serve the public well in terms of being able to maintain good eye health care. And as I said, there are many other health concerns that can be found through those appointments and not just the issue of eye care.

So, Mr. Speaker, many individuals don't know that children do not have to pay for these appointments. And I'm not certain to what age that is, Mr. Speaker. And the reason I want to talk about this right now, Mr. Speaker, is because of the fact that I am concerned that not everybody knows about the fact that they may take their children to have free eye appointments. I'm concerned that at some point this Minister of Health, this Premier, and the Sask Party government may decide that that is something that they don't need to be covering any more.

And the reason I say this, Mr. Speaker, is we've only recently see them cover . . . cut the dental sealant program. The dental sealant program was cut in this budget, Mr. Speaker. Now that was a program again that was designed to assist those who quite frankly don't necessarily have the means to be able to afford it. And it was a really thoughtful and helpful program, Mr. Speaker. Good dental health is so critical to good overall health as we all know, or as we all should know, Mr. Speaker. So cutting the funding to the dental sealant program doesn't make much sense, Mr. Speaker.

It's a program that was, like I said, put into place to assist those who quite frankly need it the most, and yet again we see those individuals getting hit the hardest. Whether it's rent increases, whether it's cost of living increases or elsewhere, but it's always those who have the least means to pay for the services they need that seem to get hit the hardest with the Sask Party government's cuts, Mr. Speaker.

So I'm really concerned about the children's eye program in terms of the eye appointments being covered off by Sask Health. I'm really concerned that the government is going to look at that as a means of finding extra money to cover off the financial mismanagement of the government in terms of the deficits and the debt that they're building up for this province right now, which is to the tune of \$1 billion again for this fiscal year from what we are seeing.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's very disconcerting that we're going to see, that we might potentially see further cuts to services that are so vital and necessary for the people of the province of Saskatchewan. Because as I said, if we're seeing a pattern here with the dental sealant program being cut from the budget, we're seeing chiropractic services being delisted, what's next, Mr. Speaker? And my fear is that this is exactly what's going to happen with the children's eye program, Mr. Speaker, that they're going to look at this as a means of funds that they can apply to the debt that they are incurring for the province of Saskatchewan.

So I would implore anyone that's listening to me right now, Mr. Speaker, I would implore, I would implore the opticians, Mr. Speaker, I would implore everyone who cares about children's eye services being covered under the government's Sask Health ministry, I would implore everyone to please, please, please ensure that you are making your concern known that these services should be maintained, and if anything, they should be expanded, Mr. Speaker.

And quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, I would like to see a better communications program being done with respect to informing all the citizens of Saskatchewan with respect to the eye health coverage for children. I'd like to see everyone in Saskatchewan know that, Mr. Speaker. So not only would I implore people to ensure that they put some strong focus on maintaining the eye appointments for children being covered but also that they also encourage and advocate stronger communications for the families of Saskatchewan to know that there is coverage provided for children's eye health in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm, like I said, I'm not overly alarmed by what I see in the Bill. I do want to have those discussions. And because I want to be able to speak to the Bill again further in the future, I will now adjourn debate so that I may rise to my feet and speak to the Bill again.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Regina Walsh Acres has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 134, *The Opticians Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 125

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Boyd that **Bill No. 125** — *The Crown Minerals Amendment Act, 2009* be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, once again it's a pleasure and an honour for me to have the privilege of rising in this House and participating in a debate on behalf of the fine people of Regina Northeast. I think all of us would agree, Mr. Speaker, to have that privilege to represent the people of Saskatchewan in this forum is truly an honour and one that I think we all . . . I can tell you I think, on behalf of all of us, we don't take it lightly. We take it with the respect that it is due.

And, Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to enter into this debate on this particular Bill, Bill 125, *An Act to amend The Crown Minerals Act*. And, Mr. Speaker, I won't hide for one moment that it's probably not one of my stronger areas of knowledge. I've probably not spent much time in the world of mining or in the world of mineral exploration, but we will share with the good folks here and this Assembly what little knowledge we have of the issue. And, Mr. Speaker, I think it's fair to say . . .

An Hon. Member: — You should be done then.

Mr. Harper: — I won't disagree with the member from Canora-Pelly, but I will still take some of his time. I will say that we all, I believe, fully understand how important the minerals of our great province is to this province and to the people thereof and to the economy of this province. I do believe, Mr. Speaker, that we have a good large deposit of minerals throughout our great province — perhaps not 20 per cent of the world's supply but still nevertheless a large percentage of the minerals here.

And as I understand it, Mr. Speaker, from some of my research is that some of the minerals that are found in our great province are found other places in the world, yes, but we have in a lot of cases a very high-quality mineral and a much higher quality than is found in other jurisdictions in this great world of ours. And I think that probably applies to for example to uranium as I understand it. There are large deposits of uranium throughout the world but they are of lower quality, and what we have in our great country, in our great province here, is higher quality uranium.

And I think that's a point worth noting, Mr. Speaker, because when I've had the opportunity in the past to travel northern Saskatchewan and to particularly to tour along with many of my colleagues the uranium mines in northern Saskatchewan and the processing plant at McClean Lake, and it's really truly an experience when you travel up there. And you note that there's basically two types of mining going on. There's the open-pit mining that we've seen at Cigar Lake, which again shows you the ability for man to overcome the obstacles that often present themselves.

As I understood it, Cigar Lake was really basically that — it was a lake. The uranium deposit was underneath the lake, so basically what happened is that the company saw the ability to pump the lake dry and then mine the uranium from the bottom of the lake through an open-pit process. And in order to ensure that that mine would not be flooded from just natural causes, the company basically dug wells all around the perimeter of the mine, quite deep wells, and put pumps down there so that the water would be pumped out of the wells and it would stop the water from leaking in to the pit mine. And I don't know how deep it was. I do know it was a long way down, and we were there.

When we were there, they were extracting the ore and hauling it out with those big trucks, and they were grading it. And it was a neat system of extracting the ore. Of course it was done by blasting. The rock was simply blasted out of the face of the area in which they were working, and then of course this was loaded with big loaders into the back of these trucks and hauled out in a circular fashion in order to make their way out of the bottom of the pit.

When they got to the top, they went through a grading system. It was done electronically. The truck would drive under a scanner, and the scanner would grade the ore in the truck box, and then it would be dumped into the appropriate holding field. So it was an interesting process, and it was interesting to see what role that modern science has played in the extracting of minerals for our use in this great world of ours. So, Mr.

Speaker, that was truly an experience.

Another part of that experience was the tour of the processing plant at McClean Lake, and that truly was something to behold because basically it was a tremendous process. The ore went in in one end of course and water was used, a liquid solution was used to extract the ore. Then the ore was separated from the water and dried, and it was put into, at that point in time it was called a yellowcake solution. And it was put into drums and then shipped south and, as I understand it, shipped to Ontario for further processing.

[21:45]

So, Mr. Speaker, it was just to be there and to experience that process was something that I feel very privileged to have been exposed to because it's not something I would think that probably most people in Saskatchewan perhaps even aren't aware that it happens here, let alone have the experience and the ability to tour the facilities and to enjoy the process and the amount of investment it takes to extract the ore, the amount of investment it takes from the entire process to extract that ore and to put it into a position where it can be further upgraded in the industries throughout this great country of ours.

Basically the same at McArthur River. That was an underground mine where we had the opportunity to go down underground and to explore the shafts there as the process of mining was taking place. And again, it was an interesting process that was used. The ore was extracted by a huge auger that simply drilled through the surface between the layers of sort of a honeycomb layer with the shafts. And the auger was simply drilled through the intermediate layers and the ore would be extracted, and then that area would be filled with cement to help support the mine shafts so that further ore could be extracted from the same area.

So it was quite a process to be acquainted with and to recognize what a great role science plays in the extraction of this ore, and the ingenuity of mankind to be able to figure out a way around the obstacles that present themselves on that extraction. So it was certainly worth the experience, Mr. Speaker, and one that I found very, very informative.

And the uranium industry is not something that's a stranger to Saskatchewan, particularly to northern Saskatchewan. If you hearken back to the . . . I don't remember exactly when this started, but certainly in the, I think it was probably in the '50s when the mine was developed at Uranium City and the community sprang up there. It was named Uranium City and it was a very active operation. I believe that mine continued to produce until about the mid-'70s. And it was, you know, an important find at the time and it was an important industry to the North and to Saskatchewan at the time.

And it's kind of sad to go back, Mr. Speaker. I had not had the opportunity to visit Uranium City when it was booming and when the population was a larger population, and I didn't have the opportunity to be there when the mine was in operation. But I did have relatives who lived up there and worked there in the early '70s, and they of course came back with many stories, but more importantly with the pictures of the community and the activities within that community. And now to have had the

opportunity a couple of years ago to travel northern Saskatchewan and to stop in and spend an afternoon in Uranium City and visit with the folks there and to have a tour of what was left of Uranium City, it was saddening.

You couldn't help but be sad because of the fact that it was a ghost town as such. Very few buildings left standing; those that were left standing were simply a shell. And the trees were growing up through the foundations and trees were growing up in the streets, what used to be streets and now had the young poplar saplings growing there. So it was really sad.

We drove by the school, and you know the school had been abandoned. And as any building when it's abandoned, it soon starts to deteriorate. And there was a beautiful, beautiful school that was the halls of education for the children at Uranium City of the day are now, you know, decaying and falling in. So you couldn't help but be sombre as we drove around there.

We did have a good meeting there. We had, I think if my memory serves me correct, we had somewhere around 35 or 40 people out to our meeting. And that wasn't bad, considering the population of Uranium City today is about 110. So I thought we had a good turnout and good discussions were held.

And we had the opportunity to share with some of the folks there — the issue that we were dealing with of course was the overtime exemption issue — but we had the opportunity in a very informal way to listen to their concerns and their thoughts. And I had the opportunity also to ask them, like why are you staying here? What is it that keeps you here? And of course it was the love of the North and that was their home. For many of them, that was their home and they were enjoying it and, you know, your home is your home and they were getting by. They weren't getting rich, but they were certainly getting by and enjoying living in that part of Saskatchewan which I've never had the opportunity to be up there in the wintertime.

The summertime, it is a beautiful part, it is a beautiful part of our great province of ours. We do live in a beautiful province, and northern Saskatchewan is a probably outstanding part of our great province in the summertime.

And I know many of my colleagues on both sides of the House have been up there, and I think would agree with me that it's something that we would recommend, at least I would recommend, that Saskatchewan people all endeavour to attempt to experience the North but really take some time to really experience the North because it is unique. It is special, and to me it's a great place.

And mining and the minerals that we find in northern Saskatchewan is of course a very important part of northern Saskatchewan. I mean that is in many cases what's caused some areas to actually be developed to the degree that they're developed now, is the need to extract the minerals. First of all to find them, the exploration it takes to find those minerals. And there's a fair amount of that that goes on up north. And we will see, you know, companies expend a lot of money. And they go big investments looking for various minerals.

And when those minerals are found, there's a very detailed process to develop those minerals. It's not something that just,

you know, they come in there with a bulldozer and bulldoze the earth off and there the mineral is. It's not that simple at all. It's really a detailed process to develop sites. You know, first they have to identify the site. They have to identify the richness of that site, I guess — you know, get a good idea of the quality of mineral that they've discovered. They get an idea of the amount that might be there, the ability for those minerals, that mine perhaps to produce, and would it be able to produce enough to warrant further investment and further development. And of course in many cases it does.

Then what that leads to is access. Up until that point, access has been able to be achieved by air, satisfactory access has been able to be achieved by air, but there comes a point in time that ground access is required. So then you will see in many cases a road will start to be developed in order to service the needs of those communities that spring up around a mineral find and the development thereof.

And in many cases it's first supported by a winter road, a road that is plowed out throughout the winter months through muskeg — in some cases through, you know, the solid land, basically rock and sand, but also often the muskeg and across lakes. And that's called a winter road because it's only accessible in the wintertime when the ground is frozen and when the water is frozen. And it's something that again I've never experienced. I've heard stories about it and seen pictures of ice roads. And they tell me that it's an interesting experience.

One would think that, you know, once the lake is frozen and it's ice, it's a matter, you know, just drive right across it. Well I guess there's a lot of hazards that come up during the winter months. Ice pressure ridges, you know, will develop just overnight. Where there was no ridge before, there will be a ridge now.

In some cases, loads, particularly heavy loads being hauled across the ice, has to be done very carefully because there is a wave. I didn't know this. But when a heavy-loaded truck for example is travelling over a frozen lake, and that lake might be frozen 3 or 4 feet of ice and plenty of ice to support the weight of the truck. But below that, that water that's not frozen below that, from the weight of the truck, the ice will give a little bit, will be a depression in the ice.

And if the truck is moving too fast, a wave is created in front of the moving vehicle. And if that wave is allowed to continue to build right across the lake, it comes to the shore. The vehicle's still on the ice, but the wave is ahead of the vehicle. And if the wave is somewhere between the vehicle and the shore and it runs out of room, it runs out of room to expand, so then it has to go someplace. And it's not going to go down. It will come up and it will break that ice. And that's when a danger then really is created for anybody that's travelling that ice road, particularly the trucker that perhaps is hauling a heavy load.

So it has to be done very scientifically, and it has to be done carefully to ensure that the weight of the truck is taken into consideration. But also the speed at which that truck travels is also taken into consideration so that it limits the size of that wave or perhaps, you know, doesn't create a huge wave so that the ice can withstand the pressure at the end so that the ice does not break and the truck is able to make it off the ice onto solid

ground in a safe fashion.

And I understand that there's, you know, there's been accidents in northern Saskatchewan, and I understand that even ice conditions will change and will change quite quickly. And there's, on an ice road that is being maintained, there's always supervision — supervisors that watch that road to ensure that it is in good condition — because that road becomes the link to the mine, becomes the link to the exploration that's going on. It becomes the link to the outside world so that goods and supplies can be moved in.

And most often the ice road is used to move goods and supplies in adequate numbers to be able to support that development or that exploration in a way that will be able to support it all summer long. Because the other alternative is to bring in supplies by air, which as you can understand, Mr. Speaker, would be very, very expensive. That would drive up the cost of that exploration. It would drive up the cost to the company that's looking for the minerals up there, and that's not something that they want to do.

They want to keep those costs as low as possible because it is an investment, a long-term investment. It's not an investment that they would perhaps be making an investment in January and by March or April start to reap a return on that same year. No, that's not the case. In many cases, it's an investment that's done over years. And in some cases, I think probably it's a decade or more from the time the investment is initially made until the company starts to see some return.

So you can understand why it's important that they wanted to control the costs, to keep the costs down as much as possible, and this is why a ground link becomes very important to a mining site or a proposed mining site or an exploration site. A ground link of some type becomes very important because it reduces the costs of moving goods and it reduces the cost of operation of that site. So with that in mind, Mr. Speaker, we begin to realize how important ground links to communities in northern Saskatchewan and to areas in northern Saskatchewan soon becomes.

Now it develops in stages. First, as I said, the companies will go up. Then, and as I understand it — I'm no expert at this, Mr. Speaker, but as I understand it — a lot of the exploration today is done by air, by scientific seismographs and so on and so forth that can be done through helicopters pulling the proper equipment over areas, or airplanes. And they get readings. They can read what's in the earth and they can read the makeup of the earth and they improve the chances, I guess you would say, of being able to find the mineral to look for in a certain area.

But at some point in time, when they've narrowed it down to where they believe an area that is worth exploring because they do believe that there's a deposit of the mineral that they're looking for somewhere down below, then they will send in a crew to do the exploration. And this crew actually is flown in and the small mining equipment, small drilling equipment is brought in by plane and a small crew is dropped off and they will spend some time there and they will do the exploration.

And it's not easy work. I've talked to some people who have worked on those types of crews and it's not easy work because

everything, after it's dropped off the plane . . . I mean it's simply dropped off a plane. They land on a body of water and they carry the stuff off the plane and pile it up on . . . the equipment that they require, pile up on the edge of a lake or a river and from there it's . . . [inaudible] . . . by hand. It's carried by hand. It's picked up by hand, put it on somebody's back and it's carried to the location that is . . . and set up that they're going to do the drilling.

And they will drill down; they will drill and test for the mineral that they're looking for and, you know, if they don't find it in this particular site, they'll just pick it up and they'll move it a few hundred feet. But again this is all done by hand, Mr. Speaker, and it's hard work.

And I've talked to some of the people who shared their experiences with me when I was up north there as to the efforts they put in. And they're living in the wilderness. I mean they not only do the hard work, but they're living in the wilderness. They don't have running water and they don't have showers and so on and so forth. They live in a tent and they make do with what mother nature provides for them, and that's of course a lake or a stream nearby. And it's dedicated work, and they I think are reasonably compensated for it. But of course these workers at that time, and I think probably even still today, didn't qualify for any overtime. They were considered, I guess you would say, as contract workers. They were just paid so much a day to do the job. And, Mr. Speaker, that of course is another subject.

But the point here is that once the company has made that investment and they have identified an area where they believe that it is worth further development, then they will provide that further development. But in order to maintain a reasonable cost factor here, there is a need then to limit the amount of dependency that they have on air travel and air transportation of goods, and they need to look at some type of a link, a ground link.

[22:00]

And the first available one is in the wintertime on the ice road, on what is known as the ice road because it not only covers the ice on the lakes that are frozen, but also will allow roads to be, I guess you would say plowed out, through what would normally in the summertime be soft areas like muskegs. Once that's frozen, once that's plowed off and the snow has been removed and the weather has had its opportunity, at 40 below in many cases, to freeze that ground down, then it becomes very solid and it will support heavy weights. And along with the ice across the lakes, they also support heavy weights. Particularly once the snow has been removed off the face of the lake and the temperature has had a chance to freeze that lake perhaps three or four feet deep of ice, it will support a lot of weight.

But it has to be managed. That weight has to be managed as it is moved from the southern areas and brought up to a location. And I think in many areas of northern Saskatchewan, you'll have a central area where it's sort of the gathering point. The goods are brought in summer and winter up to a certain point. But in the wintertime, they're moved from there then on that ice road and then moved to the sites that require the supplies.

And it's interesting, Mr. Speaker, that the time to do this, the length of time in the calendar year to do this is usually quite short. And by that I mean it's probably no more than a couple of months that's available at best to allow companies to have their supplies moved into their sites in the isolated areas of northern Saskatchewan. And when that is done, that is done through the ice road. And that is why you will see that in many cases these individuals and truckers and trucking companies that are up there, they really work virtually around the clock in order to move enough supplies in a very short time to be able to meet the needs of those particular sites for the entire summer months until a winter road is established again.

And I think we've seen some stories, most recently this last winter being a little milder winter and particularly in northern Saskatchewan. And that window of opportunity to move the goods was narrower than normal. And therefore we're finding some communities in northern Saskatchewan — particularly I think the story I was reading a little while ago was pertaining to northern Manitoba, but there's really not much difference — that a lot of these communities were not able to get their normal supply of goods brought in on that ice road.

And so now what will happen is that throughout the summer months they will depend more and more on freight brought in by air, which once again will simply drive up the costs, make it more expensive — more expensive to do business up there, more expensive to live in northern Saskatchewan because the goods that are normally brought in by truck over the ice road are now having to be flown in. And that, Mr. Speaker, of course is not something that anyone that's in northern Saskatchewan, particularly if you're a businessman or an investor in northern Saskatchewan, you would relish to see because again you want to keep the costs down as much as possible.

Mr. Speaker, that is a very important thing to remember when you're looking at the investments that companies make in the mines and the exploration for minerals in northern Saskatchewan, is that they need to have, they need to have the ability to develop those mine sites, those mineral sites rather, and the ability to develop them in a way that will make it profitable in the long run. And you know, that is something that of course the company makes a decision on. But what helps, Mr. Speaker, what helps is the quality of mineral that they find.

And that's why I was saying earlier about it's well known that in Saskatchewan we may not have the world's largest deposit of minerals, but many of the minerals that are found in our great province are of high quality. High-quality minerals means that they garnish a better return on the market. They're worth more. So you're able to extract perhaps less in tonnage, but you're able to get greater return for it because of the value of the mineral that you extract.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think uranium is probably an example that is, one perhaps should say a shining example of that. Because as I understand it is if we go into the United States, there's deposits of uranium — low quality, but deposits of uranium. We also, I understand, if we go into the Soviet Union or the former Soviet Union, we'll find large deposits of uranium, but again of lower quality.

So yes, the deposits are there, and yes they are being mined, and

yes they are on the market. But the quality of the product that the minerals that are found, particularly uranium minerals that are found in northern Saskatchewan, are something that makes it really a marketable item and in demand, in demand not only within our great country but around the world. And it probably is a demand that will continue to grow if we recognize the growth of Third World countries or what used to be Third World countries, particularly China and India, countries with huge, huge populations that are making great, great strides at becoming strong economic powers throughout this world.

I understand that much of the power generated in China, of course traditionally as a coal . . . coal-fired or power generation, but they're moving more and more to uranium and having uranium reactors built for the purpose of generating power. And that is as I understand it, I've been led to believe — and I can't remember exactly where it was that I read this, but it was a while back I read it — that they're looking at building a power generating uranium reactor, one a year for the next five years. And that's just to hope to be able to meet the power, the increasing power needs of their growing economy in China. So when that happens of course, Mr. Speaker, it makes a greater demand for the product that we produce here, the uranium which is the fuel that's used to create the power in the plants.

And I understand that basically the direction that India is going to. And India is a very fast growing economy, probably one of the faster ones in the world. And it is also creating a demand for power, and they're looking at uranium reactors for the purpose of generating their power. And thusly comes a greater and greater demand for the product that was produced in our mines in northern Saskatchewan.

So I think it's safe to say, Mr. Speaker, that we have an opportunity here I guess you'd say to look at the ability to expand our industry here in this province in a way that is acceptable to all those concerned.

And, Mr. Speaker, when I had the opportunity of touring northern Saskatchewan, it became evident to me that the minerals that are in northern Saskatchewan really play a large, large role in the development of our province or the development of northern Saskatchewan. Because it seems that a company, when it finds a rich deposit of ore, it doesn't have to be just uranium, for example. There's other ore up there.

I was talking to a . . . I think Fond-du-Lac, Saskatchewan is where we were at. I believe it was where they've identified a large deposit of a rare earth mineral, which is something that is very, very much in need for cellphone batteries, for portable batteries. It's a key component to the manufacturing of those batteries. And there's, as I understand it, there was only one or two other deposits in the world — I believe one in China and I think there was a small deposit also in the United States.

But the one up north in northern Saskatchewan here is the largest deposit ever identified and it was still under the process, I guess you would say, of establishing the size and the quality of the product. But what we were led to believe that it was the largest deposit ever, ever identified anywhere in the world and it was unique in the fact that it was near the surface. You know, there was no huge overburden or great distances to sink a shaft to look for the ability to extract this mineral, as much of it was

right close to the surface. I believe that it was, the deeper you went, the more pure or the increased quality of the mineral. But I understand it was available though very close to the surface. So that's just one more example of a need for an overland link.

And when I'm talking to those people who were involved in the development of that, both the chief of the Indian band at La Ronge as well as some of the people who were the representatives of the company working there, they were pointing out how important the winter road was to them. Because that particular year that we were there, a lot of their supplies got hung up at, some at Points North and also some at Stony Rapids or just outside of Stony Rapids. There's a huge parking area where a lot of their goods had got hung up because the ice road went out earlier than normal and earlier than expected, and therefore they didn't get their products moved. They were sitting there waiting for the winter to come and the ice road to be re-established so they could move that stuff up, their supplies further north up to Fond-du-Lac.

And, Mr. Speaker, that is an example of the importance of a land link. These products in this particular case that I can remember off the top of my head, they were large trailers. They were to be used for housing of personnel. They were used to be set up as the office network, and they were sitting there. They were one year late now getting that stuff up there because the ice road had gone out early and they hadn't got it that far north. But they did get it to Stony Rapids and again they got that to Stony Rapids over a land link. Now it wasn't a very good link, but it was a land link. They were able to move it across country.

And in talking to the chief of Fond-du-Lac and to the representative of the company that was developing the area there, first of all they pointed out the importance of the ice road, the winter link so that they could move their products in and to continue to be able to develop that site. They couldn't do so without that support. But they were quite honest. They said, but that won't support the development, the full development of the site there, and they wouldn't fully be able to develop that site until they had an all-year-round land link.

And it would probably be fairly expensive to build, but they were prepared I believe to be a part of that because it was important to them to have that land link to be able to move their minerals out, the material out. After they developed their site there and they started to mine, they would be able to move that out to a market. And with that in mind, Mr. Speaker, I think it was just one more example of how important a land link is to the development in northern Saskatchewan, to the development of the mineral exploration that takes place up there.

And it is very important that this land link be something that is certainly usable, I guess you would say, in a year-round basis. It's not only important for the companies up there, but it's also important for the people who live up there. And I can assure you that there's many people up there who would really, really welcome the ability to have a land link, to be able to go south to receive their services when required and to do so in a way that it was affordable, that they'd be able to drive on a road rather than being forced to use air service and a very expensive air service.

And in many cases, I think it probably limits their ability to get out to northern Saskatchewan. It limits their ability to even

further their education, Mr. Speaker, because it's just very expensive for somebody from Stony Rapids for example to find themselves having to attend to a school, say in Prince Albert. And the only way, the only transportation link is by air, a very expensive process.

And it's coming from a community where the unemployment is very high and many of these parents wouldn't have a full-time, year-round job, wouldn't have the ability to be able to provide the financial support for their children to be able to attend a school and to be able to further their education. And unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, a land link would certainly lessen that cost and make education, even education more affordable to the people in northern Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, that's just, you know, one aspect of northern Saskatchewan. And I know that many of my colleagues would agree with me, that when you travel northern Saskatchewan, there's just a lot up there. And it's not just the things that us southerners think about first of all, is would be good fishing or perhaps good hunting. But there's just the beauty of it, and what I really found interesting was the wonderful, wonderful people up there. They were very, very friendly, very hospitable, and very accommodating. And if you took a little time to talk to them and visit with them, it was certainly an educational process. I know that I learned a lot, just on a personal basis, just from visiting with many people in northern Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, this is why the development of the minerals that are found within our borders of Saskatchewan is important to do so in the best interests of Saskatchewan people. It is the role and I would say the responsibility of government to ensure that that development is done in an orderly way but is done in a way that benefits Saskatchewan people.

And yes, I wouldn't expect a company or corporation not to make a profit. Of course they have to. There'd be no reason for them not to go into northern Saskatchewan and invest money, in a lot of cases probably for a decade, before they would see a return on that money and that they would need to be able to over the life of the particular project be able to show at the end of the day a reasonable profit. And I have no objections to that. I don't think anybody does. I think everybody would encourage a reasonable profit. The shareholders of that company would want to have a reasonable profit for the investment that they make. And that's only understandable.

[22:15]

But at the same time, Mr. Speaker, there has to be some of those returns from that mineral development has to go back to the people of Saskatchewan. And that's probably the role of a government, Mr. Speaker, is to ensure that there is an orderly development of those minerals, but there's also a reasonable return to the people of this great province because after all that's something that's invested in the Crown. And it's invested in the rights of Saskatchewan people to share in the bounty of this land. And those minerals is just one of those bounties that we often perhaps take for granted. We maybe become pretty accustomed to having them here in this great province of ours, and we take it for granted.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, when you look at the importance that

mineral and mineral development and extraction plays in our province, you begin to realize what an important impact it has on our economy.

We've seen that most recently, Mr. Speaker, when in the potash industry which we are very, very blessed in this province to have great deposits of potash. And that has been recognized some time ago and it was touched on with some mines in this great province of ours. But as I understand it, there are other large, large deposits of potash that hasn't been touched yet and that they are, potash companies are looking at the expansion of the industry by establishing new mines.

I'm not sure how many are on the books to be established, but I do know that there are some. And I do know that particularly in the Yorkton area, the Yorkton-Melville area, that there has been some real serious exploration done, I guess you would say, to determine not only the quantity, but not only the quality but the location, the best location to develop a new mine. And nobody knows exactly — at least I certainly don't know exactly what's happening there — but I think that there will eventually be a mine developed there once the potash industry recovers from its most recent devastating financial crash.

It's interesting, Mr. Speaker, and I think we all perhaps learned a little bit of a lesson. I think my good friends and colleagues across the way in the government probably learned a bigger lesson as to the importance of managing the resources, the importance of managing the revenues from those resources and not relying too heavily on one particular resource. As we saw a couple of budgets ago, some 20 per cent of the revenue in that budget was to come from the potash industry.

It was unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, that the government didn't follow the advice of experts within the industry who were suggesting that the prices were going to soften. I don't think anybody was suggesting the prices were going to totally collapse, the market was going to totally collapse, but I think there was a number of experts that were suggesting that the prices would certainly soften and the level of revenue that the government was depending upon was false and that it probably was what I would call a false market or a false revenue.

And unfortunately the government didn't heed that advice. They budgeted 20 per cent of the revenue for that particular year on the potash industry. And with the collapse then, the following collapse of the sales of potash, we find ourselves with a government who inherited a province of prosperity, inherited a province that had over a 2 billion, a \$2.3 billion surplus — money in the bank — and quite quickly blew that, Mr. Speaker. They blew that money and they also blew another \$1 billion just trying to salvage the balance of that budget.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's unfortunate that this particular government didn't follow the advice of the officials and the advice of the experts within the industry as to the level that they could lean on revenues from the potash industry, but it again raises a question, Mr. Speaker, of the competence of the government.

Mr. Speaker, it's interesting that minerals play such an important role in the economy of our great province of ours, whether it be uranium or whether it be potash or whether it be oil, and more recently, more recently the diamond development.

We've seen I think some discoveries of diamonds in northern Saskatchewan that will, at one point in time in the future when fully developed, will probably be leading the world in large, in diamond deposits, again not only in the quantity, but I believe in the quality. And I think those are great things for the future, Mr. Speaker.

As I mentioned earlier, the discovery and the continued exploration of the rare earth mineral that is found in northern Saskatchewan, I think that's great news. I think that is just something for the future of our great province. And for those still to come on stream, I guess you would say, Mr. Speaker, that we'll have those minerals to be able to rely on and the revenues from them.

You know, we have our generation, or my generation probably enjoyed good revenues from oil. We've seen oil development in this province. We've seen oil development under the former government really take off with the negotiations of royalties that were at a level that oil companies were comfortable with. And as a result of that, we've seen significant new development within the oil patch. That has of course tapered down under this government, but it was something that certainly was beneficial to the economy of our province, beneficial to the province, the government of the province with extra revenue coming in.

And it shows I suppose what can be gained on behalf of the people of this great province when you have a government that properly manages the minerals in Saskatchewan and properly manages that on behalf of Saskatchewan people — properly manages the minerals, properly manages the return and the revenue generated from those minerals and mineral development.

But it's not only the development of the minerals, Mr. Speaker, it's the spinoffs that are so important to the economy. It's the spinoffs that you've got to develop, just not the development of the mine itself. It's just not the digging of the shaft. It's just not the erection of the buildings. It's the spinoffs. It's the jobs that are created; it's the spinoffs that spin off from those jobs, the support mechanisms that are required to support the development.

For example the trucking industry all of a sudden becomes a new employer; a new demand for trucking to move the materials, to move the supplies that are required for that development, that falls on the trucking industry. And just one thing leads to another, Mr. Speaker, the servicing to service those trucks. And one thing leads to another, and you have all of a sudden a strong economy because you have a mine and you have a development for a mineral that wasn't there before. It's created a great new activity. And in many cases, it's an activity that's going to last for many, many decades because usually these deposits are large. They're not going to be developed just for a short-term basis. They're developed on a long-term basis.

And yes, there will be up and downs. We've seen that, as I said earlier, in the potash industry. We've seen some significant downs and we've seen some significant ups. But at the end of the day, it benefits the entire economy. It benefits the province. And when it benefits the province, it benefits the people within. So, Mr. Speaker, when we see a government that is looking at making some amendments to the mineral Act here, *An Act to*

amend *The Crown Minerals Act*, then you begin to want to really carefully take a look at what are the proposed amendments and how they will affect the overall industry and how will those amendments affect the industry itself.

Well, Mr. Speaker, like I said earlier, I'm no expert at this. But I do know that if you have a problem, the solution to that problem will be usually in the hands of those who have the problem. So in this particular case when you have a company who is looking at developing a particular mineral in this great province of ours, Mr. Speaker, and before you make any changes to the Act, I think you want to sit down and talk to them, get their feedback as to what these changes should be. And I don't think it's the role of government to force changes upon the industry that are unwelcome.

I think in the role of government, you sit down in a co-operative way, to sit down and talk to those involved in the industry, those who are making investments in the industry and ask them what it is, what changes would facilitate perhaps greater expansion. What would facilitate perhaps greater extraction of those minerals from sites that are already developed and perhaps have been developed for a number of decades? As the more premium product is removed, it becomes probably, I would think, more costly to extract certain fringe areas and certain fringe quality of minerals.

So is there a way that amendments within the Act would be able to assist the company in being able to continue to operate that mine and be able to extract even bigger amounts of ore, although perhaps reduced in quality, maybe even in quantity. But are there changes that would be able to assist this? Because it's important that we fully utilize the minerals that are there and not just tap down and take off the cream of the crop and leave the rest for future generations because in many cases it may not be economically viable to go back into those areas and to extract what's left there. It may be more viable to do it at the time that that mine is in operation, and that perhaps some changes within the Act might be able to assist that.

And I would hope that may be what the government is doing. And I would like to know that the government actually did go out and do some consulting and talking to the industry, talking to those involved in the industry, talking to those who are making the investment in the development of that industry and who have made that investment, and to identify ways and means that perhaps the government could assist in creating an atmosphere there that would be economically viable for the further expansion of the mining industry right within the already established sites, let alone, Mr. Speaker, let alone looking for new sites and establishing new sites.

I think that there's a need to ensure that we fully utilize the minerals that we have already identified, that we have identified are there — perhaps, like I said, perhaps not in the same quality and maybe perhaps not even the same quantity —but perhaps there are some things the government can do to assist a company to ensure that they fully extract, fully extract all the mineral that's economically viable to extract within a developed site. I would like to see that and be assured that that is the case before I see the government move on . . . or I mean — pardon me, Mr. Speaker — the company move on to developing a new site.

I think it's, I know, Mr. Speaker, that this is a very important part of our economy. The development of minerals, the mining of minerals, the extraction of the minerals, the processing of these minerals are very important to our economy. Not only today, it not only has been an important factor in the past, it will continue to be a very important factor into the future, Mr. Speaker.

And that is why I think it's so important that when the government is intending to make changes to the Act, that they make changes that are correct, they make the changes that best suit the development and the strength, and ensuring the industry stays strong and ensuring that there is continued development within the industry so that we can have a strong industry, not only that we've enjoyed here presently and not only for the foreseeable future but for many generations to come.

Because we owe that, Mr. Speaker, to I think the people of Saskatchewan that are going to come after us. I think we benefited from the wisdom and the forethought of our forefathers when they were developing this great province of ours, when they were developing the minerals as they were being identified. We've enjoyed that. We've enjoyed the prosperity and a strong economy because of it. And I think, Mr. Speaker, it's our duty as citizens today to ensure that we pass the same on to the future generations, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, that is why I would like to see, Mr. Speaker, and have some level of assurance that in this process, in this process of introducing a Bill to amend the Act, Mr. Speaker, that the government has actually gone out and done that consultation, has actually gone out and talked to the people on the front lines.

It's been my experience, Mr. Speaker, that if you want to find out what is really going on, you go out and talk to the people who are deeply involved. You go out and talk to the people whose bread and butter it is that that particular industry is involved in. And that's what I would hope this government had done, Mr. Speaker. I would hope that this government had during its process of developing the changes, developed the amendments that they wanted introduced to amend the Act, that they did so only after they'd done a reasonable consultation with the industry. Because it's the industry, Mr. Speaker, and the players within that industry . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Time of adjournment having been reached, this House now stands adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow afternoon.

[The Assembly adjourned at 22:30.]

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