



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

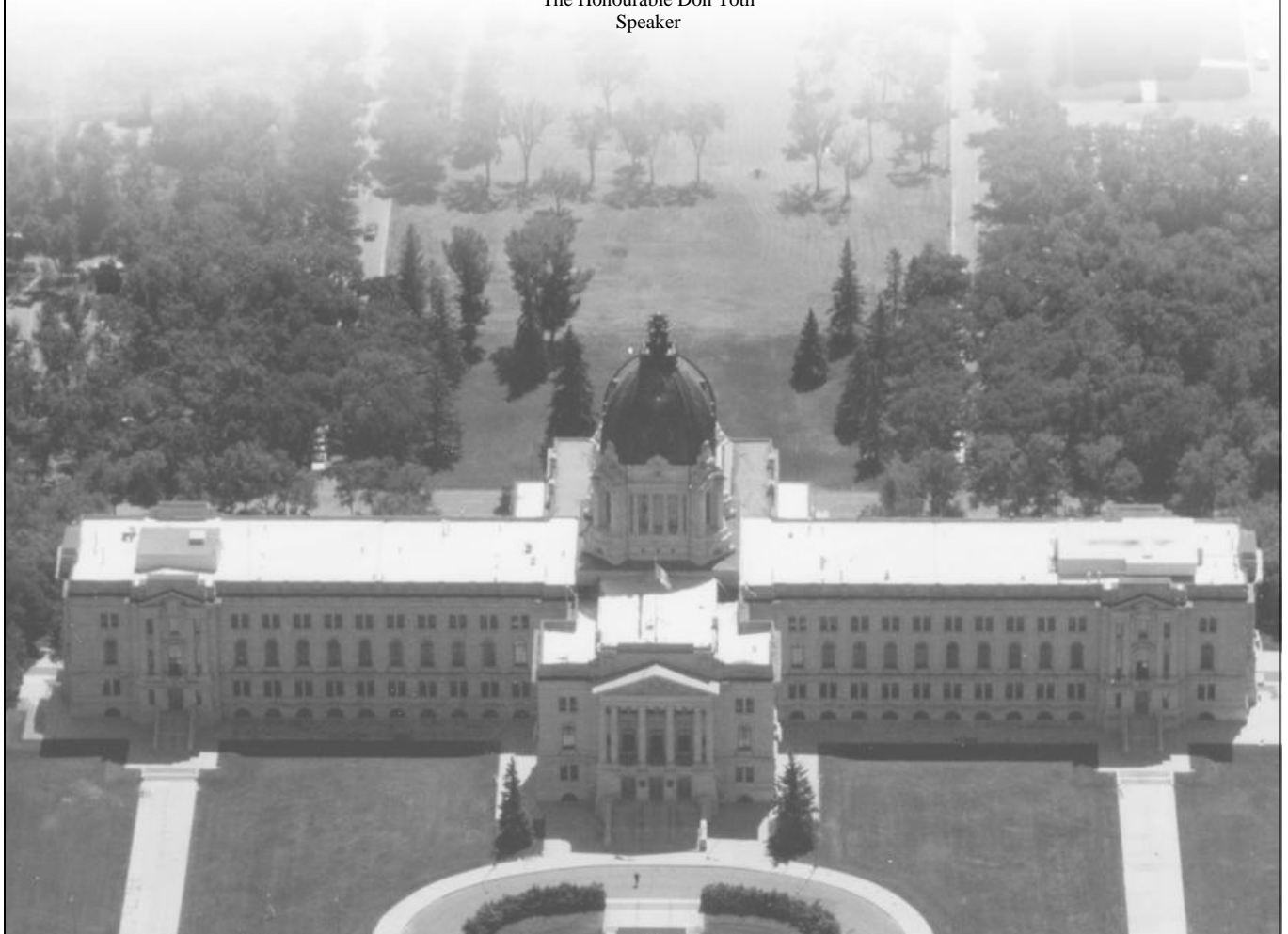
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Don Toth
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
Allchurch, Denis	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Atkinson, Pat	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Belanger, Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Hon. Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Boyd, Hon. Bill	SP	Kindersley
Bradshaw, Fred	SP	Carrot River Valley
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Brotten, Cam	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Chartier, Danielle	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
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Furber, Darcy	NDP	Prince Albert Northcote
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Harpauer, Hon. Donna	SP	Humboldt
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Higgins, Deb	NDP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Hutchinson, Hon. Bill	SP	Regina South
Huyghebaert, Hon. D.F. (Yogi)	SP	Wood River
Iwanchuk, Andy	NDP	Saskatoon Fairview
Junor, Judy	NDP	Saskatoon Eastview
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Krawetz, Hon. Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
LeClerc, Serge	Ind.	Saskatoon Northwest
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McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMillan, Tim	SP	Lloydminster
McMorris, Hon. Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
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Morgan, Hon. Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Morin, Sandra	NDP	Regina Walsh Acres
Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Norris, Hon. Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
Ottenbreit, Greg	SP	Yorkton
Quennell, Frank	NDP	Saskatoon Meewasin
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Ross, Laura	SP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
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Stewart, Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Taylor, Len	NDP	The Battlefords
Tell, Hon. Christine	SP	Regina Wascana Plains
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Vermette, Doyle	NDP	Cumberland
Wall, Hon. Brad	SP	Swift Current
Weekes, Randy	SP	Biggar
Wilson, Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Yates, Kevin	NDP	Regina Dewdney

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a great privilege for me to introduce to you and to all members of this Assembly a great group of grade 5 students from the city of Swift Current, from École Oman Elementary School on the south side of my hometown.

Mr. Speaker, joining the 48 grade 5 students today are teachers Kim Thomliston and Deb Linklater; also chaperones with the group today, Pam Kritzer, Marnie Kay-MacMillan, Dana McCallum, and Pam LeBelle.

Mr. Speaker, it is a tradition for École Oman Elementary School to bring students to the legislature so students can learn a little bit more about this place and maybe about government, and then it's the tradition for the MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] to get to meet with them, which is always a highlight of the day.

An Hon. Member: — And buy a Blizzard.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — And members around me are saying that the tradition is also that I would buy all the kids a Blizzard. How very, very helpful my colleagues are. I don't know if we'll get to that, but I think there's probably juice and some other things waiting for us. And then we'll have a little bit of a meeting a little bit later on.

Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge the teachers who bring this group every year, bring the grade 5's every year, and I also want to ask if members will help me welcome them to their Legislative Assembly today.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a couple of introductions to make. First of all are three distinguished gentlemen sitting in your gallery. The first gentleman is Dave Dutchak who is the president and CEO [chief executive officer] of MD Ambulance. He's also the former provincial chamber of commerce president, worked diligently through that organization to get the province on a growth agenda. We thank him for that work as well as the great work that he does in the Saskatoon area delivering probably a first-class EMS [emergency medical services] system for the citizens of Saskatoon.

Also, Mr. Speaker, while I'm on my feet, I'd also like to introduce Bruce Farr who is the president and the EMS chief of Canada. He runs the Toronto EMS service, Mr. Speaker. He is one of the keynote speakers at the SEMSA [Saskatchewan Emergency Medical Services Association] convention and trade show taking place in Prince Albert on May the 11th to 13th. His

speech is on "Mobile Health Care in Saskatchewan: Making the Vision a Reality." And I think he'll be talking an awful lot about the health bus that we're so proud of here in Saskatchewan.

And as well, Mr. Speaker, while I'm on my feet I'd like to introduce Ken Luciak. He is the director of the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region emergency medical services and is responsible for the overall supervision of 11 emergency medical services and the regional emergency communications centre for the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region. He does a great job in that area too, a great service that we all enjoy in the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region. So I'd like all members to welcome those three, and I have one more introduction once we're done welcoming those three.

Also, Mr. Speaker, seated in your gallery is Zeba Ahmad. Zeba is the former Chair of the Royal University Hospital Foundation. They have done absolutely marvellous work, that foundation. I had happened to be able to witness some of that work that they have put in over the last number of years.

The foundation has been in place for many, many years, but one of their projects most recently was the Irene and Les Dubé Centre for Mental Health on the shores of the Saskatchewan at the University of Saskatchewan, of course. It is a beautiful facility, and that foundation did amazing work, raising over \$10 million for mental health and that particular facility in particular. So I'd like all members to welcome Zeba to her Legislative Assembly and thank her for the great work that she has done through the foundation.

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

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the Minister of Health in welcoming our guests. I can't actually see Dave behind the clock there, but I know he's up there and I do want to say that the Dutchaks have a long family history of delivering emergency medical services to Saskatchewan, and they've done a wonderful job.

I also want to welcome Mr. Farr to Saskatchewan. And I know he'll probably be very interesting at the SEMSA convention. And also Mr. Luciak from Regina. They all do a wonderful job in delivering EMS. And Zeba. Hi. Zeba and I are friends. I'd like to welcome her here today too. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, to you and through you and to all members of the Legislative Assembly I'm pleased to introduce, in the west gallery, Heather Malek who is a member of a group of citizens concerned about this government's decision to privatize SCN, the Saskatchewan Communications Network, without consultation or actually any sense of what they were actually doing.

Heather today had an opportunity to hand in to the Premier a petition in support of SCN with close to three . . . well, 2,500 signatures, 2,451 signatures from 80 different cities and towns

across Saskatchewan, everywhere from Assiniboia to Yorkton and everything in between. So she'll continue with her group to help the government see the error of its ways. So please join me in welcoming Heather to her Legislative Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of concerned citizens of Saskatchewan who are concerned over the condition and the safety of our highways. This petition pertains to Highway No. 10 between Fort Qu'Appelle and the junction of Highway 1. The petition goes on to state that this portion of the highway is a main traffic route to a year-round tourist destination as well as this portion of the highway serves three major inland grain terminals. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the Government of Saskatchewan to construct passing lanes on Highway 10 between Fort Qu'Appelle and the junction of Highway 1 in order to improve the safety to Saskatchewan's motoring public.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the good folks from Fort Qu'Appelle, Kamsack, Theodore, and Yorkton, Saskatchewan. I so submit.

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

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition in support of the protection of wildlife habitat lands. Mr. Speaker, we know that *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act* protects 3.4 million acres of uplands and wetlands, or one-third of all wildlife habitat lands in Saskatchewan in their natural state, and that citizens are concerned that the government is repealing the schedule of listings of these designated lands. And the prayer reads, Mr. Speaker:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action:

To cause the provincial government to immediately and without delay recognize the importance of the protection of wildlife habitat lands and immediately withdraw the proposed amendments that will negatively affect the protection of wildlife habitat lands;

And in so doing cause the provincial government to commit to meaningful and adequate consultation with all stakeholders that will be affected by future legislative changes to *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*.

Mr. Speaker, these petitions are signed by citizens from Redvers, Storthoaks, and Moose Jaw. I so present.

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

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition on behalf of citizens of the province who are concerned that seniors who live on fixed income, about seniors who live on fixed incomes and are victims of physical, emotional, and financial abuse. They also know that seniors have, or believe that seniors have a right to social and economic security and a right to live free from poverty. And they also say that seniors should have a right to protection from abuse, neglect, and exploitation:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan to enact a Saskatchewan seniors Bill of Rights which would provide Saskatchewan seniors with social and economic security and protection from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

The people that have signed this, Mr. Speaker, are from Climax, Frontier, Val Marie, Saskatoon, and one other place, Kenaston. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to present another petition in support of maintaining educational assistants in the province. Mr. Speaker, as we all know, the Ministry of Education published a document in November of 2009 looking at the ratios for educational assistants in the province. What this petition calls for in the prayer is:

That the government provide funding for the required number of educational assistants to provide special needs students with the support they need and maintain a positive learning environment for all Saskatchewan students.

I so present. And these signatures are from Regina and Saskatoon.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition in support of affordable rents and housing for Saskatoon. And we know that there's a shrinking number of rental accommodations in Saskatoon and the rents are going up. I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to call upon the Government of Saskatchewan to develop an affordable housing program that will result in a greater number of quality and affordable rental units to be made available to more people in Saskatoon and Saskatchewan, and that the government also implement a process of rent review or rent control to better protect tenants in a non-competitive housing environment.

And these people come from the city of Saskatoon. I do so present. Thank you.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand to present a petition in support of the expansion of the graduate retention program, a call for fairness for post-secondary students here in Saskatchewan. The prayer reads:

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

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

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

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

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to present yet another petition respecting another rural water issue. And the residents of Furdale have been directed by a government ministry that they may no longer treat non-potable water using methods approved by Sask Health. The Furdale residents have dealt in good faith with SaskWater for over 30 years and have paid large amounts for their domestic systems and in-home treatment equipment. The alternative water supply being referred to by the government ministry is a private operator offering treated, non-pressurized water at great cost with no guarantee of quality, quantity, or availability of water. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to withdraw its order to cut off non-potable water to the residents of the hamlet of Furdale, causing great hardship with no suitable alternatives; to exempt the hamlet of Furdale from further water service cut-offs by granting a grandfather clause under *The Environmental Management and Protection Act, 2002* and *The Water Regulations, 2002*; and that this government fulfills its promises to rural Saskatchewan.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

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

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

Mr. Quennell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again to present a petition signed by residents of Saskatchewan concerned about this government's disregard for legal, constitutional, and human rights. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause

the government to direct marriage commissioners to uphold the law and the equality rights of all Saskatchewan couples and to withdraw the reference to the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal that would allow marriage commissioners to opt out of their legal obligation to provide all couples with civil marriage services.

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

Today the petition is signed by residents of Saskatoon and Moose Jaw. I so submit.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again here today to present petitions on behalf of concerned residents from across Saskatchewan as it relates to the unprecedented mismanagement of our finances by the Sask Party. They allude to the two consecutive \$1 billion deficit budgets and they allude to the billions of dollars of debt growth projected under the Sask Party, Mr. Speaker. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly condemn the Sask Party government for its damaging financial mismanagement since taking office, a reckless fiscal record that is denying Saskatchewan people, organizations, municipalities, institutions, taxpayers, and businesses the responsible and trustworthy fiscal management that they so deserve.

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

These petitions are signed by concerned citizens from Preeceville, Pelly, Rhein, Stornoway, and Yorkton. I so submit.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to present a petition in support of midwifery here in Saskatchewan. This petition is signed by citizens concerned that there's a huge disparity in access to midwifery services and that, despite the fact *The Midwifery Act* was proclaimed two years ago, there's still only seven registered midwives serving all of Saskatchewan. I'd like to read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to keep its promise to broaden the options for women and their families and recognize that presently this promise remains unfulfilled, as many communities in Saskatchewan still do not have midwives employed by their respective health regions;

And in doing so, your petitioners pray the honourable Legislative Assembly cause the government to support midwifery in Saskatchewan by making funding available for additional midwife positions in Saskatchewan's health regions as well as independent positions;

And, furthermore, the honourable Legislative Assembly cause the government to encourage an increase in the

number of licensed midwives in Saskatchewan by extending liability insurance, thereby making it possible for prospective midwives to achieve the number of births required to successfully apply for a licence with the newly formed College of Midwives.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by residents of Regina today. I so present.

[13:45]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Child Care Centre Opens in Moose Jaw

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this morning I had the great privilege, along with the member from Moose Jaw North, of attending the opening of the Explore “N” Learn Childcare Centre located in the heart of my constituency, Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Approximately 75 toddler, preschool, and school age children will be cared for in this newly renovated space. This centre is the newest initiative of the Moose Jaw YMCA [Young Men’s Christian Association] who now has four child care centres around our city.

The YMCA has been doing some great work in our community. Last fall the Strong Start Family Centre was opened after many years of work to develop a community centre that focused on families. The renovated facility brings together a range of services to support the parents and children of our city. This is a one-stop, single entry point for parenting information, community resources, referrals to professional services, practical advice, and family and children’s programming and events. The family centre offers a parenting and pregnancy resource library, a toy lending library, a creative playground, and an indoor space, family literacy events, infant, toddler, and preschool programs, and will host numerous community and family events throughout the year.

Mr. Speaker, I’d like to congratulate and thank Jeff Fox, chief executive officer of the Moose Jaw YMCA, and his staff. Also to be congratulated is the YMCA board of directors led by President Rob Hugg. Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members join me in wishing continued success for the Moose Jaw YMCA in all their endeavours.

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

National Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May is National MS [multiple sclerosis] Awareness Month. Multiple sclerosis is a complex disease. It is an unpredictable, often disabling disease of the central nervous system which is composed of the brain and spinal cord. MS affects vision, hearing, memory, balance,

and mobility. Its effects are physical, emotional, financial, and last a lifetime. While it is most often diagnosed in young adults aged 15 to 40, we know that it affects children, even some as young as two years old.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada, notably its Saskatchewan division. Saskatchewan’s MS Society offers a variety of services such as educational sessions and conferences covering a variety of topics related to MS. These services are designed for both people with MS and their families.

Saskatchewan’s MS Society offers alternative services. These services include Tai Chi, aquatic fitness programs, strength training, and social and support group activities. Most importantly, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan’s MS Society offers supportive counselling.

Until we end MS, people affected by the disease will continue to face many challenges. I encourage all people in this Assembly to keep all those affected with MS in your thoughts and prayers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

International Nurses Week

Ms. Junor: — International Nurses Week was established by the International Council of Nurses in 1965. The week begins on May 6th each year and culminates on May 12th, the birthday of Florence Nightingale, considered to be the founder of modern nursing.

The Canadian theme for nursing week 2010 is, Nursing: You Can’t Live Without It! And nothing could be more truthful. Right now there is a nurse helping a woman become a mother, a nurse holding a dying man’s hand, a nurse starting a child’s IV [intravenous], a nurse listening to an Alzheimer’s patient tell a story, and a nurse missing their family while caring for yours.

The role of nurses are many and varied. They do not only serve as staff nurses but also educators, nurse practitioners, policy-makers, advocates, and researchers, and even in some cases MLAs. Nurses are there for all of us in our ordinary and extraordinary times.

Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party government has been full of talk and rhetoric about their appreciation for nurses. But nurses are part of a health care team and, of 25,000 health care workers, many of them are licensed practical nurses and they’re still without a contract. They would like to see and tell the minister and the government that they’ve seen nothing but disrespect and insulting job offers from day one. The Sask Party government has made a mockery of their collective bargaining process, and health care workers and their patients are paying the price.

Mr. Speaker, I do ask that all members join with me in congratulating the nursing team and celebrating their hard work and dedication this week and every week.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Rosthern-Shellbrook.

Motorcycle Safety Week

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to inform the Assembly that May 8 to 14 is Motorcycle Safety Week in Saskatchewan. This safety week serves as a reminder for motorcyclists to get training, follow safe riding practices, and for all road users to share the road with motorcyclists. It is sponsored by the Saskatchewan Safety Council with the help of SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance].

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Safety Council is an . . . [inaudible] . . . non-profit organization. They are determined to make Saskatchewan a safer place. Motorcycles aren't enclosed, making their riders much more vulnerable in collisions. They are also harder to spot by other drivers on the road, especially after a long Saskatchewan winter when they're not used to seeing them. And sadly, Mr. Speaker, there are sometimes tragic results. In 2009 there were 202 injuries and two deaths a result of motorcycle collisions in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, Motorcycle Safety Week serves both to remind motorcyclists to drive safely and to remind other road users that motorcycles are back on the roads. Mr. Speaker, I thank the Saskatchewan Safety Council for sponsoring this important safety week. I hope that all motorcyclists can have a safe and enjoyable summer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Two Worlds

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, it seems that this Premier has been living in his own world. In the Premier's world, the economy is growing because of his divine leadership. In the real world, Saskatchewan's economy shrunk by 6.3 per cent in 2009, the second worst performance among Canadian provinces.

In the Premier's world, the province will be debt free. In the real world, and according to his own budget documents and because of his mismanagement, total public debt is set to increase 55 per cent by 2014.

In the Premier's world, he pretends to support our Crowns. In the real world, Crown corporation debt is projected to increase by 117 per cent by 2014, and 100 per cent of profits and all equity has been taken to fund his deficit budget.

In the Premier's world, Saskatchewan will overtake Alberta in oil production this year. In the real world, under the so-called leadership of this Premier, Saskatchewan's barrel of oil equivalent has dropped by 44 per cent between 2007 and 2009.

In the Premier's world, this incompetent government pretends it is moving Saskatchewan forward. In the real world, according to Doug Elliott, "we just lost all the gains we made in the last three years."

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think the people of Saskatchewan would prefer truth and straight talk over the spin and the rhetoric from this Premier every day of the week. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Lloydminster.

Mining Operations Receive Awards

Mr. McMillan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to congratulate Cameco on receiving two safety awards last evening at the Canadian Institute for Mining, Metallurgy and Petroleum, the CIM awards in Vancouver. Cameco's mining operations which received these prestigious awards were McArthur River and the Cigar Lake operations.

The McArthur River operation received the John T. Ryan National Safety Trophy in the metal mines category for its safety record during the year 2009. The John T. Ryan Trophies are presented to a Canadian metal mine, a select mine, and a coal mine for maintaining an outstanding commitment to safety through obtaining the lowest injury rate per 200,000 hours worked. Throughout this time period, it reported an impressive one injury for 756,990 hours worked.

Mr. Speaker, the Cigar Lake operation received the National Special Award certificate for its 2009 safety record. It had an equally impressive record, reporting one injury for 717,932 working hours.

Mr. Speaker, I would like all members to join with me in commending Cameco for receiving these two prestigious awards. This was achieved through teamwork by all their employees and by a dedicated commitment to employee safety. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Response to Questions

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, perhaps it's understandable why the Premier would get a bit defensive yesterday. After all, I'm sure he wants to avoid being put under public scrutiny for his record of unprecedented incompetence, financial mismanagement of epic proportions, debt that is projected to increase 55 per cent by 2014, and a multitude of broken promises and mean-spirited cuts. But being ashamed of this track record is no excuse for avoiding serious issues.

He can try to rely on his overpaid political staffers to cover his tracks and enter into the debate. But perhaps someone should tell his staff that if they really wanted to debate in the Assembly, they should quit hiding behind the Premier and actually run for office. When the Premier was asked serious questions about why he refuses to consult with Saskatchewan people on anything, the Premier avoided the questions. When asked serious questions about the financial mismanagement we have seen over the last two years, the Premier avoided the questions.

When asked serious questions about the fact that our debt is growing under his watch, the Premier again avoided the questions. When asked serious questions about the fact that Saskatchewan people are paying the price for the Premier's incompetence, he yet again avoided the questions.

That was the pattern yesterday, Mr. Speaker. I guess when you

have a track record to be ashamed of like this Premier does, when you've broken trust with Saskatchewan people, like this Premier has, Mr. Speaker, I guess that's the best you can do.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Proposed Long-Term Care Facility

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, a proposal by Amicus Health Inc. to build a 100-bed facility will be presented tomorrow to the board of the Saskatoon Health Region and a public announcement will be made thereafter. The minister can assure us all he wants that no final decision has been made, but the fact is this wouldn't be going to the Saskatoon Health Region unless there was a concrete and detailed agreement. To the minister: what are the terms of the agreement with Amicus?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said yesterday in my response to the questions, is that yes, the member opposite is right. The Saskatoon Regional Health Authority will be looking at a proposal put forward by Amicus to supply 100 long-term care beds within the Saskatoon area.

All the details haven't been worked out, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a proposal that's going to the health region that will see Amicus build the facility, and the health region through the Ministry of Health, for lack of a better term, rent or utilize the beds, pay for the bed usage, Mr. Speaker, as well as the facility fee. All the details haven't been worked out. But, Mr. Speaker, that is kind of a new look at how to deliver long-term care, Mr. Speaker, especially . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well the member says, that's for sure.

Because what we saw under 16 years of government, Mr. Speaker, was certainly not enough beds. They didn't do enough for long-term care. When you look in rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, they absolutely let many, many of the facilities deteriorate. They should be ashamed of their record on long-term care, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, if I recall, this government just cancelled 13 long-term care . . . [inaudible] . . . Now the minister says that neither the government nor the health region will guarantee any loans to Amicus. But he was less clear on whether the government or the Saskatoon Health Region have made an agreement that Amicus could take to the bank that would help them secure a \$27 million loan.

To the minister: what agreement has been made with Amicus? And how much will these commitments cost the taxpayers of Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, under the Catholic

Health Ministry, Amicus — which is a subsidiary of that — is proposing to build a long-term care facility in Saskatoon that will be really quite revolutionizing, Mr. Speaker, because it's looking at a number of areas such as aging in place, such as the opportunities for couples to stay together if one needs level 3 and 4 care, Mr. Speaker. This is new thinking regarding long-term care. As I said, the details are yet to be worked out.

But there will be . . . Amicus will . . . however they raise their money, whether it's probably through a bank, it is an agreement between the bank and Amicus, not through the Ministry of Health, Mr. Speaker. The agreement would be, as far as utilization of those beds, on a cost per bed as well as a facility fee, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's interesting because we didn't see any of that new type of thinking under the NDP [New Democratic Party] to fix 16 years when we saw deterioration after deterioration of our long-term care facilities right across the province.

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

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, currently the government pays affiliated health facilities a modest debt service stipend of \$3 per patient per day to offset the cost of any debt they incurred in building their facility. That amounts to about \$1,095 per year. But Amicus is financing 100 per cent of the cost of building this \$27 million facility. It stands to reason, Mr. Speaker, that their debt servicing cost will be substantially higher than facilities who have to front the 35 per cent portion, and taxpayers are going to be forced to pay a substantial premium to Amicus to offset these higher costs.

To the minister: does the agreement with Amicus stipulate how much they're receiving per patient per day in debt servicing costs? And how much of a premium will Saskatchewan taxpayers be forced to pay, and for how long?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, I want to correct something that was said, not in this past question but in the question before; something that is completely untrue, Mr. Speaker, that 13 health care facilities have been cancelled in the province. That couldn't be further from the truth, Mr. Speaker. Those communities are working diligently to do the scoping around the facility, to also do the raising of their share of the capital, the 35 per cent, Mr. Speaker. Government will be there with our 65 per cent when that facility is ready to move forward, Mr. Speaker.

The Catholic Health Ministry has delivered excellent health care in this province for many, many years, in fact probably well before when the province was founded. Whether it was the Grey Nuns Hospital here in Regina, St. Paul's in Saskatoon, they've delivered great health care throughout this province, Mr. Speaker. This is another opportunity for the Catholic Health Ministry to be involved in health care and provide great care for the citizens of Saskatchewan.

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

Ms. Atkinson: — The minister insisted yesterday that neither the government nor the health region was guaranteeing any loan that Amicus might be taking out. But if the government or the health region has agreed to pay Amicus a substantially higher debt servicing stipend than any other facilities like Oliver Lodge which is presently raising their 35 per cent, or Sunnyside nursing home, then Amicus could leverage that guaranteed income to get a loan, 100 per cent financing of a loan. Either way, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan taxpayers and patients are paying a premium for this deal the government is cooking up.

To the minister: how much of a premium will Saskatchewan taxpayers and patients be forced to pay to help Amicus secure their loan? And most importantly, will other affiliates that are doing walkathons and golf tournaments and bake sales, are they going to get the same terms?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, as I said in my previous answer that the Catholic Health Ministry has delivered health care in this province for many, many years. I find it very interesting, the opposition seems to feel that we've got more than enough long-term care beds in the Saskatoon area. They're obviously not in favour of this agreement.

It is a different form of agreement. This agreement takes a little different structure, Mr. Speaker. But with the Catholic Health Ministry moving forward with the capital cost, we will be covering the cost as far as the daily rate and the facility fee, Mr. Speaker, as we move forward. The agreement hasn't been finalized. It's up to the Saskatoon Health Region to have a look at the agreement too to see whether it makes sense to them, Mr. Speaker.

But what I do know is what is important to people in this province is to ensure that we've got modern, new . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — I find it interesting observing that one member on the opposition side actually putting his earpiece to his ear to get a clear response. I ask the Minister of Health to wrap up his comments.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, what I would say is that what is priority number one for our government is to ensure that we have the proper amount of long-term care facilities, the proper amount of beds throughout the province that are modern, that haven't seen the deterioration that many of our facilities have seen under NDP governments.

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

Coverage for Dental Treatment

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week in response to the Dale Regel dental implant case, the Minister of Health said:

This hasn't worked out the way I would like to see it work out. This is one area that should have received far more

attention than it did. I [meaning the minister] would far rather be proactive than reactive.

Ryan Foulston was 17 years old when an aggressive tumour was detected in his jaw. He has been without some of his bottom teeth for the last six years. Mr. Speaker, is the minister going to be proactive rather than reactive, and is he going to give Ryan's case the attention it deserves right now?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, many of these policies and regulations that govern payment of, for example in this case, dental implants, have been in place for a very long time, probably through the '60s, Mr. Speaker. Through many NDP governments, Mr. Speaker, they found it not a priority for their government to move on it in 16 years of NDP government.

Mr. Speaker, I have looked at this situation. I have asked the ministry to go back and look at the regulation to compare it to what other provinces do. We know that some other provinces cover this type of implant, Mr. Speaker, so I have asked the ministry to look at what we need to do to change the regulations. They have instructed to me that they will, through me, be bringing something back to cabinet in the very, very near future, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, Ryan is here today in the gallery with his grandmother, Annette, and just wants to tell his story. The result of the surgery to remove Ryan's tumour was the loss of nine bottom teeth. Ryan's oral and maxillofacial surgeon writes:

With the resection involving nine teeth, this space is much too large for conventional crowns and bridges. Titanium dental implants are currently the only option for permanent reconstruction of a defect this size. I would respectfully suggest to you that our provincial health care plan provide coverage for this reconstructive effort.

Mr. Speaker, this is clearly a medical procedure as a result of the removal of a tumour. And the minister has now announced another review, and we do have a history of watching him review everything and decide nothing and do less.

Is the minister, the question today to the minister: is he going to cover the cost of Ryan's reconstructive surgery that will include titanium implants?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, my sympathy goes out to Ryan and any person that finds themselves in this situation that, through no fault of their own, whether it's a tumour that has caused the removal of some of their teeth, Mr. Speaker . . . Of course Sask Health would pay for the removal of the tumour, but that doesn't replace their, for example, dental work back to where it was.

That's why I've asked the ministry to look into this. We're

comparing what we're doing to other provinces, and many provinces cover this. There is variation from province to province, Mr. Speaker.

But what I am saying is that they have my, the families of the province have my guarantee that not only are we reviewing this, we'll have a cabinet decision item going to cabinet in the near future, in the very near future, once the ministry is able to get its work done, Mr. Speaker, so that we as a Government of Saskatchewan can decide to change some of the programs that were certainly antiquated under the former government.

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

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, what we've also seen from this minister when he does reviews, he takes the low road. Whatever's the lowest common denominator across the country, he will go down to that standard.

Mr. Speaker, another person is in the gallery, Charlene Sullivan. And on March 24th, Ms. Sullivan was in the legislature asking for coverage for implant-retained prosthesis. Her dentist said it's the only option for Charlene because she's unable to wear any type of dentures due to severe allergies.

Mr. Speaker, when the question was asked, the Premier answered and said, quote, "I'm not familiar with this specific case . . . forward it to our office, we can look into it." Mr. Speaker, all the Premier did with Charlene's case was refer it to the Health minister, who had done nothing with it the first time he got it and nothing with it the second time when it was sent by the Premier.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: both the Premier and the Health minister have turned their backs on Charlene. Today, will the minister finally take the time to actually look at the case and provide Charlene the help she needs?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, once again, you know, our sympathy goes out to anyone that finds themselves in this position, that needs some dental reconstructive work done because of no fault of their own because of whether it was a cancerous tumour or malignant tumour, Mr. Speaker. The removal of that tumour is covered, but of course the dental work isn't under regulation, under regulations that have been put in place long before we came to government. These regulations need to be reviewed.

And there are some very compelling cases. Certainly Dale, Dale Regel last week was a very compelling case. And that's certainly why we have moved in that direction, to look at that regulation, to compare it to what is done in other provinces so that we can hopefully help as many of these people as we possibly can, Mr. Speaker. It's interesting that they would be lobbying so hard for a regulation change, when they were in government for 16 years, and they ignored that very regulation.

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

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, it's funny because when I was talking to the people that are in the gallery before they came in here today, I basically told them what the minister would say. So he's basically telling the truth what I said to them. You're right on script. You're right on script.

And the letters that the people have got, the minister says he's sorry, but the letters that the people have got are basically form letters saying, I'm sorry for your situation, but we won't do anything for you. And basically I think someone should tell the minister that he is in charge of regulations. He can make them change any time, which he's done in other cases. This one does not have to be reviewed and studied and looked at across the province. It's just a stalling technique, Mr. Speaker. Every day I'm getting phone calls, emails, and letters telling me how the minister has turned his back on people asking for help to cover the costs of dental implants.

Edward Enequist is a 31-year-old who in March, 2009 had a cancerous tumour removed from his jaw. His jaw had to be rebuilt and dentures are not an option. Edward needs dental implants. When Edward asked the Minister of Health for help, he received a form letter identical to the one received by Dale Regel, telling him the costs of dental implants will not be covered and expressing his sympathy.

Mr. Speaker, where is the sympathy the minister talks about in this form letter? Every day that Dale Regel, Ryan Foulston, Edward Enequist, and Charlene Sullivan, and others in the same situation have to live without dental implants is one day too long. Is the minister changing the regulation soon?

[Interjections]

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

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we're aware of a number of cases that come forward, every year roughly, for this type of dental implant. Roughly about 10 per year, has been consistent for many years, Mr. Speaker. You know over the last two or three years, roughly 30 people could've been covered that if we had the regulation changed.

And if you extrapolate those numbers over 16 years of NDP government, 160 people who were in the very same position under the NDP government had to pay for those dental implants out of their own pockets, Mr. Speaker. That would be 160 people that that former government turned their back on. No doubt those letters were sent at that time too. The only difference between that government and our government, Mr. Speaker, is we've seen this. We've reacted, Mr. Speaker, and you'll see that a regulation change coming to cabinet will be there in a very short time.

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

Consultation on Changes to Legislation

Ms. Morin: — To the Minister of Environment: did she consult with the FSIN [Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations] on *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act* before bringing this Bill to

the legislature?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Environment.

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I've stated many times in this House, we had a list of stakeholders who were notified of the changes that we were going to be making to WHPA [*The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*], to the conservation easements, and to the assessment of Crown land in our province, Mr. Speaker. There were workshops that were organized last summer. People were invited to attend. We asked people for feedback, and some organizations offered that feedback. Some chose not to, Mr. Speaker.

We had another meeting last Thursday which we invited a list of stakeholders to attend. Just about everybody showed up, Mr. Speaker. The FSIN was invited to attend. They declined to attend, Mr. Speaker. I've spoken with FSIN this morning at a meeting that we had and assured them that they would be included in the ongoing consultations that we're going to have, based on a committee that was asked of us to strike up. And we will be putting that committee together, and the FSIN will be invited to be a member of that committee.

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

[14:15]

Ms. Morin: — Well, Mr. Speaker, those meetings that the ministry had in 2009 were not to discuss the legislation that's before the House right now, it was to discuss the tool that was going to be used to assess those lands. So let's be clear on what those talks were about.

The minister told this House on March 8th that Bill 132:

... has been developed in consultation with a wide variety of stakeholders such as the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation, the Nature Conservancy of Canada, Nature Saskatchewan, Ducks Unlimited Canada, The Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations . . .

According to Chief Lyle Whitefish:

I find these statements extremely troubling since no such undertakings have occurred. There has been no attempt by your Ministry to enter into a consultation process with First Nations people regarding the expansion of the sale of Crown lands protected under *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*.

Seems pretty clear, Mr. Speaker. To the minister: why did she tell the House that she had consulted with the FSIN when this is obviously not true?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Environment.

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't recall that the member opposite was invited, nor did she attend the meetings that we had about this last June. But I can say that the information that was sent out, talked about WHPA. It talked

about conservation easements. It talked about lands being sold with restriction. It talked about land being sold without restriction. It talked about land being kept under the protection.

And, Mr. Speaker, we were so secretive about our plans we even said, and I quote, "During the fall 2009 legislative session, the government intends to introduce amendments to *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act* and *The Conservation Easements Act* to reflect this new approach." That's how secretive we were, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the FSIN was given exactly the same information as every other stakeholder. They were given exactly the same opportunity as every other stakeholder, Mr. Speaker. And as I said, I asked them this morning to have representation on a committee that we are going to be putting together so that there can be direct involvement between stakeholders and government moving forward as we manage these lands.

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

Ms. Morin: — Well, Mr. Speaker, of all those stakeholders that the minister is referring to the SWF, Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation, released this today: "The SWF opposes dismantling *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*." And they say they weren't consulted.

Nature Saskatchewan says, "We can assure you that no meaningful consultation regarding the sale of Crown lands has occurred with Nature Saskatchewan." They weren't consulted. The FSIN says they weren't consulted.

I can go on for a long time. I've a binder full of letters of people that she says were consulted that say they were not. Not only does this government have a legal duty to consult with First Nations and Métis people, they also have surplus funding set aside to do just that. The minister's officials informed committee last night that of the \$3 million set aside for the First Nations and Métis Consultation Participation Fund last year, \$2,377,600 was unspent. Nearly 80 per cent of this line item was available last year, but this government still refused to consult with First Nations.

The Ministry of First Nations and Métis Relations has nearly . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I ask the member to place the question.

Ms. Morin: — Of the nearly \$2.5 million of unused funds, what is the minister doing to consult with First Nations now?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for the Environment.

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier and members of cabinet met with the FSIN this morning. We had good discussions. And as was pointed out at the beginning of the meeting, we'll agree on a great many things; there will be things that we don't necessarily agree on.

And, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the issue of consultation,

there remains in this year's budget under the Ministry of FNMR [First Nations and Métis Relations], a \$3 million Consultation Fund which is there for First Nations to access if they require the capacity to engage in consultations, Mr. Speaker. That is up to the First Nations to apply for that funding and the funding remains there.

As for the WHPA legislation and the changes that we were making, Mr. Speaker, I have said that I invited the FSIN to have representation on the committee that we will be putting together to work on land conservation issues as we move forward with this legislation.

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

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, I spoke to the FSIN after this meeting this morning as well and they still want to see the Bill pulled from the legislature. The only consultation the FSIN was offered was a last-minute workshop from the minister in this Bill's final hours in the House. Mr. Speaker, this is not considered consultation to the FSIN, to the members on this side of the House, or to anyone in Saskatchewan quite frankly. According to Chief Lyle Whitefish:

Requesting that the First Nations respond to these proposed legislative amendments in one consultation session and within a mere week's notice without adequate information is unreasonable and not supported by law.

To the minister: when you have nearly \$2.5 million of unused funds earmarked specifically for consultation, what is your excuse for not consulting?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for the Environment.

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The FSIN and all of the other stakeholders that are involved in this were all given exactly the same opportunity to respond. They were all contacted in June of 2009, Mr. Speaker. It is my understanding that the FSIN did not access the consultation fund housed through FNMR for that purpose, Mr. Speaker. But they were given exactly the same opportunity as every other stakeholder. We contacted them in June of 2009. Some chose to respond, some did not, Mr. Speaker. That is their prerogative. I cannot speak for those individuals and those groups as to why they did not respond.

But, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important to note that the changes that we are making offer greater protection for land in this province than we currently see. Under current WHPA legislation, there is only a maximum of a \$2,000 fine and very little in the way of enforcement, Mr. Speaker. Under the new WHPA legislation and the new conservation easements, we have increased the penalties to \$100,000, Mr. Speaker, and a whole myriad of enforcement tools for the government to pursue. There is greater protection going forward, Mr. Speaker, than there ever was.

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

Ms. Morin: — Here is what FSIN Chief Lyle Whitefish has to say about what the minister interprets:

The program will reduce the amount of accessible lands available to the First Nations people who possess treaty rights to such land available through the TLE and Specific Claims agreements. I wish to sternly express that such programs hinder the First Nations people in Saskatchewan to exercise their treaty and constitutional right to hunt, fish, trap, and gather on such lands.

Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party didn't consult on *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*. They didn't consult on the New West Partnership. They didn't consult when they tore up the agreement on chiropractors, and they didn't consult when they pulled the funding from SCN. To the minister: since your track record on consultation speaks for itself, how can people of Saskatchewan trust you to consult on anything?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for the Environment.

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to reference the meeting that we had last Thursday. It was a very good meeting. Almost everybody that was invited attended, Mr. Speaker. And I would point out that at that meeting not one of the organizations or people that were represented there asked us to pull this legislation. They asked us to do some things moving forward, Mr. Speaker, and we are committed to doing that.

I'm going to be bringing forward a proposal to cabinet tomorrow that would see a portion of the revenue from the sale of these lands go to an organization such as the FWDF [Fish and Wildlife Development Fund] for land conservation, Mr. Speaker.

We've also agreed to form a Crown land conservation committee, which I'd referenced earlier in question period. We've asked the stakeholders to be part of that so that we can work together. They've got great ideas. They can work with the ministry moving forward, Mr. Speaker, and we've agreed to that. Mr. Speaker, we have also agreed to put the assessment tool that we're using under WHPA land on all other unoccupied Crown land, Mr. Speaker, so we can make the right decisions moving forward.

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

Mr. Ottenbreit: — To ask for leave to introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Yorkton.

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all the members of the Assembly, I'd like to introduce a friend of mine and my family's from Yorkton who

lives around the corner. Her husband and her two children live in Yorkton, Ms. Carma Lee Doupe. Hi, Carma Lee.

She's a very dedicated citizen of Yorkton, Mr. Speaker. She's dedicated a majority of the last part of her life teaching high school at-risk and challenged youth, Mr. Speaker. Very commendable, very hard-working woman and a good friend who has helped my family through some difficult times in the past as well with her friendship. And I'd ask all members to help me welcome Carma Lee to this Assembly.

The Speaker: — Why is the member from Saskatoon Nutana on her feet?

Ms. Atkinson: — With leave to introduce guests.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Ms. Atkinson: — Well again in the west gallery are my neighbours, people who live directly across the street from me, Jake and Louise Buhler. Jake and Louise are very active in the Mennonite community, but they're also very active in the international community. They have spent many, many years working in Vietnam, ensuring that people in Vietnam have access to some very basic services, Mr. Speaker. And in fact they've been, Louise has been recognized by the Government of Vietnam for the work that she has done in that country.

In addition, they're involved with the Saskatchewan SCIC [Saskatchewan Council for International Cooperation], which I believe is going to be holding a reception here today. And I would ask all members to welcome these good Saskatchewan citizens that do good work in our province, but they also do good work across the globe.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

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

Standing Committee on House Services

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am instructed by the Standing Committee on House Services to report that it has considered certain estimates and to present its ninth report. I would move:

That the ninth report of the Standing Committee on House Services now be concurred in.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Chair of the House committee:

That the ninth report of the Standing Committee on House Services be now concurred in.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Clerk: — Committee of Finance.

The Speaker: — Committee of Finance. I do now leave the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

General Revenue Fund Executive Council Vote 10

The Chair: — The first item of business is the estimates for Executive Council, vote 10, found on page 67 of the Saskatchewan Estimates book. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Chair: — Is subvote (EX01), central management and services in the amount of \$5,001,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Is subvote (EX07), Premier's office (EX07) in the amount of 572,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Is subvote (EX04), cabinet planning, (EX04) in the amount of \$1,001,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Is subvote (EX05), cabinet secretary in the amount of \$504,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Is subvote (EX03), communications office in the amount of \$1,413,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Is (EX08), House business and research in the amount of \$466,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Subvote (EX06), members of the Executive Council in the amount of \$154,000. The amount is statutory, is not required to be voted on.

Is subvote (EX10), intergovernmental affairs in the amount of \$3,066,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

[14:30]

The Chair: —

Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31st, 2011, the following sums for Executive Council, \$12,023,000.

Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

[Vote 10 agreed to.]

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Chair, I know we're moving to conclusion here and just before we do, I never had a chance to thank officials who were here to help answer questions last night or to thank the Leader of the Opposition for the questions that were asked by . . . on his part on behalf of the opposition. I would do that now. I would thank the officials that were here and acknowledge not just their work, but the work of all of those civil servants across our government, the Government of Saskatchewan, our professional public service who work hard on behalf of all of government but significantly support Executive Council as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: — The motion has been carried. There being no further business before the committee, I would invite to move that the committee rise, report progress, and ask for leave to sit again. I recognize the Government House Leader.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move the committee rise, report progress, and ask for leave to sit again.

The Chair: — It is moved by the Government House Leader that the committee rise, report progress, and ask for leave to sit again. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of committees.

Mr. Brkich: — Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the committee to report progress and ask for leave to sit again.

The Speaker: — When shall the committee sit again?

Mr. D'Autremont: — Next sitting, Mr. Speaker.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 132

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Heppner that **Bill No. 132 — *The Wildlife Habitat Protection (Land Designation) Amendment Act, 2009*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's with great interest that I rise to participate in this debate today, given what has happened or what's been revealed to be the case with this legislation over the past number of days and weeks, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to say that I've been surprised by what has transpired on this legislation as regards to the manner in which the Minister of the Environment has conducted her affairs and the affairs of that government as it relates to this piece of legislation.

But I can't say that I am all that surprised, Mr. Speaker, given that in the 2007 election — and I've talked about this in this Chamber before — in the 2007 election I stood on a platform with that member from Martensville, the current Minister of the Environment, when that member was the Environment critic for the opposition then, the Sask Party. And at which point she had said that the Sask Party's position on carbon emissions was exactly the same as that of the NDP and as such there was no real need to look any further into the Sask Party position. You know, they're the same as the NDP — please move it along; nothing to see here.

And of course it wasn't a matter of weeks or months after the election when that member and that government changed their platform position, changed the position that they've taken out to the people of Saskatchewan but which I saw that member opposite defend in person from a platform to a room full of young people at the University of Regina.

They made the promise and then they promptly broke it with, you know, no seeming regard, Mr. Speaker. And then of course we've seen the moving target that is the carbon emissions reductions targets from the Sask Party government and how that has evolved and how it's very hard to pin that kind of Jell-O to the wall when it comes to the targets that they're presenting, Mr. Speaker. So it's not like I entered into this debate with any great trust for the word of the member from Martensville as it related to the environment or generally, Mr. Speaker.

So again it's always disappointing when you have members of the public come forward and say that they have been misrepresented by the government, that their interests that the government has assured the Assembly have been addressed, are not in fact addressed. When the members opposite and when that Minister of the Environment comes forward and says that no, we've consulted and we've consulted here, we've consulted there, we've consulted pretty much everywhere.

It's almost like when that minister says something is up, Mr.

Speaker, you know that is in fact down. You know that it's the exact opposite of what's taken place. And that's certainly the case, Mr. Speaker. When that minister says that people have been consulted with, you can almost bet money on it that they have not in fact been consulted.

I guess the one thing I want to read into the record, Mr. Speaker, off the top here, concerns the position of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations as was referenced in question period today. And certainly, having sat in committee and listened to the minister represent the position of the government as concerns other pieces of environmental legislation and represent the environmental protocol that had been in place for 16 years, Mr. Speaker, and that for which the funding was in the amount of \$282,000 was cancelled on budget day with a phone call, not even the courtesy of a face-to-face meeting, Mr. Speaker. That cancellation of funding for the environmental protocol resulted in the FSIN considering the agreement to be breached and null and void.

And then to ask that minister, well is the protocol still in place? The minister will sit there, you know, bold as brass and tell the committee that no, the protocol is still in place; it's just the funding that's been cut — despite the express opinion on the part of the other partner in the protocol that the actions of the government of the day have necessitated that protocol being torn up.

And again this is an agreement that was in place for 16 years, Mr. Speaker. It was the environmental protocol. It was signed by the then government of the day, the NDP, and signed by then Chief Roland Crowe for the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations. And it brought the two parties together to work on issues of common concern to make sure that this common interest had some capacity to it and to do a better job of working together in this province of Saskatchewan from the respective perspectives of the parties.

And that 16 years of partnership was torn up with the dialing of a telephone on budget day, in some respects, Mr. Speaker, is a bit shocking, but when it comes to the approach of the members opposite to issues of the environment and when it comes together with issues of First Nations concern then we get, you know, anything is possible, Mr. Speaker. And we see that with the actions of this government as it relates to the environmental protocol and we see that in the action of this government as regards the different pieces of wildlife legislation and environmental legislation that have come to the Chamber over the past months. And we see that in spades, Mr. Speaker, as relates to *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*.

So I want to . . . There's a fairly lengthy correspondence that relates back and forth between the Department of the Environment and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations regarding concerns raised by the FSIN. And what I'd like to read into the record now is a letter dated April 29th, 2010. It's sent to Minister Heppner. To quote from the letter, Mr. Speaker, it states as follows:

Re: Amendments to The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act and The Conservation Easement Act.

Dear Miss Heppner,

In 1984 the provincial government of the day initiated the wildlife conservation process by enacting *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act* (WHPA). This legislation protects about 1.2 million hectares of Crown lands throughout the agricultural region of the province for the purpose of protecting natural habitats that are important to sustaining wildlife.

In November 2008, the Ministry of Agriculture introduced the Agricultural Crown Land Sale program that provided financial incentives for lessees to purchase their leased land from the provincial Crown. The Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations Vice-Chief responsible for lands and resources, Delbert Wapass, responded to this program through correspondence to the Minister of Agriculture Bjornerud on November 19, 2008. [And I'm sure you'll remember that, Mr. Speaker.] This letter detailed the concerns that the First Nations people have with regard to the Crown Land Sale Program.

In June 2009, the Ministry of Environment decided to expand the Crown Land Sale Program to also make available for purchase Crown lands protected under the WHPA. The expansion of such programs, through your Ministry, continues to raise numerous concerns.

The program will reduce the amount of accessible lands available to the First Nations people who possess Treaty rights to such available land through Treaty Land Entitlement and Specific Claims agreements. I wish to sternly express that such a program hinders the First Nations people in Saskatchewan to exercise their Treaty and constitutional right to hunt, fish, trap and gather on such lands. What is more perplexing is that such program excludes First Nations who possess such rights to these lands, from purchasing such, which is contrary to the Natural Resources Transfer Agreement (NRTA), 1930.

As you are aware, the NRTA requires the province to provide lands to the First Nations in fulfillment of Canada's obligations to the First Nations. As such, the program which you have implemented will limit access to the many archaeological, heritage and sacred sites important to the First Nations people in Saskatchewan that are found within those lands, not to mention the likely inability for First Nations to exercise their Inherent and Treaty rights to hunt, fish, trap and gather on such lands. Furthermore, delegating the responsibility to maintain the lands to the purchasers leaves these lands vulnerable to their destruction when the purchaser decides to make improvements to those lands or posts such lands as inaccessible to First Nations hunters, trappers, fishers, or gatherers. However, the most glaring concern is the fact that your Ministry continues to fail to consult and accommodate the First Nations people prior to initiating this program.

It has come to my attention that you are informing your government colleagues and members of the Saskatchewan Legislature that your Ministry consulted and accommodated the First Nations people prior to initiating this program. I find these statements extremely troubling since no such undertakings have occurred. There has been

no attempt by your Ministry to enter into a consultation process with First Nations people regarding the expansion of the sale of Crown lands protected under the *Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*.

Judging from past experience I can only ascertain that your deliberate refusal to consult and accommodate First Nations people on your Ministry's initiatives, including the sale of Crown lands protected under the WHPA, as well as your Ministry's "Results-based Regulatory Review", is a reflection of the policy position that your government has taken with regards to the First Nations people in Saskatchewan. The province has no regard or respect for the interests, concerns and the Inherent and Treaty rights of the First Nations people in Saskatchewan. Furthermore, it appears your government views the Inherent and Treaty rights of First Nations people as a hindrance to Premier Wall's "growth agenda" and that the government will proceed by attempting to ignore the provincial Crown's constitutional and legal obligations to the First Nations people in Saskatchewan.

Since the FSIN was not involved in any consultations, I am requesting a detailed explanation of how your Ministry purportedly undertook to consult with First Nations prior to the decision being made to expand the sale of Crown lands protected under the *Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*. Rather than a vague reference, I am seeking a response that includes a listing of all the meetings your Ministry held with the First Nations and the dates such were held, which First Nations and their leaders or representatives who attended such meetings, what their responses were, how these were incorporated into the report your Ministry used to make the decision, and how your Ministry reported back to the First Nations of your decision. I also request a copy of such report.

I trust that the report will be forwarded to my office given that this sale of Crown lands gravely affects the Inherent and Treaty rights of First Nations people in Saskatchewan.

I expect your response immediately.

Sincerely,

FEDERATION OF SASKATCHEWAN INDIAN NATIONS

Lyle Whitefish
Office of the Fourth Vice Chief

[14:45]

There are other stakeholders that have been cited in these proceedings, Mr. Speaker. But I just want to dwell for a moment on what I see the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations trying to say in terms of what that government opposite is doing.

Two years ago just at about this time, Mr. Speaker, there was a conference held in Saskatoon concerning the duty to consult and accommodate. And that arose, that particular conference arose from a platform promise made by the Saskatchewan Party

in the 2007 election to provide leadership on the duty to consult and accommodate file — leadership, Mr. Speaker. And again in terms of Sask Party promises, when they promise leadership, that's the first opportunity, that's the first sort of warning that you should check what's really going on.

I was there at that conference, Mr. Deputy Speaker, or Mr. Speaker. I was there when different leaders from that side of the House lifted the pipes in the morning and solemnly undertook to do their best in respect and in honesty around the duty to consult process. And there were things that were said on stage and we know that there were things that were said off stage by the members opposite in advance of the last election as regards to the duty to consult and accommodate position of the Saskatchewan Party. And we know that the members opposite like to talk about how the process, as it had evolved to date, was inadequate and wrong and how the Sask Party would do so much better.

And with this piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, and with other pieces of legislation and with other things that we've seen this government do, we see what a mockery that they've made of their campaign promise in 2007 to provide leadership on the duty to consult and accommodate file. We see that they've made a sham out of the promise they had made in that campaign. We see that when they'd come together with First Nations and Métis people at the duty to consult and accommodate conference that was held two years ago in Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker, we see how far that government has strayed from the path that they said they would be walking in partnership and respect with First Nations and Métis people.

And as it relates to this legislation, Mr. Speaker, you know we've just, as recently as this question period, we've heard the Minister of the Environment, a ministry that has a huge amount of dealings with the duty to consult file, we've seen that minister say that, well opportunities to consult, you know — and whether or not those consultations actually take place, Mr. Speaker, but — we've seen that minister say that, you know, consultations are offered to everybody. There's no particular onus on the government to live up to responsibilities to consult with First Nations and Métis people in particular. And that's not the case, Mr. Speaker.

That's not the case that members opposite argued before the election. That's not the case that members opposite went to that duty to consult and accommodate conference to talk about with First Nations and Métis leadership. And that's not the case as has been developing out of different Supreme Court rulings over the past decade, Mr. Speaker. There is a specific onus on the Crown, there is a duty of the Crown, there's an honour of the Crown to be upheld by the provincial government as it regards to the duty to consult and accommodate.

And if those members opposite felt that that was the duty, if they felt that was their responsibility, if they felt that there was a particular regard that must be paid to the rights arising from these different Supreme Court rulings for First Nations and Métis people, then maybe they could enlighten their Minister of the Environment to give some different answers in question period. Maybe they could tell their Minister of the Environment to practise something different as regards to the way that First Nations and Métis people are dealt with in terms of their

dealings with the government. If they think that's the case, they should enlighten their Minister of the Environment because that's not what's being practised in the name of that government, Mr. Speaker.

And it's interesting, Mr. Speaker, the different challenges that this province faces in terms of what constitutes progress and how we go forward together or how we drift further apart. And sometimes there are things that are done through the political process, and sometimes there are things that are done through the legal process. And progress is certainly not, is certainly not a straightforward thing in this province, Mr. Speaker.

But as regards better engaging First Nations and Métis people in the social and economic life of this province, they hold up a tremendous amount of hope for the duty to consult and accommodate process and partly because it's been demanded of all different levels of government by the Supreme Court.

So when they see what happens in practice with something like *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act* and how the rhetoric from that government when they were campaigning and the rhetoric from that government when they were meeting in conference two years ago, Mr. Speaker, and how that has fallen so, so drastically short of the reality of what is practised in this case by the Minister of the Environment as regards *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*, as regards them upholding their part in the duty to consult and accommodate process, it's not hard to understand the frustration that arises in the correspondence that we see from a person like Vice-chief Lyle Whitefish, who of course also has, in addition to his responsibilities for lands and resources, responsibility for the duty to consult and accommodate file.

And we see the frustration across the piece, Mr. Speaker, where you have the Minister of the Environment stand up in the committee and say that, well we cancelled the environmental protocol because you don't need this capacity on the part of the FSIN. And we read between the lines, Mr. Speaker, and it's pretty plain that the FSIN was disagreeing with the actions of the government. So we think this is a means by which, if you don't agree with us, then we'll pull your funding. And, you know, we've seen that from different governments over the years.

But as regards the answer that is given by the Minister of the Environment when it comes to putting forward funds under the environmental protocol, that minister says, well there's no need for that. There's a \$3 million consultation fund over in First Nations and Métis Relations.

And we've seen different ministers over there make a big deal about how this was such a great thing in terms of the money being put forward for consultation under the duty to consult and accommodate, and what great people they were, Mr. Speaker. But it's always interesting to find out what the rhetoric is and what the actual actions are, and what the gap is between those, Mr. Speaker. And in this case the gap that exists between the rhetoric on the consultation fund and the practice in reality is worth about \$2.4 million, Mr. Speaker.

Because last year the \$3 million that was heralded in the budget and in the different estimates that we heard throughout the

House and as it relates very much to *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act* and the process therein, there was \$3 million put forward, but you know what? Come the end of the year, Mr. Speaker, there was \$2.4 million of that, nearly \$2.4 million of that, that went inaccessible for First Nations and Métis people in this province.

So again there's, there's consultation that is preached. There is funding that is put forward as being proof positive of their commitment to the consultation process, but when it comes time for the cash to get on the dash, we find out that 80 per cent of it was held back by that government, Mr. Speaker. And of course we see the same game being played again this year.

We see another \$3 million being brought forward. So a year's time from now, Mr. Speaker, what's the guess in terms of how much of that money will actually find its way to First Nations and Métis people to help them do their part in the duty to consult and accommodate process? You know. What's the betting line on that, Mr. Speaker? Because this year it was 80 per cent that they held back, and you talk to them in committee about it and the prognostication and the thought on the part of the officials and the minister is that, well you know, maybe it was the economic slowdown and there weren't that many people interested as a result in duty to consult and accommodate, but you know, it defies belief, Mr. Speaker, that members opposite would make that argument with a straight face.

Because if they're doing their job, if they're getting out across the province and talking to First Nations and Métis people, they know that the duty to consult and accommodate is a hugely important file to those people, and that if they're not applying for the funds or if they're not able to access the dollars, there's something wrong there, Mr. Speaker. So when you ask the minister, is it a problem with the fund, you know, any fund that you put up that 80 per cent of the dollars in it go unaccessed, you know, what's wrong there? And the minister doesn't really have an answer.

Well you'll forgive the opposition, Mr. Speaker, but we think the answer's pretty plain. We think it's part of a pattern of action over there, Mr. Speaker, where they say consultation, where they preach consultation, but what they practise is something very different.

And in terms of, in terms of this consultation fund, you know, what better example is there of a fund where you put forward \$3 million with great fanfare and you pat yourselves on the back for it, you know, the length and breadth of this Assembly. But when it comes time to actually flow the dollars and allow people to access the resources to get their job done under the duty to consult and accommodate process, you don't flow the dollars and 80 per cent of it — \$2.4 million of it — goes unspent.

And then it gets rolled over into this year, Mr. Speaker, and it's another \$3 million. And aren't we great people, and we can't wait for the exploratory table process. And they'll announce that they're going to be releasing the final guidelines, you know, before year's end, and they're going to be providing the guidelines in April, and they're going to be providing the guidelines in May.

And you know I think one of the things they're waiting for, Mr. Speaker, is that they're waiting to provide the guidelines after this Assembly has closed. And of course the opportunity for the official opposition and the people of Saskatchewan to give the measure full scrutiny of course is diminished when this House is not in session. And you know, they've got a minister that likes to pull a bit of a Columbo routine in terms of, you know, I don't know what's really happening with this file, but we'll see what happens.

What happens, Mr. Speaker, is that the House closes and the opportunities to provide scrutiny are diminished, diminished for the people of Saskatchewan and diminished for those that are interested in what happens with the final guidelines around duty to consult and accommodate.

So again, Mr. Speaker, it's kind of appalling that the government would act in this manner, but it's not particularly surprising, particularly given the minister that's leading on this file, the Minister of the Environment. The Minister for First Nations and Métis Relations in discussion in the committee last night, there were points at which it wasn't particularly clear whether or not the minister understood duty to consult and accommodate period, Mr. Speaker.

And again we find that kind of alarming on the opposition side in terms of, you know, if the minister doesn't understand the file, what does that mean if that's the guardian that's on point for making sure that all the other ministries and agencies of the provincial government live up to their duty to consult? Is this something that's farmed out to officials or is it something that they farmed out, you know, good luck or fate or fortune? Is that how they're dealing with it, or is it something where they think that again because they're not doing their job right in the first place, Mr. Speaker, then if people have to find their recourse in the courts, then that's how they'll get things sorted out.

And again, Mr. Speaker, that's an approach that smacks of the complete opposite of what was promised in the 2007 election in terms of providing leadership on the duty to consult and accommodate file. The members opposite, of course we know they talk a good game when it comes to consultation. When it comes to practising it though, Mr. Speaker, it's something else entirely.

And it leads you to wonder, in terms of the vaunted promise list that those members keep on the website, you know, at what point do they take things down? Because on this file, you've got one of the key partners in this legislation saying they were not consulted. And you've got that government over there patting themselves on the back for, you know, job well done on consultation and providing leadership on the duty to consult and accommodate file. And what is held up as proof for that, Mr. Speaker, is the fact they held a conference two years ago. And since that time, Mr. Speaker, it's been round and round and round it goes, but we've seen the list of grievances pile up in terms of people that are not getting their rights addressed in terms of the duty to consult and accommodate.

And again I'm interested in this in particular from the perspective of the First Nations and Métis Relations critic for the official opposition, Mr. Speaker. But I know that there are many, many other groups that the Minister of the Environment

says have been consulted on *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*. But in fact, they come forward and say that's not the case. That's not what happened. You saw the unusual step of two former ministers of the Crown in this House, Mr. Speaker, come forward in the person of Lorne Scott, the former member for Indian Head-Milestone and Colin Maxwell, the former member from Shellbrook, I believe, Mr. Speaker.

[15:00]

And the former minister of the then Devine government that brought this legislation in in 1984, you saw Colin Maxwell come forward and condemn what had been done by this government to this point on this legislation. And he took pains, and you know he took pains to compliment the Premier and say, you know, in other regards I think he's a great person and all of that. But it was a very unusual thing to hear Colin Maxwell on the morning CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] radio saying what they're doing on *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act* is wrong.

That they've got a former colleague of theirs, a former member of this Assembly that you'd think would've been one of their brothers in arms over there, when people like that come forward and say, you've got it wrong, you've got to step back and you've got to get this right, it should give them pause for thought, Mr. Speaker.

I know they would . . . They've liked to pay attention to, you know, some of the things that former minister Lorne Scott, minister of the Environment Lorne Scott has done. Some of the things they like, some of the things they don't, but for the most part, there's that partisan treatment that's given of the man. But this is a fellow who's got the Order of Canada for the work that he's done around conservation, around preserving habitat, who's devoted his life's work to habitat protection and to the wildlife of this province and who's garnered the Order of Canada for it, as just the foremost of the different accommodations that he's been provided for his work.

So you'd think when somebody like that spoke up on this file, that would give them some pause for thought. But of course it doesn't. You would think that when the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation speaks up and says, you've got it wrong on this legislation, you've got to take a step back and get this right, because of course once you lose these lands, that's it forever for those lands. You'd think that when the Wildlife Federation stands up and says, what are you doing on this file, you'd think they would, that would give them some pause for thought.

So you know, in terms of the Wildlife Federation; in terms of, you know, former notable individuals that have made a great contribution to the province through their activities in this Chamber and through their public policy work over the years, Mr. Speaker; in terms of the different organizations that are interested in this legislation; and in terms of a group like the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations and First Nations across this province that have not just a philosophical interest in this, Mr. Speaker, they have a constitutional interest, a constitutional right to have their interests addressed in this process, and if the government's not doing that in *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*, of course we as the opposition are going to fight it. So again, Mr. Speaker, I think I've registered how

strongly I disagree with the approach of the government on this legislation.

How interesting it is that they seem to bring together what is usually a fairly disparate group of interests, Mr. Speaker, in terms of their disagreement with the approach of the government on this part. I think I've pointed out the chasm that exists between the promises of consultation on the one hand and the actual practice of what goes on with that government and that Minister of the Environment on the other. And as such, Mr. Speaker, I'm going cede the floor so that another of my colleagues can take his place and to express a few more things on this legislation.

But again, if this government was listening to what people had to say; if they were interested in doing, doing it right and not just ramming it home; if they were interested in giving public policy its due and not just making a mockery of a genuine consultative process, they'd be pulling this Bill. They'd be scratching their heads and they'd be going back to the drawing board to make right the problems that are glaring in this legislation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Quennell: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise again to speak on *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Amendment Act*. Some in the legislature, in the Chamber may recall, in respect to a piece of legislation that we debated at some length earlier respecting a heritage day for trapping, hunting, and fishing, I spoke at some length, considerable length — and some members may think too long — about the effect that human beings have had on the environment in Saskatchewan. And I'm going to return to that theme again. I think it's appropriate in respect to this legislation because it's because of those effects that the original legislation was brought into, enacted and brought into effect. And it's because of those effects and concern about those effects that we have concerns about the legislation proposing the amendment, Mr. Speaker.

Now certainly there's been some scholarship recently about the fact that modification and change to the natural environment of the Americas and North America in particular did not begin with European settlement, that there was significant modification of the environment by the actions of the Aboriginal people, maybe not so much on the prairies, but certainly on the prairies, but even more so in respect to agricultural communities throughout Eastern Canada and the eastern United States long before European settlement.

But with the arrival of the Europeans, that modification of the natural environment proceeded apace and picked up considerable speed. And in the time, in the 100 years or more since the Prairies have come under the plow and agricultural development began in this province and in our sister provinces Alberta and Manitoba, there has been considerable modification of the natural environment in Saskatchewan. The breadbasket of the world meant that other things that did grow here were no longer growing here and that the environment was dramatically changed to achieve that title for the province of Saskatchewan and indeed for Canada. And it was a significant part of the Canadian role in the expanding British Empire, the providing of

cereal crops to Europe.

And it wasn't just a case of some types of wildlife no longer being able to find habitat in Saskatchewan, such as bison, but they changed the type of wildlife that was in the province. So a province that would not have had, for the most part, whitetail deer or raccoons or red foxes, many birds found a home here when the landscape was changed when agriculture broke up the land. And many of the animals that we think of as native to the province, and the whitetail deer in particular as a provincial animal, were relatively foreign to the province prior to the breaking up of the land and the modification of the province of Saskatchewan.

And this is an historical and given fact and can't be reversed, and no one is suggesting that it can be or should be or that it would be desirable to do that. But in the early days of agriculture, when the attempt was made to maximize the production of the province as a whole and the production of any particular landholding, marginal lands or what we would now call marginal lands were cleared. They were ploughed and they were seeded. And that practice continues, Mr. Speaker, somewhat abated now.

And the development of modern fertilizers, pesticides, as controversial as they sometimes might be, and even bio-engineering makes good land more productive and able to feed a larger group of people. And many of those almost industrial developments in respect to pesticides and in respect to fertilizers and in respect to bio-engineering are arguably — and some would argue quite strenuously — good for the environment because they make productive land more productive and therefore put less demand on the need to cultivate marginal land.

The fact is before the development of and widespread use of many of those techniques, much marginal land was also converted to agriculture in Saskatchewan, and a lot of wetland, as we know, was drained throughout the province. And maps that groups like Ducks Unlimited will show of aerial maps — so even the early ones are relatively recent in time because obviously they were taken from aircraft, Mr. Speaker — but aerial maps even a decade apart will show a tremendous amount of wetlands in the earlier photos that have disappeared in the later photos as a result of drainage.

And I think the province found itself by the 1970s with a lot of marginal land in production, a lot of wetlands drained and concern — that I don't think was partisan, Mr. Speaker — that wildlife habitat was not sufficiently protected in the province of Saskatchewan. And we found ourselves in this province with perhaps one of the most modified landscapes in North America, at least south of the treeline, one of the most modified landscapes in North America. And people who live in Saskatchewan don't think of it as that case.

You can drive from one city to the next, and it takes a considerable amount of time to do that. And you drive past a landscape that's not like a European landscape at all in that there are not homes and dwellings all the way along. The settlement ends, and after driving past only farm yards for a considerable period of time and at a great distance, settlement starts up again. But that is not a natural landscape. But it

appears to be a natural landscape, and it's the subject of great works of art by Saskatchewan landscape artists. But it is actually a very modified landscape compared to many parts of North America, many parts of Canada, except for perhaps the more northern part.

But certainly the southern part of the province, the very southern part of the province, Mr. Speaker, is one of the most modified landscapes in the country. And it's partly the breaking of, and the cultivation of, and the seeding and planting of crops on a great amount of land, including some that was marginal, and has now — some of it — been returned to a more natural state and the drainage of a large amount of water from the landscape.

But a while back when we had a great crop here, destroyed by rain in the fall — and, Mr. Speaker, you will recall that probably even more acutely than I do — that year it was in some ways a revenge of the ducks because you can drain the water but you can't stop it from coming down. It's going to settle somewhere. And indeed we've seen in prairies where these drainage issues do cause problems because places where the water did go, it can't go any more. And I know it's a sore point often in rural Saskatchewan about where drained water does go, Mr. Speaker.

But the large scale, the large scale effectively is to dramatically change the nature of the Saskatchewan environment. And because of this extensive agricultural development over a century, we have seen 75 per cent of the natural areas in agricultural region disappear to cultivation or had seen this by the end of the 1970s, Mr. Speaker. And other developments as well as agriculture contributed to this, roads obviously, towns, cities.

Between 1976 and 1981, according Saskatchewan Environment at the time, in those five years, Saskatchewan lost 2 million acres of natural landscape. So the process of breaking land and putting it to agriculture that began at the end of the 19th century with the coming of the railway, in particular, continued the pace. And it was not a century-old activity that just reached a plateau and a status quo. It continued on into the '70s and into the early '80s.

[15:15]

And it was a Progressive Conservative government that saw the need to conserve the land that was left. What did survive was a habitat for over 400 species of wildlife. You don't get the kind of biodiversity in a province like Saskatchewan, an area like Saskatchewan that you do in a rainforest, Mr. Speaker. I expect that there are areas the size of this room, the size of this Chamber in Amazon rainforests that have over 400 different species in them. You've got to get less diversity as you move either north or south from the rainforests of the equatorial areas.

But still even after the record of human activity on the Saskatchewan landscape, still a varied and a diverse environment for wildlife and a varied and diverse collection of wildlife in the province, but living on one-quarter of its previous habitat by 1981, Mr. Speaker. And so it was a Progressive Conservative government, to use the proper term, that brought in *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act* in 1984.

And what was significant of course and not surprising at all, Mr. Speaker — and I suppose it's this reason why there is concern amongst First Nations, concerns amongst conservation groups, and concerns amongst the opposition about the legislation now before the legislature — this wildlife habitat, much of it, was Crown land.

Now the previous NDP government, the government previous to the one that is now in power here, provided for private land that was crucial to wildlife habitat, particularly wetlands, particularly in the migratory routes to be available for easements, easements only by Ducks Unlimited which, you know, brought those conservation dollars into the province to preserve those lands on private land. And I think a win-win, Mr. Speaker.

But there was a recognition in the '80s that much of this land is not private land, much of this land is Crown land, and these natural areas are very important for maintaining wildlife populations as most land, two-thirds of the land base south of the treeline, south of the forest fringe is privately owned. So you have a situation south of the treeline where, not unexpectedly, the majority of the land, two-thirds of it is already privately owned, where little of that privately owned land is wildlife habitat. Some of it is, but most of the wildlife habitat is on the one-third of the land that is Crown land south of the forest fringe, and that represents much of the one-quarter of land that is the original habitat for wildlife in the province.

So in 1984 the Progressive Conservative government initiated a conservation process by passing *The Critical Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*, which is now known as *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act* and which this government wishes to substantially change — in effect, reverse the effect of the Act. Because the legislation that was passed in 1984 was meant to preserve the land, maintain it as Crown land, and prevent the government from selling the land. Or if the land was sold, to ensure the protection . . . the purchase of new land. That was later called the net loss policy, that even if land was lost from Crown land that other land would come in and be protected, Mr. Speaker.

The legislation protected 3.4 million acres of uplands and wetlands or one-third of all wildlife habitat in the agricultural region in its natural state. And protection of the lands was seen by the government under this Act as a cost-effective wildlife habitat conservation program. And because it didn't require the purchase of land or the purchase of easements on lands, it was obviously fairly cost-effective. What had not been lost to the point of 1984 could now be saved and preserved.

One of the reasons that people defend Teddy Roosevelt being on Mount Rushmore, Mr. Speaker, is arguably without his foresight millions and millions and millions of acres of natural habitat in the United States would be privately owned and would not be in the state that it's in.

Similar foresight was shown by the Progressive Conservative government in 1984. And some would argue that if that foresight had been shown in '74 or '64, we would be the better for it. And I would not argue with that, Mr. Speaker. But as I've said here before and probably say again, given the opportunity, the best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago and the second best

time is today. And today was 1984, and that's when the tree that was *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act* was planted, Mr. Speaker.

Now this government — some would say a successor in some ways to that Progressive Conservative government of the '80s, unfortunately, usually in bad ways, Mr. Speaker — this government on this opportunity to be conservative, to conserve, as with their opportunity to be fiscally conservative, decided not to give meaning to that word conservative at all, Mr. Speaker, and would seek to reverse the effect of the legislation that was brought in in 1984 by a Progressive Conservative government.

The original legislation, Mr. Speaker, as we all know, prevents the government from selling designated Crown land. And that is the case unless and until this legislation is passed that is now before the Chamber and lessees require permission before any clearing, breaking, or drainage occurs. And I've spoken of the issues that are raised by clearing and breaking the land or even the drainage of land. And the philosophy of the Act, the current Act — not the legislation before the House but of the current legislation — is to conserve wildlife habitat while enabling compatible traditional uses to coexist.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when my colleague from Regina Elphinstone raises the concerns of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, it's about the changes to legislation and the disrespect that is shown for the right to traditional uses of the land and how these changes are being made and that disrespect being shown with what the minister will now acknowledge wasn't consultation but was perhaps notification, Mr. Speaker. But notification, while we're all notified when legislation is brought before the Chamber, notification is not consultation. And I think the members of the government are actually starting to appreciate that that's been a failure of their government.

The original legislation, the legislation currently in place, supports agriculture uses and actually supports petroleum activities in certain cases, Mr. Speaker. The lands are leased mainly to cattle producers who use them for grazing or haying. And the proposal of the government is that this land instead of being owned by all the people of Saskatchewan and leased to people who are free to use it for the purposes that they have traditionally have used it for — and the same purposes they would use it for if they owned it, Mr. Speaker, one would hope — that it be transferred to those smaller group of people, not the entire people of the province, to own it and to be able therefore to alienate the land, to be able to sell the land, to sell the land to other owners who would be able to do anything with the land, subject to the Crown easements, on the conservation easements on the land.

And we appreciate that the government has brought forward parallel perhaps legislation, sister legislation in the conservation easements legislation, the conservation easements Bill that's been brought before the House, Mr. Speaker. But I know the opposition can't speak for the conservation groups on this specific issue, Mr. Speaker. I don't know what their views are on this specific issue. But I know we in the opposition would be more comfortable with the legislation that I am now discussing if the conservation easement provisions weren't in a separate Bill, were in this Bill, and had some kind of preemptory or

presumption to them, Mr. Speaker, that there would be some presumption that there would be such an easement on land that was sold by the government.

Not because we are concerned about the activities of the current lessees, Mr. Speaker. I hope that we have made it clear speaker after speaker, both on the legislation and in question period, made it clear we're not concerned about the activities of the current occupants of the land. Mr. Speaker, we are concerned about activities of subsequent owners, and I think properly so, Mr. Speaker, and nobody would suggest that we shouldn't be. And that's why there is, at the same time or in the same sitting as we see this legislation, the conservation easement legislation.

But we have to ask the question as to why that legislation is separate and why there is no presumption that when this land is sold it would be subject to an easement, and if it's not subject to an easement, certain conditions have to be met in respect to that land; that land has to be of a certain kind.

There has to be a reason why land that a Progressive Conservative government in 1984 thought should be protected and owned by the Crown generation after generation after generation should be sold and not subject to an easement, a conservation easement of any kind, Mr. Speaker.

There should be an explanation of why that would be case, and there will be no explanation, Mr. Speaker. The majority in this House, the Saskatchewan Party government will pass the conservation easement Bill, whatever we may think about that over here. And I don't think we have any difficulty with that legislation necessarily, Mr. Speaker. And they will pass this Bill amending *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*, Mr. Speaker, because they are the majority and they will do that. And they don't seem to be willing to withdraw the Bill. They don't seem to be willing to consult with people they have failed to consult, Mr. Speaker.

And so subject or failing that withdrawal of the Bill, to have that discussion which we would encourage and have encouraged this government to do, failing that, Mr. Speaker, then this legislation will become law very, very soon, and there will be no guarantee of protection.

There is waved by the minister a veil of the conservation easements. But that's the minister who called notification consultation. So we don't necessarily have a lot of confidence in how the minister will exercise her powers. And we have no idea who the successor to the minister will be and how he or she will use their powers and whether they have any intention of using their powers in respect to the conservation easement, Mr. Speaker, or whether the conservation easement is so much smoke and mirrors to make the . . . the sugar to make this medicine go down, Mr. Speaker. But we'll in fact, we will not see a lot of sugar after this medicine is going down. People will just have to take the bitter taste of it. That is our concern.

The lessees, the occupants of the land who were using the land at the time of the 1984 Act, did not notice a change. The land was Crown land before the 1984 legislation was passed. It was Crown land after the 1984 legislation was passed. And the legislation did not prevent them from carrying on the activities they had traditionally carried on on the land. Leases were

renewed and transferred as in the past, and very little effect on daily operations. Fencing took place, dugout construction took place without any questions, without any reference to what was then the Department of the Environment.

Oil and gas companies still explored and drilled, although there was — as farmers have too, Mr. Speaker, and the people of Saskatchewan should have as well as farmers — concerns about damage to the surface. And to suggest that only on these lands were oil companies required to do very little damage to the surface, we would hope that would be the case on privately owned land as well, Mr. Speaker. But that was certainly meant to be the case in the case of the wildlife habitat land.

[15:30]

Back in the '80s, there were a number of plants and animals in the province that were already under risk and were species at risk under the provisions of *The Wildlife Act*. Some no longer existed in the province of Saskatchewan. Some were endangered and threatened to no longer be able to exist in the province of Saskatchewan, and usually not because — well never because — of hunting, Mr. Speaker, but because of loss of habitat. And some were likely to become endangered if they hadn't already been removed from the province.

Some of these are quite common — the whooping crane, the burrowing owl — quite common in that we know, it's commonly known what animals are included in this list. Not that the animals themselves are common; that would be a contradiction. Swift fox, black-footed ferret, plains grizzly bear — which is not a very well-liked animal necessarily, Mr. Speaker, in particular but in general I think is considered to be a unique creature and we wouldn't want to see its loss any more than we'd want to see one in our backyard.

And this legislation that was brought in, I think, Mr. Speaker, probably had the support of the ranchers who leased the lands because they and the government and the legislature all agreed on the values of the lands, on the value of the traditional activities and the fact that the legislation would not conflict with those activities and preserving our protection of that land, Mr. Speaker.

And to cast our minds back to the political situation in 1984, we will remember that there were, I think, eight opposition members in this House and most of them represented, not all of them — the one exception would be Pelly that I can think of — but most of those members would have represented urban ridings and the government would have represented most of rural Saskatchewan, almost all of rural Saskatchewan, and then, as now, represent a lot of areas, Mr. Speaker, where these lands exist.

And so when this legislation was brought in 1984 by a Progressive Conservative government that represented these areas where this Crown land was, one can imagine that, speculate that, this legislation had the support of those members and had probably the support of their constituents. And so the affected people supported, supported the legislation, Mr. Speaker.

So all that makes us wonder why the need for change. Why a

new government, relatively new government, less than three years old now, would reject the good conservative principles, conservation principles contained in the legislation brought in in 1984 by a Progressive Conservative government. Why, without consultation with conservation groups, including a spokesperson for those groups who was the minister of the Environment in a Progressive Conservative government that brought in the original legislation, why they would proceed without consulting with those groups. Why a government that is quite fond of the slogan — in opposition, now in government — duty to consult . . . Maybe they're getting a little less fond of this slogan, Mr. Speaker, but they were very fond of this slogan.

Why they would, as my colleague from Regina Elphinstone pointed out, refuse, refuse to discuss this legislation and its impact on other traditional users, the First Nations of Saskatchewan with their government, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations. Why is this the circumstance, Mr. Speaker?

And what the opposition wants to do with this Bill, Mr. Speaker, is give the government an opportunity. And they'll be given another opportunity this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, because we are declining to move this Bill to committee. We are giving the government an opportunity to actually consult on this Bill, Mr. Speaker. There is no doubt an argument that government would want to make beyond the minister's second reading speech as to why these things have to be done.

And again, I find myself lecturing a conservative government on conservative principles. And they are sister principles, Mr. Speaker: if it ain't broke, don't fix it; and the law of unintended consequences, Mr. Speaker. What, in the legislation brought in by a Progressive Conservative government that has protected over 3 million acres of wildlife habitat . . . And it sounds like a lot, Mr. Speaker, but at the beginning of my remarks, I spoke about the dramatic changes that have been made to the landscape of Saskatchewan, the fact that it's one of the most modified landscapes by human beings on the continent.

What about legislation that protects over 3 million acres, slightly over 3 million acres of wildlife habitat, what about that legislation is broken, Mr. Speaker? I think that's the first question the government should have answered.

What about the current status quo . . . I guess that's redundant, Mr. Speaker. What about the status quo is broken? What about the status quo is wrong? What evil does the government seek to remedy? Why is the government tinkering with this legislation that has served the interests of conservation groups, the users of the land, the public as a whole?

And I know the minister doesn't like to be accused of secretive, but it's clear from the communications we received, it's clear from the communications that have been made publicly — and I won't go back to the editorial that I read into the record last time I spoke on the Bill, Mr. Speaker — but it's clear that conservation groups were not consulted, this discussion hasn't taken place, so why the rush? If not the secrecy, Mr. Speaker — I know the minister objected to that word — but if not the secrecy, why the rush? And why are we doing this at all?

And that's got to be part of the debate, Mr. Speaker. And if

members of the government don't want to rise in the House and say, this is why we need to fix this, this is what is broken, then surely that's a discussion that they should be willing to have with the public, Mr. Speaker. If they're not willing to withdraw the Bill and have this discussion with the conservation groups and others who they should have consulted in the first place, then surely the government can commit itself to public hearings when the matter proceeds to committee.

We haven't had enough public discussion in committee on Bills, Mr. Speaker. I can think of two or three Bills that the government sent to committee for public hearings that were Justice Bills when I was Justice minister. But we haven't taken advantage of that process to a great extent. I think this Bill cries out for it, Mr. Speaker.

The second principle, the law of unintended consequences. If there's no glaring evil to be remedied, if there's nothing obviously broken to be fixed, then the risk one takes when making dramatic changes is that there will be consequences intended or else the consequence is unintended, Mr. Speaker. I don't really believe it's the consequence of the government to eliminate crucial, vital, wildlife habitat and to see more species of plants or animals disappear from the province. I don't think that's their intention, Mr. Speaker.

But things happen that we intend to happen, and things happen that we don't intend to happen. And the danger that things will happen that we don't intend and don't desire — on either side of this House — of happening when we make changes, are there. And you have to assess the risk of doing that, and maybe the government has done this risk assessment and consider it to be acceptable. But acceptable for what benefit, Mr. Speaker? Which takes me back to the sister principle: if it ain't broke, don't fix it.

So, Mr. Speaker, I know that there are other members of the Assembly who want to speak on the legislation this afternoon and I want to allow them to do that. I've now had two opportunities to speak, the first time on the public reaction to the legislation as described in a *StarPhoenix* editorial, and today at a little bit greater length about the reasons for the original legislation and the questions we have about the need for change.

And I expect that those aren't the only concerns. The member from Regina Elphinstone had other concerns that he spoke to. There are a wide variety of concerns in the public and represented, I think, well on the opposition benches, Mr. Speaker. And because of those concerns, I again take the opportunity to suggest that the government take the opportunity that the opposition intends to provide once again this afternoon to reconsider its actions, look at withdrawing the Bill, and participating in some real public consultation, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Broten: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure this afternoon to stand and join in on the debate on Bill 132, *An Act to amend The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts*. Mr. Speaker, it's a piece of legislation that a good number of us here in the Assembly have had the opportunity to speak to, and I'm pleased

to be able to do so after the member from Saskatoon Meewasin and the member from Regina Elphinstone have made comments earlier today.

And it's a topic, Mr. Speaker, that we've had the chance to speak to on other days through adjourned debates as well as through question period. Because it's clear, Mr. Speaker, that this issue is one that is important to Saskatchewan people. It's important to the leaders in the province as policy makers, individuals setting the course for what this province can and should and will look like in the years to come.

It's an issue that affects many individuals in the province from different walks of life, individuals that may have a direct tie to a specific piece of land or individuals who simply are members of Saskatchewan society, citizens living in this province who care about the province, care about the assets, care about the things that are owned collectively as a group, things that belong to them, just as, Mr. Speaker, any individual cares about the house they may own or the car that they drive or their possessions.

When we have any sort of discussion about what is termed Crown land or land that the people own, land that belongs to the people of Saskatchewan belongs to everyone, everyone who is from here and who lives here. It's an important issue, just as if we were talking about a piece of land that was owned by simply one individual. A fact that more people own this land does not in any way diminish the importance of it. In fact it actually increases the importance of the debate because it's an issue that affects everyone.

[15:45]

Mr. Speaker, it's clear that in our province, the people of Saskatchewan, we have a great love for our province. We love the many different aspects about living in Saskatchewan. And for many people, Mr. Speaker, that love for our province is because of the people that we know. Maybe it's friends, family, Mr. Speaker. It might be because of the experiences that we've had. But whatever the main reason is that generates a love that we might have for Saskatchewan, in all of those stories I think, Mr. Speaker, the land that we enjoy, the land that we live on certainly plays a major part about that, in generating that kind of love that we have for our province. And everyone's affection for this province I think is tied to some degree to the land, to the place that we live, to the experiences that we've had, to the things that we see on a daily basis.

And I mean a good reminder of that, Mr. Speaker, is that here in this Assembly we're not commonly referred to according to our names, our Christian names, the names that are given to us by our parents when we're born, but we're referred to by the geographical area that we represent. So I'm the member for Saskatoon Massey Place. And whether we're the member for Massey Place or a rural area like Wood River or a smaller city like Moose Jaw or North Battleford, Mr. Speaker, it's clear that we have an attachment to the land that we are from. It's an important thing. This largely comes out of — and this isn't unique to just Saskatchewan — I think wherever people are living, we often have interaction and a connection with the landscape with the place that we are from.

The member from Lakeview, who is fond of reading poetry

here in the Assembly often will read a poem or a piece of literature that has some sort of connection, speaks to in some way the attachment someone has to the land, or an experience that they've had while living on the land. And if you think of any of the authors, the artists, anyone involved in the arts, it's quite common, Mr. Speaker, that the art that they generate, the art that they create is greatly influenced by the land that we live on.

I think for probably all members in this Assembly whose family roots go back further than one generation, for most of us, Mr. Speaker, we have a connection to the land. Land was a reason, Mr. Speaker, that for those of us that aren't of Aboriginal heritage, land was the reason, Mr. Speaker, that most people came west or from a different direction, but most of the reason that people came to Saskatchewan. So we have a deep connection to the land.

For me, Mr. Speaker, my grandparents and great-grandparents on opposite sides, one group homesteaded near Viscount, so our family has a connection to the land there. My other family, Mr. Speaker, homesteaded in the Ardath area, near Outlook. So there's a connection there. And while that story might be special to me, it's not a unique story, Mr. Speaker, because we could ask around this Assembly or ask anyone on the street and for most of us, Mr. Speaker, we do in fact have an attachment to the land. It's something that's important for people. It's something that we care about.

So over the years, Mr. Speaker, while some people in this Assembly and in this province most certainly are directly tied to the land in the way that they make their living — whether that is through agriculture or whether that is through, in the North through hunting, fishing, trapping, Mr. Speaker — we have the attachment to the land because of our heritage and because of the daily activities that we still are engaged in in doing on a routine basis.

So, Mr. Speaker, whenever we consider a piece of legislation that does have some sort of impact on the land, on how land is owned here in the province, how it is enjoyed by all, I think it surely is a piece of legislation that will generate debate, will create some discussion because people will have opposing views. And I think when that discussion occurs it's important to have a thorough examination of what is the motivation, what is the rationale behind a proposed piece of legislation.

So, Mr. Speaker, even if we're not living on the land in the sense that some of us may no longer live on a farm — I know some members here in the Assembly do — we still are . . . the memories that we generate, the good experiences that we have with family and friends still certainly involves the land, often enjoyment of the land on Crown land, land that is owned by everyone. So whether that is engaged in hunting with family and friends, whether that's hiking, whether that's simply enjoying the many parts of the province, I think, Mr. Speaker, it's a good thing that people can develop an appreciation for Saskatchewan by spending time exploring the many nooks and crannies and hidden gems of the province.

That's a great thing, Mr. Speaker, about being an MLA is that it does provide some opportunity to travel to different parts of the province where we don't always get to go. Often, I doubt I'm

alone in this experience, but sometimes when we grow up in one particular place, we don't have the opportunity to explore our own backyards in the same way that we probably should. And I know most individuals have spent time travelling different parts of the country, different provinces or overseas, but we haven't done the exploration maybe that we should in our own backyard.

And as an MLA we do get the opportunity to travel to different constituencies and see different parts of the province where we don't travel on a regular basis. And it's an important step to do because it is part of the process of generating a love, an appreciation, and just as importantly, Mr. Speaker, a better understanding of what our neighbours, our fellow residents of Saskatchewan experience. So that if one individual is from an urban area and they have the opportunity to travel to a rural area, they can experience what life is like, gain a better insight to some of the challenges and positive things going on in a particular area, and of course the other way around as well.

So when we have a discussion about changing, Mr. Speaker, how land is owned, how land is controlled here in the province, as I said it's something that generates debate. Because whether we have family roots tied to a piece of land, whether we currently have a strong attachment to a particular piece of land because it's how we make our living, or whether, Mr. Speaker, it's simply how we enjoy our lifestyle here in the province through whatever pursuit, exploring whatever corner of the province, it's clear that the land plays a very important role.

And it's because of this understanding, Mr. Speaker, that land is so important. And the land that is owned collectively by everyone in the province, the land that belongs to every person regardless of what walk of life we come from, whether we are an urban person or a rural person, whether we are a student, a business person, whether we're a civil servant, whatever our occupation and calling is in life, this is land that is owned collectively.

And I think in years prior, Mr. Speaker, when the initial legislation came into place that addressed the ownership of Crown land — land that is owned by everyone — there was an understanding, Mr. Speaker, an understanding of the importance of land that is owned by everyone. And as a consequence, the legislation that was put in place to control, to regulate, to ensure that what was owned collectively remained a collective asset for everyone in the province, there were steps taken to ensure that that was in fact done properly.

And for many years, over a number of jurisdictions and individuals from different political stripes, Mr. Speaker, policy was in place that ensured that the people of Saskatchewan, the land that we own collectively, the land that everyone owns, the land that everyone has an attachment to, the land that everyone receives a benefit from is in fact cared for and kept in a secure manner.

So it's interesting, Mr. Speaker, when the Sask Party government has recently brought forward Bill 132, *An Act to amend The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts*, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting to see their take, their new approach to how this sort of legislation ought to be. It was interesting to see their opinion;

their view of how this land should be treated; their view of how this land is valued by everyone in the province; their view on what steps, what changes should take place to create the kind of future that they think is appropriate with respect to land that is owned and enjoyed and appreciated by everyone in the province.

It was described, Mr. Speaker, in a newspaper article in the *Leader-Post* on April 26th as “the Saskatchewan Party government’s new approach.” And, Mr. Speaker, while certainly every government is entitled to take a new approach, every government is entitled to do things as they see fit because that is the prerogative of government, just in the same way, Mr. Speaker, it’s the role of the opposition and the role of civil society and everyone out in the public to respond as to whether or not they think a new approach is in fact an appropriate approach. Just because, Mr. Speaker, members opposite might have a new way of wanting to do something, a new approach of wanting to do something, simply because they received a majority in the election in 2007 in the fall doesn’t necessarily mean that their new approach is a sound one. It doesn’t mean that the new approach is a wise one. It doesn’t mean that the new approach is one that received proper consultation with Saskatchewan people.

And I think in the last few weeks, Mr. Speaker, we’ve seen a great amount of evidence where the government has adopted an approach where they are using the fact that they have a majority, the fact that they did receive a majority in the last provincial election, they’re using that, Mr. Speaker, as an excuse to not engage in the type of proper consultation, the proper kind of discussion that needs to occur with Saskatchewan people. And I know that is troubling for many Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, in having the opportunity to go through some of the previous content that has been discussed in the legislature with respect to Bill 132, as I said, it has proven to be a fairly controversial piece of legislation because people do have such a strong attachment to the land, do have such a strong attachment to what they own, to what we own collectively as a province. So it has generated debate.

So I read with interest, Mr. Speaker, some of the opening comments that were made by the minister when the piece of legislation was introduced to this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. And so the comments that I just recently made in addressing this idea of a new approach, on so many other fronts with the Sask Party government when dealing with this new approach, whenever they have a new idea of how something should or could be done as they see fit, there have certainly been some major flags raised by a number of people in the province on how this government undertakes a new approach, how they decide as a group of people that they want to pursue a new approach and deliver a new approach to the people of Saskatchewan.

It was interesting, Mr. Speaker, that this topic of raising a new approach and sharing it with Saskatchewan people, we saw, Mr. Speaker, on the issue of educational assistants, how when they had a new approach, Mr. Speaker, it was an approach that was photocopied in a document and mailed out to individuals throughout the province, Mr. Speaker. And this approach has to

do with the Minister of Education’s desire, as it stated in the document, to change the number of educational assistants operating throughout the province in a number of school regions, helping children who require the assistance that EAs [educational assistants] provide in a very professional and competent manner. And the type of new approach that was exhibited by the Sask Party government in sharing this new approach on educational assistants was one where consultation did not occur. An idea was developed in a document and simply mailed out, and then we saw what happened.

Well, Mr. Speaker, it was clear that the new approach was not an approach that was appreciated by the people of Saskatchewan because I know members of this Assembly — whatever side we are that we are from or sit on — heard a whole lot of feedback on the new approach, heard a whole lot of feedback on the failure of the Sask Party government to consult properly with Saskatchewan people.

So simply because, Mr. Speaker, a government received a majority at a particular time — in this case the fall of 2007 — this does not give them *carte blanche* to do whatever they want to do simply because they have the majority. It’s still necessary, Mr. Speaker, that proper consultation occurs and that the people of Saskatchewan are consulted when a piece of legislation that is controversial, that does have a great amount of bearing on the future of the province, when that is in fact considered. It’s necessary that consultation does occur.

[16:00]

While members opposite might say well he’s given one example to this failure to consult, and it has to do with the area of education. So that’s hardly building a case, they may say, that this problem is widespread throughout government ministries. Simply because it’s occurring perhaps in Environment — I’ll get to that in a moment — in Education, I wouldn’t say there is a mountain of evidence yet. This is what they might say, Mr. Speaker, on the opposite side.

Well let’s move from the Education portfolio to that of Health. When looking at this idea of a new approach to a different course . . . And as I said, Mr. Speaker, every government that has a majority, that has been chosen to govern, has the right and indeed the responsibility to bring forward a new approach. That’s why they are elected. But it’s how this new approach is delivered.

And so, Mr. Speaker, for a period of time the government had engaged in negotiations with chiropractors in the province with respect to the care that is provided to Saskatchewan people. The government provides a subsidy for the services, for individuals visiting a chiropractor, and the thinking goes, Mr. Speaker, that while this may cost money on one hand by having individuals that are in better health because they’re not missing work or they’re not showing up in the emergency room or they’re not visiting a family physician, they have a higher quality of life — this saves money in the long run. So while it may cost some on the one hand to subsidize the services of visiting the chiropractor, it makes sense in the long run because it saves money.

And again just as the issue with educational assistants, I know

many members in the Assembly on both sides received a great number of phone calls. And I had a great number of visits to my office as well with people coming in, patients of chiropractors concerned about the government's new approach on how they want to provide chiropractic services in the province.

And it was despite the fact that negotiations had occurred for a great deal of time, that chiropractors had come to the table in good faith and had bargained, had talked with government officials and hammered out a new deal and it was all ready to be penned, Mr. Speaker. It wasn't until the last moments before the budget that it was clear that that Sask Party government was going to walk away from the agreement that had been negotiated. No consultation with patients, Mr. Speaker. The written and oral statements that have been made by the association of chiropractors has been very critical on how they were dealt with, with respect to consultation, with respect to being treated fairly, with respect to engaging in the bargaining process in good faith — certainly not pleased on that front.

So members opposite may say, well simply because poor consultation with respect to a new approach, simply because it's occurred in the Ministry of Education, simply because it has occurred in the Ministry of Health, why would the member suggest that this is also occurring in the Ministry of Environment with respect to Bill 132? Well it doesn't take long, Mr. Speaker, if we look to another ministry going across the benches, I suppose from south to north, that if we first visit the Minister of Education, then visit the Minister of Health, and then go east a little ways, Mr. Speaker, we come to the Minister Responsible for SCN.

Now you would think, Mr. Speaker, that when we're looking at an issue that provides a great amount of value to the province in the same way that the land associated with Bill 132 provides a great amount of value for Saskatchewan people because of the attachment that we have to the landscape, the attachment we have to the province, to the dirt here in the province and the rocks and the trees and everything else in between, individuals may say, well how on earth can the member suggest that the role of SCN in the province is an important one and matters about how the government may pursue a new approach with respect to SCN? Well, Mr. Speaker, as we've seen by having people come to the gallery and rallies in the legislature and the Facebook group SCN Matters, from hearing from individuals involved in the industry, it's clear that on an economic front because of the jobs that are created and the investment that is attracted, excuse me, on a cultural front in terms of the stories that are told, often about the land that we hold so dear to ourselves as individuals and as families — it too matters.

So when the cut, Mr. Speaker, was made to turn the lights off at SCN, and then it comes out in subsequent weeks that there was no consultation with the actual board of SCN — the individuals taking on the responsibility of controlling SCN and setting its direction and making sure that it's successful — and not only consultation about the new approach with respect to killing SCN but with an absence of meetings in general over the last two ministers, Mr. Speaker, I think, on the cultural front, it's another prime example of how the government is using the majority that it received in 2007 as an excuse, as a rationale to abandon any type of proper consultation with the people of Saskatchewan on a number of fronts.

So now members opposite may say, well okay, the member from Saskatoon Massey Place has presented a fairly sound case on how there was a complete absence of consultation on the shutting down of SCN. The member from Saskatoon Massey Place may have given a pretty good story on how the major policy change in the number of educational assistants in the province was shared with the people of Saskatchewan, with the educators and the students in the province. And the members opposite may say, well the member from Saskatoon Massey Place has provided some strong evidence that poor consultation occurred with chiropractors and the patients of chiropractors in the province.

What type of evidence does the member from Saskatoon Massey Place have that a failure of consultation occurred on the environmental front with respect to Crown land, land that is owned by all Saskatchewan people, land that is going to be potentially affected by Bill 132?

Well, Mr. Speaker, if we look at the opening statements when Bill 132, *The Wildlife Habitat Protection (Land Designation) Amendment Act, 2009* was introduced by the Minister of the Environment, in the speech that was prepared . . . I haven't been a minister, Mr. Speaker, but I'm told that these speeches are often prepared by individuals in the ministry staff because we want to convey the important points, and then they'd of course be approved by the minister and the minister's immediate staff. I would assume that the minister would not come into the legislature reading a document for the first time. I would assume that the minister would be familiar with the content in the document. I assume that a competent minister, a minister doing his or her job, would read the document properly and know what they are saying, know what they are suggesting to be the actual fact of the situation.

I know they would be wanting to put forward information, Mr. Speaker, that does in fact reflect the actual story, information that would be backed up by the people that are being spoken of, information, Mr. Speaker, that would simply tell it like it is because on so many fronts, the examples that I gave — whether it was chiropractors, whether it was SCN, whether it's the educational assistants, Mr. Speaker — we see a new approach from the government where they are failing, in my opinion, to consult with Saskatchewan people and the relevant organizations involved with any particular issue. And they are instead simply using the election majority that they used in 2007 as an excuse to do whatever they want because of whoever they are friends with.

So I would assume, Mr. Speaker, that when the minister came into the Legislative Assembly on March 8th, 2007, and made comment on Bill no. 132, *The Wildlife Habitat Protection (Land Designation) Amendment Act, 2009*, I would assume, Mr. Speaker, that the individual, the Minister of the Environment, when she read the speech that was prepared for her and then approved by, I would assume, herself and perhaps some input from ministry officials or her immediate political staff around her — and I'm sure the Premier's office might have a say on what was in this speech as well — I would think, Mr. Speaker, when the minister would come into this legislature, rise to her feet and make comment on Bill no. 132, I would assume that the information she put forward would in fact be consistent with reality, with the facts.

So in the third paragraph of her speech, as it is recorded in *Hansard* on page 4004 on March 8th, 2010, the minister states:

This has been developed in consultation with a wide variety of stakeholders such as the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation, the Nature Conservancy of Canada, Nature Saskatchewan, Ducks Unlimited . . . The Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association, and the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities.

So, Mr. Speaker, these are the individuals that the minister, when she came into the Assembly, said that consultation did in fact occur with and that these individuals had been contacted in a meaningful way — consultation needing to be a meaningful thing, not simply a formality or a sending of an email perhaps.

So I would think, Mr. Speaker, with these organizations that have been listed by the minister, in these organizations where she stated that consultation did in fact occur, I would hope, Mr. Speaker, that when the minister embarks on this new approach, just as the Minister of Education embarked on a new approach with wanting to reduce the number of educational assistants, just as the Minister of Culture, Tourism and Parks engaged in a new approach in wanting to turn the lights off at SCN, just as, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health wanted to engage in a new approach in reducing or in eliminating a bargained agreement with the chiropractors and benefiting the patients here in the province, I would think, Mr. Speaker, that when the minister rose in the Assembly, spoke to Bill 132, her new approach would in fact have the type of consultation.

But sadly, Mr. Speaker, just as we saw with the Minister of Education with respect to a new policy on educational assistants, just as we saw with the Minister of Culture, Parks and Tourism with respect to turning the lights off at SCN, just as we saw, Mr. Speaker, with the Minister of Health breaking a deal with the chiropractors and reducing the quality of health care for Saskatchewan patients, I fear that the type of consultation that did occur with the Minister of Environment and relevant stakeholders was not an adequate, a thorough, and a comprehensive type of consultation but instead, Mr. Speaker, was a type of consultation that was inadequate, less than thorough in its enactment, and a type of consultation that did not allow the minister to hear the true views of the individuals being consulted.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's important because when a government simply uses a majority that they received in any given election and then takes a railroading approach on any particular issue ignoring what Saskatchewan people want, ignoring what is in the best interests of Saskatchewan people but for whatever political reason, whether it's a reason that's not known to individuals or whether it's a backroom reason, whether it's a reason for friends or reasons to perhaps address concerns only of one group, not looking at the collective concerns. Because remember, Mr. Speaker, when we're talking about Crown land, it's land that's owned by everyone. We need to keep a perspective that it's necessary to do what is right with that land for all Saskatchewan people, not only a select few.

So I would hope, Mr. Speaker, that . . . I would've hoped that the minister would've engaged in a more thorough and

comprehensive type of consultation. But as recent as question period earlier this afternoon, we saw the minister try to explain the type of consultations she had. And, Mr. Speaker, I recognize that consultation is not responding to every bit of information that is received. It's impossible, Mr. Speaker, to please everyone all the time. So on a given issue, it's true that not all feedback, not all input that will be received through consultation will be in favour of a position that a government wants to take. But when the amount of consultation . . . when proper consultation occurs, and there is a consistent concern being raised by a number of groups on a number of occasions in a number of places, I think, Mr. Speaker, that ought to be a concern for the Sask Party government. And it ought to be a concern for anybody who cares about democracy, transparency, and the things that are important to all Saskatchewan people.

[16:15]

So the minister claimed that consultation occurred with a wide variety of stakeholders, such as the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation, the Nature Conservancy of Canada, Nature Saskatchewan, Ducks Unlimited, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association, and the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities. Well, Mr. Speaker, if you look at some of the statements that have been made by these groups in recent days following the statements that the Minister of the Environment made in this Assembly, one interesting piece is a news release that was sent out actually today, Tuesday May 11th, by the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation. And the title, Mr. Speaker, of the news release reads, "The SWF opposes dismantling The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act."

And the news release, I think it's important to read, Mr. Speaker, because it speaks to the approach, this "new approach" that the Sask Party government seems to be taking time and time again on a number of ministries where they are failing to consult with people. And if they had properly consulted, Mr. Speaker, I think the speech that the Minister of the Environment gave on the day — I think it was March 8th when she made this speech — in the legislature, I think the speech that she provided would have better reflected the types of things she was hearing from a number of groups.

Now maybe her speech would have said, we've heard significant concerns from a number of organizations, organizations A, B, and C, but we've also heard supportive arguments made by groups F and G, and we've decided to go ahead anyway. But, Mr. Speaker, her comments didn't say that. Her comments, Mr. Speaker, were one-sided. And it was the type of statements that we've seen from a number of Sask Party ministers, where they're saying yes, we consulted, check. Here comes the bulldozer; here comes the legislation whether you like it or it, whether or not it's good and proper for the people of Saskatchewan.

And as a consequence, what we've seen in recent days, Mr. Speaker, following the statements the minister has made about this legislation, is that there are a number of groups raising a number of concerns about this piece of legislation. And these are concerns, Mr. Speaker, where the minister felt it was appropriate, as she indicated in question period today, to simply call a meeting at one given time and call it done, call it good.

I'll fire up the bulldozer, here comes the legislation whether or not it's a proper thing, whether or not it goes contrary to a number of policy directions for a previous administrations, going back to Grant Devine's Tories. So a significant departure from what has been done, this "new approach."

And what we've seen, Mr. Speaker, in recent days are groups coming forward saying, hold on. This minister talks about consultation. The Sask Party government talks about consultation, talks about talking to Saskatchewan people. But they're not listening to us, and they're not listening to the many other groups that have real and legitimate concerns about the legislation.

The Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation, the news release that was sent out earlier today, it reads:

The Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation (SWF) continues to have grave concerns surrounding the recent Legislation aimed at dismantling the Wildlife Habitat Protection Act (WHPA), the legislation that was created almost 30 years ago and is still considered to be one of the most visionary conservation programs ever developed in North America.

So 30 years ago, Mr. Speaker. Not quite my age but a significant amount of time. Longer than any one member has been here in this Assembly. Perhaps a few of the staff in the building have been serving here 30 years, Mr. Speaker, but in terms of MLAs sitting in this room, it's a piece of legislation that has a long, rich history here in the province, legislation that has served Saskatchewan people well — important legislation. And I think that is also something, Mr. Speaker, that really escapes members opposite, ministers opposite when they're engaged in any new approach. For example the new approach of the Health minister, the Education minister, or any given minister on a new approach.

Mr. Speaker, the news release goes on to read:

The over 3 million acres presently protected in the Act would now be controlled under regulation and would be able to be sold or changed at the discretion of the Minister.

Well, Mr. Speaker, when we have seen a Sask Party government on so many fronts who have simply said they've consulted through sending an email or calling one single meeting, Mr. Speaker, when we've seen ministers exhibit that type of judgment on the issue of consultation, in my opinion, Mr. Speaker, I don't want that minister being the final and ultimate say on land that belongs to everyone here in the province.

Under WHPA, [the news release goes on to read] any lands that were removed or changed were required to be debated in the Legislature and allowed for public scrutiny. Under the new legislation there would be no transparency. In addition, the newly passed Conservation Easement Legislation that the Saskatchewan Government would place on most of the sold parcels gives the Minister the power to remove or change the easement without public knowledge or recourse.

Mr. Speaker, I think that's, that's a very important paragraph to

read into the record and an important paragraph to share with all Saskatchewan people because, Mr. Speaker, the sentence that really does it for me is, "... any lands that were removed or changed were required to be debated in the Legislature and allowed for public scrutiny."

And that's an important point to make, Mr. Speaker, because it's a point that goes back, as the news release indicated, 30 years. It's the fact that, one individual, a minister who thinks he or she is the best thing since sliced bread when it comes to consultation, when it comes to having a political plan, simply because that individual thinks they're great at doing something, Mr. Speaker, it doesn't mean that they are. Just because they think they have consulted, just because they think they have a great plan for the province, they have a great new approach on any given issue, whether that's shutting down SCN, whether that's eliminating services, paid-for chiropractors, whether that's the number of educational assistants in the educational system, or whether that is the protection of Crown land, land that belongs to every Saskatchewan person, that should not be a decision that is up to one sole person.

The benefit, Mr. Speaker, to how things have previously been conducted in the legislature is changes to the land that is owned by everyone, belongs to every person here in the province, that is a change, Mr. Speaker, that would come to the legislature, would be open to public scrutiny, would be open to debate, and would be open to a transparent airing of all the facts. Unlike, Mr. Speaker, as the minister would like, is to have the ability to make any decision to say thumbs-up, thumbs-down like some sort of emperor on a piece of land, on the fate of one area based on his or her decisions and feelings of that given day. I think, Mr. Speaker, people of Saskatchewan want the type of scrutiny on any given piece of legislation, but especially on a piece of legislation that affects land that is owned by everyone and that is important to everyone.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the news release goes on. It says:

"The combination of a lack of consultation and the aggressive time line on this Bill has effectively made it impossible to address our concerns and left many important questions unanswered," states Darrell Crabbe, Executive Director of the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation (SWF). "We need the Minister to table this Legislation until all the variables can be properly addressed."

And by tabled I assume it means paused, pulled back, let's slow things down. Let's, Mr. Speaker, as a group of Saskatchewan people, as legislators, as people in the community, let's not rush forward on a piece of legislation that has served Saskatchewan people well for 30 years, has guaranteed the security of important land for all Saskatchewan people. Let's not, simply because the minister thinks she can do an amazing job on determining the fate of parcels of land throughout the province, let's not rush this decision. Let's not forego the type of legislative scrutiny that is required to ensure that land is properly cared for here in the province.

Well, Mr. Speaker, if the news release were to end there, in my opinion there would be enough evidence to suggest that the minister should put on the brakes, should have a sober second

thought and re-evaluate the new approach that she and the Premier have dreamed up. But, Mr. Speaker, the news release does in fact go on. The news release goes on and it says:

The SWF sees a “no net loss” agreement, as has been the policy of every Provincial Government since the WHPA was introduced; changes to create public transparency; the establishment of a Conservation Lands Fund and the continuation of protection of properties under WHPA legislation; as the most pressing issues and is prepared to work with the Government towards this goal.

So, Mr. Speaker, another important concept introduced here by the news here that was sent out by the Wildlife Federation, the concept of no net loss. So the Wildlife Federation, as I think many other sound-thinking people here in the province, they’re not saying that the land arrangement in the province needs to stay exactly as it has been for 30 years. There’s a recognition that over time there may be changes, there may be sales that are required, but it’s a commitment to the principle, Mr. Speaker, that when land is sold off, when land exits the provision and the safety that is provided through the legislation, that additional land is brought in so that there is not a loss. There’s a no net loss.

The people of Saskatchewan are just as wealthy, just as blessed to have the land that we all own collectively that belongs to every Saskatchewan person. We are no less blessed by having a transaction occur. If land exits, land comes back on. It’s a simple concept. And it’s a concept, Mr. Speaker, that the Wildlife Federation supports, and I think many other organizations in the province that are concerned about the protection of sensitive lands and important lands are.

The news release goes on, Mr. Speaker, it says, “The SWF is a predominantly rural organization . . .”

The Speaker: — Order. Why is the member from Yorkton on his feet?

Mr. Ottenbreit: — To ask leave to introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Yorkton.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to the members of the Assembly, in your gallery . . . I apologize to the lady; I’m not sure who it is. I can’t really see clearly from here. But the two gentlemen, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Ray Malinowski and Mr. John Malinowski, two very influential business people in Yorkton, the owners of Leon, Ram Industries. Mr. Speaker, big employers and entrepreneurs and philanthropists, very well known in the Yorkton area and throughout the province. I’d ask all members to help me welcome the Malinowskis to their Legislative Assembly.

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

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I certainly extend a welcome to the visitors in the gallery as well. The paragraph I was reading, Mr. Speaker, is from a news release put out today by the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation. The title of the news release is “The SWF opposes dismantling The Wildlife Protection Habitat Act.” I’ve talked about some of the concerns that the Wildlife Federation have presented to the public and to the government and to the opposition.

The second-last paragraph, Mr. Speaker, as I was reading:

“The SWF is a predominately rural organization. A recent poll on our member base indicates that we have over 7,000 landowners and over 3,000 livestock producers in our membership. We recognize that the present operators that lease many of these properties have, and continue to be excellent stewards of these lands. We want to work with all the stakeholders to hopefully create a win-win scenario for all involved. We need the cooperation and commitment of the Provincial Government to make that happen,” states SWF President Ray Wild.

The closing paragraph, Mr. Speaker:

The Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation has over 30,000 members in 121 branches across Saskatchewan and is, per capita, the largest wildlife conservation organization of its kind in the world.

Mr. Speaker, a few important points that were made in that closing paragraph. Individuals raising this concern, Mr. Speaker, are largely, not entirely but largely coming from a rural background involved in making their life off the land and enjoying the pursuits that are provided on the land. And they raised an important point, Mr. Speaker, that I fully agree with, and it is respect to the role that many of the individuals who have been leasing Crown land, land that is owned by everyone, that they have been doing a fine job over many, many decades, Mr. Speaker, in most cases, of being good stewards of that land.

Mr. Speaker, I know a good number of people who lease Crown land in the capacity that is referred to in this news release. And I wholeheartedly agree, Mr. Speaker, that these individuals do a fine, fine job of respecting the land, of caring for it, of treating it properly, of being good stewards as the news release suggests, Mr. Speaker.

So this isn’t about pitting one group against another. It isn’t about wanting to make enemies or wanting to appease one certain group, or it ought not to be about that, Mr. Speaker. But as the Wildlife Federation suggests, it’s about slowing down. It’s about not 100 per cent putting blind trust in the Minister of

the Environment and her ability, or proposed ability to control land. It's about slowing down and doing this properly, Mr. Speaker.

[16:30]

As the member from Meewasin has suggested, it's clear that consultation, proper consultation has not occurred. And I think there may be some more . . . The member next following me in speaking may indicate some of the failed consultation.

But it's not only the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation, Mr. Speaker, that has concerns. One of the other groups the minister listed in the list of groups that have supposedly been consulted was the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations. There's a letter from Lyle Whitefish addressed to the minister. The one paragraph reads, Mr. Speaker:

Since the FSIN was not involved in any consultations, I am requesting a detailed explanation of how your Ministry purportedly undertook to consult with First Nations prior to the decision being made to expand the sale of Crown lands protected under *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*. Rather than a vague reference, I am seeking a response that includes a listing of all the meetings your Ministry held with the First Nations and the dates such were held, which First Nations and their leaders or representatives who attended such meetings, what their responses were, how these were incorporated into the report your Ministry used to make the decision, and how your Ministry reported back to the First Nations of your decision. I also request a copy of such report.

So, Mr. Speaker, one of the groups that was listed by the minister, a group that was supposedly consulted in a thorough and proper way, a fairly strongly worded letter coming from a vice-chief from FSIN about the failure of consultation that occurred with them, Mr. Speaker.

Another example of failed consultation from Nature Saskatchewan, from an individual from Nature Saskatchewan. The quote I would like to read from a letter that was sent to us by Nature Saskatchewan, the sentences read, Mr. Speaker:

We can assure you that no meaningful consultation regarding the sale of Crown lands has occurred with Nature Saskatchewan. On occasion we were told some details of the land sale program, but this is not consultation.

So we see a track record and a pattern emerging, Mr. Speaker, I believe from the Sask Party government. We see a government, Mr. Speaker, that is convinced that because it won a majority in the fall of 2011, it is given the right, Mr. Speaker, to do anything that they think is politically wise.

And, Mr. Speaker, we've seen on a number of ministries . . . I gave some example of the Minister of Education with respect to EAs. I gave some examples of the Minister of Health with respect to breaking a deal with chiropractors and their patients. I spoke, Mr. Speaker, about an example from the Minister of Culture, Parks and Tourism with respect to turning the lights off at SCN, where individuals from different walks of life

representing different organizations have been highly critical of the Sask Party government in its ability to consult in a proper, thorough, and comprehensive manner.

And now, Mr. Speaker, in Bill 132, legislation that is proposed that greatly changes the control of Crown land. And by Crown land, land that is owned by all Saskatchewan people from every corner, from every community, from every walk of life, land that is so special to us because of our historical roots to the land, because of our current work pursuits, because of our current recreational pursuits, because of the memories that we create with our families and our friends and our loved ones that occur on the land. This matters to Saskatchewan people greatly.

And following the poor track record, Mr. Speaker, that we saw from other ministers, I'm sad to say the evidence to me would suggest that the Minister of Environment has adopted the approach that must be condoned by the Premier, and in fact encouraged by the Premier, when it comes to consulting with Saskatchewan people. Because on a number of fronts we have three groups, three different groups — FSIN, Nature Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation — three groups that have different mission statements, different people, different organizations, different motives for why they would be acting, and we've seen a consistent message coming from these groups, a message that consultation did not, in fact, occur as it ought to have. Consultation by this government has been missing.

Consultation by this government is not fully grasped, is not fully understood because it's not simply sending an email saying send us your thoughts. It's not simply calling one meeting and calling it quits after that. It's not simply saying hello to someone, talking briefly about an issue, sharing a bit of information, and then bulldozing ahead with whatever legislative agenda they may have.

So, Mr. Speaker, I haven't spoken about the motives as to why Bill 132 may be coming forward. I wanted to focus, Mr. Speaker, in my remarks about how land is important to all Saskatchewan people because of the shared history we have with the land. And I wanted to talk about, Mr. Speaker, how when it comes to the issue of consultation and doing what is right on any given issue, time and time again what we've seen from Sask Party government ministers is an approach that is fully condoned and endorsed and supported by the Premier, and that's one of flawed and failed consultation.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I want to say I'm very pleased that I was able to go on record and share some of my concerns and thoughts about Bill 132 because I do think it's an instance where the Sask Party government could turn away from the path of arrogance and of bulldozing ahead with an approach even though there is real and legitimate concerns being raised by Saskatchewan people and Saskatchewan organizations. They have, Mr. Speaker, the opportunity to do the right thing as suggested by the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation. They have the opportunity to slow down, put on the brakes, and do proper consultation so that a proper outcome can be achieved on this issue.

I thank members of the Assembly for allowing me the opportunity to make some remarks. And with that, Mr. Speaker,

I will conclude my remarks and let the next speaker from the official opposition have his or her say. Thank you so much.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to join in the debate again . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I'm informed that the member from Saskatoon Centre has already spoken.

I need to remind the member that unfortunately while the member spoke, but they also . . . the member relinquished his place, sat down and allowed somebody in, didn't adjourn which would have allowed the member to get up again. So the member has given up his spot to speak. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. . . .

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

Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, I am extremely pleased this afternoon to enter into debate on Bill No. 132, *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is a Bill that the people of Saskatchewan care a great deal about. Over the last few weeks, I think it's very safe to say, Mr. Speaker, that this is a piece of legislation that we have heard more about than we have in many years.

Mr. Speaker, this piece of legislation is one that the ordinary citizens of our province have taken an interest in. And in taking an interest in this legislation, Mr. Speaker, we're receiving literally hundreds of emails, letters, phone calls about this legislation. And, Mr. Speaker, there's a common thread to all the correspondence about this legislation and it's simply this: the people of Saskatchewan believe very strongly in protecting the future of their habitat, wildlife habitat, Mr. Speaker. And they view that any potential changes that could result in a lessening of the protection of that wildlife habitat is very serious.

And, Mr. Speaker, although the government will say that they have no intentions to sell off the 3.5 million acres, Mr. Speaker, the question everyone seems to be asking is then why change the legislation? Why make the change now if there's not an intent to sell off that pristine wildlife habitat, Mr. Speaker? What is that hidden agenda? Now, Mr. Speaker, whether or not there is a hidden agenda or not, Mr. Speaker, there is a belief today that this legislation wouldn't be coming forward in its current form and design if there wasn't an agenda to do just that — sell off, if not all that 3.5 million acres, Mr. Speaker, a large portion of that pristine habitat land, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, the other issue that seems to come about as a result of this piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, is the problem that many, many organizations that have come about with the sole purpose of protecting the habitat lands in our provinces and across our country, Mr. Speaker — whether it be the Wildlife Federation or the Ducks Unlimited or any of the other groups that have formed with the purpose of protecting our pristine

habitat, Mr. Speaker, wildlife habitat in our province and in our country, Mr. Speaker — feel they weren't consulted.

They feel that they were not involved in the decisions to make the change. And in not being involved and not being consulted, Mr. Speaker, that raises for them a suspicion as to why. If this is good public policy, if it's based on sound, thought-through analysis, Mr. Speaker, then why weren't they consulted? Why weren't they brought along and filled in every step of the way so that they clearly understood what the government's agenda was? But the fact, Mr. Speaker, that they were not informed of what the agenda was and they didn't clearly understand what the outcome would be, Mr. Speaker, and they still don't today, Mr. Speaker, all the assurances in the world are not going to turn back the clock and make people believe that nothing is going to change as a result of this legislation.

And the reason for that is, is that they believe very strongly that on something this important to the people of Saskatchewan, they should have been consulted. And when they're not consulted, Mr. Speaker, they then believe that there is an agenda, whether there is or isn't. So the government may not have a hidden agenda, but you're not going to convince people today that there isn't because they weren't consulted, they weren't brought along, they weren't involved in the process, and all of a sudden they're faced with a change that can affect their families, their children, their grandchildren.

And, Mr. Speaker, to have the type of reaction that we've seen in the last several weeks over this piece of legislation, quite frankly, is surprising. But, Mr. Speaker, you only get that reaction when there's genuine concern. And, Mr. Speaker, when you have this level of genuine concern being displayed by the people of the province, by the various groups who take it upon themselves and who work very hard on behalf of the people of the province and the people of Canada to preserve the wetlands and conservation lands of our province, Mr. Speaker, it's important that we listen to them.

Mr. Speaker, we've had a process for many, many years where wildlife habitat lands could in fact be taken in or out of government protection, the protection of the legislation, Mr. Speaker, but in each case it had to be debated before this legislature. And there's been a zero net loss policy in place for many, many years that if you're going to take lands out, you have to replace it with at least an equal amount of land of the same ecological value.

And, Mr. Speaker, that isn't done in any one given day because it takes analysis of the ecological value of land. It takes purchasing land, Mr. Speaker. It takes a number of steps in order to ensure that there's a zero sum loss of land of ecological value protected under *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*, Mr. Speaker. But that has been a goal that the province has undertaken long before I was elected, Mr. Speaker, and long before I would believe any of the current sitting members of the House were elected.

I believe it was under the government of Grant Devine back in the early 1980s, Mr. Speaker, when we in fact undertook the first detailed look at the protection of wildlife habitat in the province and worked on it in a manner in which we really set out to protect the habitat for future generations, Mr. Speaker.

And in doing so, the people of Saskatchewan began to clearly understand and value what this land represents for both the waterfowl and the wetlands of our province, Mr. Speaker, and for other wildlife, Mr. Speaker, but also for the various species of plants and shrubs, Mr. Speaker, that become endangered if we don't protect adequately the ecological value of the land.

So, Mr. Speaker, today this particular piece of legislation moves the ability for the sale of that land out of the protection of legislation into regulation and placing it then at the whim of the government without the debate in the House about what's going to happen to that land, without the debate of the potential changes to that land having to go through the scrutiny of this legislature and having to go through the scrutiny of the public of Saskatchewan because at any given time the opposition can raise that issue to raise public awareness of what's about to happen to the land prior to it being sold off.

[16:45]

And, Mr. Speaker, that was a check and balance system that was put in place many, many years ago to ensure that the land that we put under protection remains under protection or that we have at least a clear understanding of the value of the land we're selling off — not from a financial value but from its ecological and wildlife potential, Mr. Speaker — and what the value of the land has in protecting endangered species, whether it be either endangered species of wildlife, Mr. Speaker, birds or waterfowl, but also plants and shrubs that are sensitive in various parts of our ecologically protected lands, Mr. Speaker, under *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*.

So, Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, in the last number of years we have not seen the type of public outcry that we are starting to see about this Bill. And this Bill, the outcry is not coming from a narrow group of stakeholders, Mr. Speaker. It's coming from people from across the province from every walk of life, from university students to high school students, and families, Mr. Speaker, in the cities of Regina and Saskatoon, to groups like the Wildlife Federation, the Ducks Unlimited, and others, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we've even had letters written in from various stakeholders, Mr. Speaker, that are talking about the, well for lack of a better word, the backwards approach to this legislation and what its impact can be on the province of Saskatchewan. And one of those individuals played a key role in the development and classification of the lands that were put under protection under *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*, Mr. Speaker. And this individual played a role — he's a professional agrologist — in analyzing and assessing the value, the ecological value of the lands, Mr. Speaker, and determining why land should be put under the protection of the government in order to protect endangered species, in order to protect wildlife species, Mr. Speaker.

And we need to pay close attention to what the professionals have told us about the protection of this land and not make quick decisions that may be based on an economic quick dollar, selling off the land that's owned by the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, it's been said that we're against land ownership if

we're talking against the sell-off of land protected under *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*, Mr. Speaker. Well I'd like to tell the people of Saskatchewan that land is owned. We're talking about Crown land that's owned by all the people of the province of Saskatchewan. You and I own that land. My children own that land. My grandson owns that land. And that's land that's been put into protection to guarantee that he has the same opportunity to enjoy and explore the wildlife of our province, to enjoy and understand some of the rare species of plants and animals and wildlife that exists within our province, Mr. Speaker. And anything that we do that takes away that opportunity from our children and grandchildren, Mr. Speaker, is something that I think we need to look at very carefully.

And that's why in the past any movement of land protected under *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act* had to come to this Assembly and be debated. It wasn't that changes couldn't be made. The fact was changes needed to come here to be debated. And I think that's quite appropriate, Mr. Speaker. It then also means that the changes that are being proposed are thought through and looked at more carefully by the government because they know it's going to go through a much more detailed scrutiny by the members of this Assembly.

And, Mr. Speaker, it also then goes to put great pressure on any government that's in power to have a zero loss policy: that if we move some land that's ecologically protected, of a certain ecological value, that we replace it with other land of a same or equal ecological value, protecting enough land within our province to guarantee the ongoing stability of those ecosystems. And, Mr. Speaker, I think that's good. I think that's a protection, a level of protection that the people of this province should in fact want to have, Mr. Speaker, I know that they do want to have, Mr. Speaker, and it's quite appropriate.

Now, Mr. Speaker, many, many very interested groups are saying they haven't been consulted. And, Mr. Speaker, when groups that have the type of respect in our society and our communities are saying they haven't been consulted, and they should have been consulted, Mr. Speaker, then it's incumbent upon us as legislators, whether we're in government or opposition, to pay attention. Because, Mr. Speaker, we're not here to represent ourselves. We're here to represent the people of the province of Saskatchewan. We're here to represent the best interests of the people of our province, not to represent our own personal interest, Mr. Speaker, but to represent all the people of the province of Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, when we're given the responsibility to represent the interests of the people of the province, we need to take that responsibility very seriously.

And, Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that on this particular piece of legislation there are many, many people who are saying, let's take a step back. Let's not pass this piece of legislation in this sitting. Let's re-examine what our options are. There is today an option, if the government wanted to move forward and deal and sell some ecologically protected land under the Act, Mr. Speaker, they could do that. They could do it under the existing rules, but it would have to be debated within this Assembly. It would have to undertake the scrutiny of the members of this Assembly and the scrutiny of the general public prior to it going into effect. Now, Mr. Speaker, what's wrong with that?

So if we didn't pass this Bill this session, it doesn't stop anything from happening. It doesn't change anything. The government could still bring forward a Bill to deal with a certain amount of wildlife habitat protection land for sale. But they'd also have to bring, they'd have to bring, in order to get it passed in this Assembly without a fight, Mr. Speaker, they'd have to bring land of equal value in the same amount, Mr. Speaker. If it's 250 acres, Mr. Speaker, they would be expected to bring 250 acres of equally sensitive ecological-value land and put it under protection. So if you're going to sell off 250 acres, Mr. Speaker, we'd expect 250 acres of additional land to go under wildlife habitat protection.

Mr. Speaker, that guarantees to the people of the province of Saskatchewan, that guarantees, Mr. Speaker, that we're maintaining that ecological value, that wildlife habitat land for our children, our grandchildren, and future generations. And, Mr. Speaker, I believe that's absolutely important. It's important to me. It's important to my colleagues. I can tell you it's important to thousands of Saskatchewan residents who have contacted the official opposition, Mr. Speaker. And it's important, Mr. Speaker, to our, it's important to our future generations, Mr. Speaker, because they have a right to have an expectation that we're going to protect our environment, our lands, and our ecological value for them, Mr. Speaker.

There are reasons why we are elected. It's not in our short-term, short-sighted, own self-interest, Mr. Speaker. It's about our children. It's about the future. And it's about looking beyond what our own self-serving, short-term interests are, to look at the value of everything we do to future generations, to our children, and to our grandchildren.

And, Mr. Speaker, all I'm saying and all the people of Saskatchewan are saying is, let's not make a hasty decision. Let's not move to a Bill that puts all the power in one minister's, in one minister's hand, Mr. Speaker, without having to come back to this legislature for debate. Let's leave it in the hands of the provincial legislature to determine what land should be protected for the future generations of the people of Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, we need to do this and we need to do it for the people of our province. And, Mr. Speaker, the people are starting to speak out. A month ago the people didn't know this Bill existed. We've had hundreds of people come to this Assembly now to talk about this Bill. We've had the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations here today to meet with members of the cabinet, talking about the seriousness of this legislation and sharing their concerns, Mr. Speaker.

We've had the Wildlife Federation here. We've had the Ducks Unlimited here, Mr. Speaker, and we've had many, many other environmental groups here, with a common concern, that common concern being this legislation isn't needed for any purpose. For any purpose other than simply, Mr. Speaker, simply taking what the government can already do, but through the scrutiny of this legislature, and moving it to the sole direction and scrutiny of a single cabinet minister, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, that puts tremendous power in an individual's hands, but it is power that is more appropriately controlled by this legislature and by all 58 members elected on behalf of the

people of the province of Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have many hours of debate on this particular issue. Mr. Speaker, I could probably go for, as members opposite would know on something as important as this to the people of Saskatchewan, for many, many hours.

But more importantly, Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to make a few very, very specific points and then adjourn debate, Mr. Speaker. But those points are important to be made. And it's simply three points, Mr. Speaker. Don't fix what isn't broken. Mr. Speaker, there's no need to fix something that isn't broken. The current legislation works best for the people of the province of Saskatchewan and still allows the government to move forward on its agenda.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, before you make a drastic change that in fact takes the control away from the people of the province of Saskatchewan and gives it to a single individual, Mr. Speaker, there needs to be meaningful consultation, meaningful consultation so people know and understand. So even if there isn't a hidden agenda, they clearly know there isn't a hidden agenda.

And thirdly, Mr. Speaker, every decision we make has to be in the best interest of all the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. It has to be considered through a filter of what is in the best interest of the people of Saskatchewan. Not in the best interest of a government to move an agenda forward rapidly, Mr. Speaker, or in the interest of stakeholders who are pressuring the government, but, Mr. Speaker, in the interest of all the people of Saskatchewan. And I just want my colleagues on both sides of the House to understand that we need to take into consideration what's the best interest of the people of Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, as I see the clock very quickly coming to 5 o'clock, Mr. Speaker, and because I will want to speak at length again on this particular issue, Mr. Speaker, I would now move we adjourn debate on Bill 132.

The Speaker: — The member from Regina Dewdney has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 132. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move the House do now adjourn for committees this evening.

The Speaker: — To facilitate the work of committees, the Government House Leader has moved the Assembly adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — This Assembly stands adjourned until tomorrow afternoon at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 16:58.]

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