



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

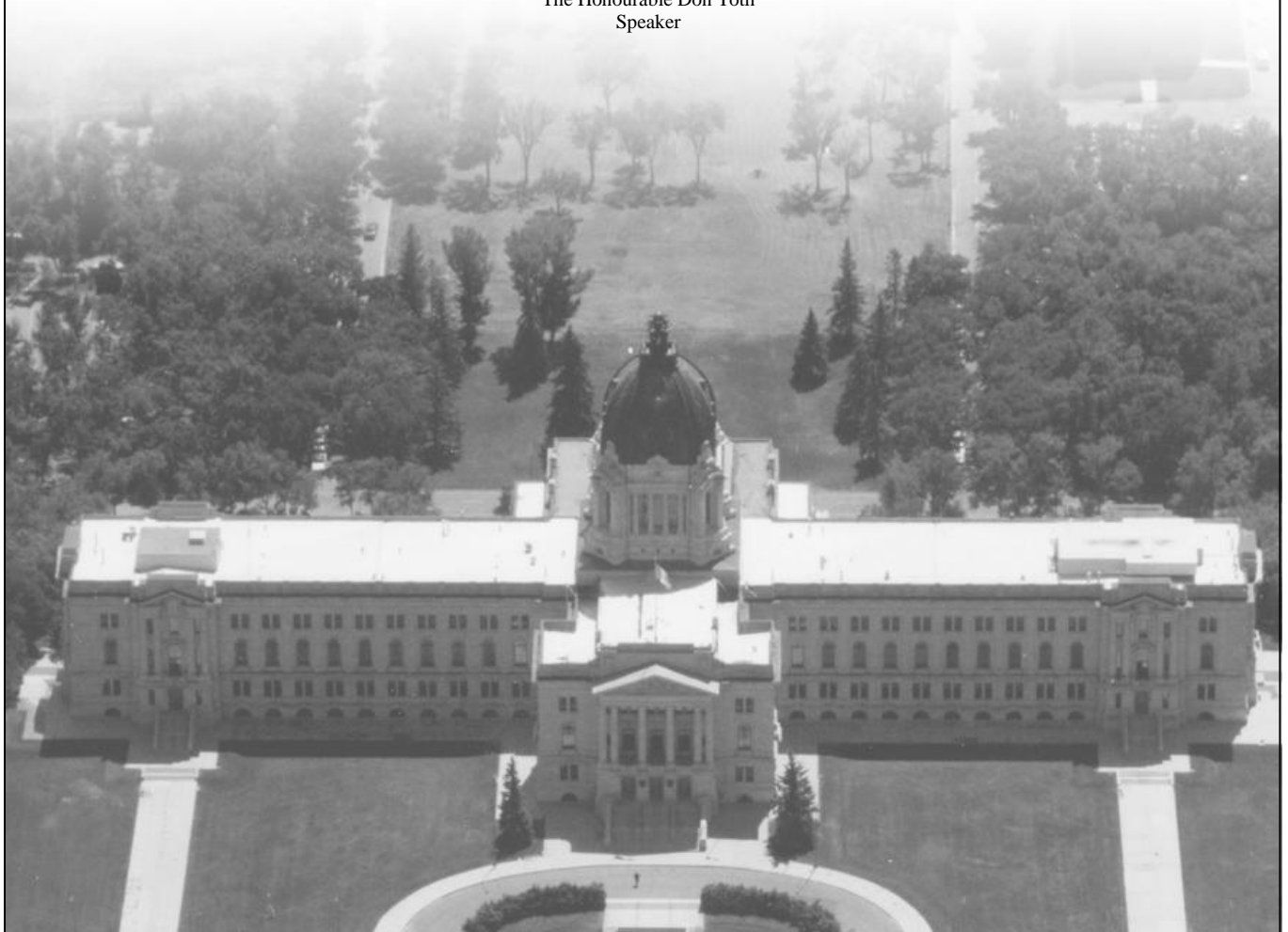
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Don Toth
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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

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

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to introduce some special guests to you and through you to every member of this Assembly who are seated in your gallery.

Mr. Speaker, at the second annual Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation annual Regina golf tournament, there was a prize that was used to raise some money. It was called Dinner with the Premier. I'll leave it to members to decide how much of a prize that really is, but we had that dinner with the recipients of the prize.

A Regina businessman by the name of Dwayne Galloway was the successful entrant into that particular contest, and he had a great idea. He brought along his son and three of his son's friends from Luther to have dinner. We had it at a restaurant here at the end of March, at Memories. Memories donated it as part of the prize as well. And we had a great discussion that night about public affairs in politics, not just here in the province, in Canada, but all over the world frankly, the United States especially. We talked a little bit about sports.

We had a great evening, and it was a great honour for me to share the evening with them. And I've invited them to the Assembly today. I had a brief chance to meet with them in the Premier's office earlier on, but I'd like to introduce them to all members if I can. Now maybe they'll give us a bit of a wave.

First, Dwayne Galloway is here. Originally from Swift Current, an owner of Lawn Butler here in Regina, there's Dwayne. His son Jared is with him. We're missing one of the participants from, we're missing Lucas from that night at the restaurant, but his son Jared has joined him. And then two other friends, Matt Dangstorp and Sam Eggertson are also here, if they'd give us a little wave.

As I say, Mr. Speaker, these are fine young men who are attending Luther. They have different plans that for some will take them out of the province. We hope to get them back. Others are going to be staying here to pursue their post-secondary endeavours. And I would just say this, Mr. Speaker, if this is representative of the future of this province, we are in good hands indeed. I'd ask all members to join with me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you an individual that doesn't need a whole lot of introduction to the Assembly, but it's really great to see him here today. Seated behind the bar, on

the floor as is his right as a former member of this Legislative Assembly, I'm speaking of course about Dale Flavel.

He served as the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood from 1991 to 1999 and continues in many different ways to serve the interests of the public in this fair province of ours, Saskatchewan. And when he's not out standing in his field, he's standing tall in the legislature, many different places. But it's good to see Dale here, and I'd ask all members to join with me in welcoming Dale Flavel to the Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Kelvington-Wadena, the Minister Responsible for Crown Investments.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm delighted today to have two groups of people in the legislature that I'd like to welcome. The first group is a group is a group of students from Porcupine Plain School in the west gallery. They're grade 8 students, 21 of them. They have their teacher Lawrence Schmidt with them and also chaperones Anita Harphan, Shelley Burghardt, and Grant Ziola. These students have been watching their new school being built beside them in the last year, and I know they're delighted to be looking forward to their new building. And I really would like everyone to welcome them to their legislature.

Mr. Speaker, while I'm on my feet, I'd also like to welcome 17 members from the public service who are participating in the parliamentary program for public servants today. I'd like to welcome them to their legislature. We have representatives from four government ministries: Advanced Education, Agriculture, Education, and as well as the Public Service Commission.

And I'm really pleased to welcome them to their building today. We all know that without their support and hard work that we wouldn't be able to get our work done in this building. We'd like to publicly thank you and again welcome you to your Legislative Building.

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

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the official opposition, I'd like to join with the minister and welcome our civil servants today that are here with us in the gallery. And, Mr. Speaker, we all know and understand and appreciate the very valuable work that they do on behalf of all of us and on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan. So we truly would like to thank you for your dedication and work on behalf of the people. Thank you.

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 along with the Minister of the Public Service Commission, there was a few I ran into today. I'm only seeing two that I can spot in the Assembly right now, Mr. Speaker.

One is Mr. Brian Pohorelic from Yorkton, a dedicated public

servant, well-known in the community for his giving and caring.

One I know much better, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Larry Wells, long-term resident of Yorkton, formerly with the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] for many years, serving our federal government, and in that respect also serving our federal government through his public service positions he's held in Yorkton since. Also very instrumental in the Kinsmen Club in Yorkton, Mr. Speaker; he's given of himself time and time again for many years. And more better known, or much more widely known, is his involvement with Crime Stoppers, not only nationally, but bringing Crime Stoppers to this province of Saskatchewan.

So I'd ask all members to welcome Brian and Mr. Larry Wells to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Quennell: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, a couple of people sitting in your gallery. Don Fletcher is a constituent of mine, and he got a ride down to Regina today with a friend, Janet Wiebe, who's also in your gallery. Travel is very difficult for Mr. Fletcher. It was quite a trip down and it will be quite a trip back. I hope all members will welcome him to his Assembly this afternoon.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford.

Mr. Chisholm: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you I would like to introduce to the Assembly a fine-looking group of very well-behaved students from Neilburg. These are grade 7 and 8 students; there's 23 in total today. And, Mr. Speaker, I know they'll be well-behaved because I note there are eight teachers and chaperones accompanying. The ratio is higher than we sometimes see in the legislature. So I would just like to welcome them all to their Legislative Assembly. And I look forward to meeting with them shortly after question period for another question period. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the Legislative Assembly it gives me great pleasure to introduce in the west gallery, Heather Malek. Heather is a film and television editor here in Regina and is one of thousands of people who are concerned about this government's decision to privatize SCN, the Saskatchewan Communications Network, and the manner in which they've done it. With that I'd ask all my colleagues, all members, to welcome Heather to her Legislative Assembly today. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood.

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to

join with the member from Elphinstone in welcoming a former member who represented Last Mountain-Touchwood, Mr. Dale Flavel. I'm happy to see him seated behind the bar, and I certainly wish him a happy retirement. And it's good to see him here again today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Mr. Toth: — Members, it's a pleasure for me to introduce guests as well today. We have with us a group of people from Kipling Industries in Kipling. And I had the pleasure of enjoying lunch with this group of individuals and I'd like to let you know who all's with us today. We have Darcy Brickley. We have John Darveau. We have Andrew Dixon. We have Justin DeRoos, Jack Rieder, Teresa Daku, Joleen Daku, Brenda Galbraith, and Brendan Gall. And with them staff, Joanne Weir, executive director; Daryl Savage who is the program coordinator; and Deb McDougall, activity director. Earlier today we were joined as well by Jack Rieder's brother and sister, Francis and Cecile.

Ladies and gentlemen, when you have the opportunity of meeting individuals such as this and get to know them, and even as we were enjoying lunch together and just the camaraderie and the excitement as they were . . . First time as I'm aware for most of them that they've ever been in the Legislative Chamber. And I would ask the members to join with me in extending a warm welcome.

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 citizens of Saskatchewan that are concerned over the condition and the safety of our highways. This petition pertains to Highway 10 between Fort Qu'Appelle and the junction of Highway 1. The petition states that this highway is a main traffic route to a year-round tourist destination, as well it 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 of Saskatchewan's motoring public.

And in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And this petition is signed by the good folks in Fort Qu'Appelle, Lebret, Balcarres, and Regina, 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 wildlife habitat protection Act protects 3.4 million acres of uplands and wetlands, or one-third of all wildlife habitat lands in Saskatchewan in its natural state, and that there is a great deal of concern with the

government's proposed amendments repealing the schedule listing the 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 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 consultations 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 in Moose Jaw and Redvers. Mr. Speaker, I so present.

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

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I have a petition in support of maintaining educational assistants in the province. And as we all know, educational assistants provide supports to students with special needs. And the Ministry of Education introduced a document in November of 2009 which indicated that there would be drastic reductions in the number of EAs [educational assistant] in the province and a replacement with a speech and language therapist and psychologist. This petition indicates that they want the following:

To cause the government to 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.

And this petition is signed by people from Saskatoon as well as someone from Holbein, Saskatchewan. I so present.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition in support of affordable rents and housing in Saskatoon. And we know that there is a shrinking number of accommodations for rent in Saskatoon, and yet 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, Mr. Speaker, the people signing this petition come from the city of Saskatoon. I do so present. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition in support of Highway 915. This petition addresses the concerns of Saskatchewan people about the quality of the Stanley Mission road. I will read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to upgrade and repair Highway 915 as soon as possible.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

It is signed by the good people of Stanley Mission. I so present.

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

[13:45]

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition in support of SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology] and students attending SIAST. In the recent budget that delivered some significant cuts to SIAST programming, there are a number of students that are voicing their concern about the Sask Party government's decision to shortchange SIAST. And the prayer reads:

To change the Sask Party government to recognize the importance of the programs offered by SIAST campuses in ensuring that we develop a highly skilled and educated workforce in Saskatchewan, and in so doing to cause the Sask Party government to stop shortchanging SIAST which forces the institution to cut programs, and instead to immediately increase funding to SIAST to allow for the reinstatement of programs affected by recent budget cuts.

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

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

Mr. Furber: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise yet again today to present a petition in support of financial assistance for the town of Duck Lake water project. The petition is being circulated and signed by Saskatchewan residents. Due to the exorbitant amount of money that Duck Lake residents will pay for clean, safe water, it's causing them hardship and is forcing people to actually move away from their community. And the prayer reads:

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the petition is signed by good folks from the town of Duck Lake, the community of Spruce Home, and the city of Prince Albert. I so present.

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

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise yet again today to present a petition on behalf of rural residents who are dealing with another water issue. A government ministry has directed that these customers may no longer treat non-potable water using methods approved by Sask Health, and that these Furdale residents, in dealing in good faith with SaskWater for over 30 years, have paid large amounts for their domestic systems and in-home treatment equipment. And the alternative water supply 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 and Saskatoon. I so present.

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

Mr. Quennell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise once again with a petition signed by citizens of Saskatchewan who had requested the government, even at this late date, withdraw its reference to the Court of Appeal in respect to legislation that would allow marriage commissioners to discriminate on the basis of race, religion or sexual orientation, Mr. Speaker. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to direct marriage commissioners to uphold the law and the equality 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 obligations to provide all couples with civil marriage services.

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

The petition is signed by residents of Saskatoon, Regina, and Moose Jaw, and 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 specifically allude to the two years and billions of dollars of deficits racked up by the Sask Party and the billions of dollars of debt growth projected to grow underneath the Sask Party. 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 residents of Preeceville, Buchanan, Pelly and Kamsack. I so submit.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today with a petition in support of midwifery in Saskatchewan. This petition is signed by residents who are concerned that two years after the proclamation of *The Midwifery Act* there are still only seven registered midwives in Saskatchewan, and the only women who actually really have access to midwifery are those within the city limits of Saskatoon. 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 Estevan, Southey, Wynyard, and Regina. I so submit.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

26th Legislature Caps 26-Year Career

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege this afternoon to rise today to pay tribute to one of our colleagues who announced this morning that this 26th legislature will cap off his 26-year career of public service to the people of Saskatchewan.

The member for Regina Northeast served for a decade as a councillor in the rural municipality of Claydon, and for 16 years has represented his constituents as a member of this Assembly. Those constituents, and people throughout the province, know this member as a dedicated MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly], a conscientious public servant and a true friend of the ordinary working man and woman. Genuine and down to earth, people know this member's unassuming style truly embodies the philosophy he learned from one of his political mentors, Leonard Larson, a former member from Pelly who said you can push people an inch, but you can lead them a mile.

Mr. Speaker, the member has served the public just a few years longer than his beloved Montreal Canadiens have been without a Stanley Cup. But as he prepares to exit public life, both he and his Habs are enjoying an unbelievable winning streak. But it's the people of Regina Northeast, and indeed all of Saskatchewan, who have been the true winners, Mr. Speaker, to have this member as their champion in our Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating the member of Regina Northeast, his wife Carol and family, and offering our best wishes for whatever adventures life may bring their way when retirement actually does become reality. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Qu'Appelle Valley.

National Nursing Week and International Nurses Day

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Anyone who has come in contact with the health system can attest to the important contributions that nurses make in delivering high quality health care. As the largest group of health care providers in the province, nurses are held in the highest esteem by the people of Saskatchewan who trust and rely on them. For this reason, Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize May 10th to 16th as National Nursing Week and May 12th as International Nurses Day.

Mr. Speaker, two years ago our government signed a partnership agreement with the Saskatchewan union of nursing looking for more ways to recruit and retain nurses, and we committed \$60 million to support this. Our goal was to add 800 nurses to Saskatchewan's workforce and we wanted to take action to address the chronic shortage of nurses in our health care system, a shortage that is not unique to this province. But since we signed this partnership there are 650 more nurses working in Saskatchewan today. That's 81 per cent of the target

set by our agreement.

Now as Legislative Secretary for the Minister of Health, I've had the opportunity to meet and talk to hundreds of nurses and I would personally like to recognize all nurses currently working in Saskatchewan's health care system for their hard work and their dedication. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Biggar.

Speech and Hearing Awareness Month

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to inform the House that our government has proclaimed the month of May as Speech and Hearing Awareness Month in Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services has been providing services to people who are deaf or hard of hearing, since 1981.

Our government supports the goal of a world without barriers for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Promoting this objective is also the primary mission of Saskatchewan Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services. Mr. Speaker, we are pleased to support that organization and its important work with this proclamation.

Throughout the month of May, Saskatchewan Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services will be striving to raise public awareness of the needs of deaf and the hard of hearing people, as well as providing information about the services being provided to them by a variety of agencies throughout the province. Raising awareness is one of the ways that we can help overcome barriers for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

We are therefore pleased to have proclaimed the month of May 2010 as Speech and Hearing Awareness Month in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, I hope all members take some time this week and realize how fortunate people are and we should never take for granted the ability to speak and hear. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Fibromyalgia Awareness Day

Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, today is Fibromyalgia Awareness Day. May 12th is chosen as Fibromyalgia Awareness Day because it coincides with birthdate of Florence Nightingale, the English army nurse who inspired the founding of international Red Cross.

Fibromyalgia is a chronic condition producing a widespread musculoskeletal pain, disturbed sleep, and debilitating exhaustion from head to toe. One of my constituents with the condition states that, quote, "When you suffer from fibromyalgia, you judge every physical task that you have to accomplish by two criteria: how much pain is this going to cause me, and how long will it take to recover from this?"

As we can tell from this statement, fibromyalgia has a devastating effect and impact on people's lives, people's work, and their families. Roughly a quarter of the people suffering

from the condition are work-disabled. Fibromyalgia was widely misunderstood when it first came to the public's attention, just as multiple sclerosis was labelled hysterical paralysis before medical understanding and public awareness caught up with the disease.

Unfortunately, finding treatment options for sufferers has been impeded by this diagnosis. Fibromyalgia requires the visionary support from health professionals, researchers, and our Ministry of Health. Today on Fibromyalgia Awareness Day I call on this government to commit to effective treatments for those who suffer from fibromyalgia.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Yorkton.

Riderville Events in Yorkton

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This past Saturday I was able to attend the fourth annual football night in Yorkton which raises funds for the support of minor football. The banquet was also the final event of a week of events in Yorkton's bid to become Riderville. Events during the week included a Rider museum, classic games screenings, breakfasts, barbecues, performances by local bands, and football and cheerleader camps for youth, a best-dressed pet competition, and the first-born baby after high noon Saturday was declared Riderville baby by the business improvement district.

This year's event had a Rider "parade" almost one hour long which featured Jim Hopson and George Reed and several Riders including Gene Makowsky, Weston Dressler, Stu Ford, and Hamilton Ti-Cat local boy, Jordan Matechuk, and yes, Mr. Speaker, Gainer the Gopher.

This weekend ended with a dinner featuring guest speakers Ti-Cat Jordan Matechuk, Rider Gene Makowsky and Weston Dressler. And a surprise guest to many, Mr. Speaker, was Troy Westwood, the former kicker with the Winnipeg Blue Bombers who helped rename the Labour Day Classic between our Riders and Bombers, now famous as the Banjo Bowl.

Troy did a very admirable job, Mr. Speaker, at the banquet speaking highly of the Riders and their fans and humbly of the merits and benefits of minor football and its positive impact on youth. He gave accolades to Barry and Roby Sharpe and Jason Farrell, along with the many volunteers involved in this week-long initiative.

Mr. Speaker, it was a great week and I thank all the volunteers, fans, and people of our community for their contributions and participation and literally painting the town green, and a special thanks to the Riders for coming out and supporting Yorkton minor football year after year. And, Mr. Speaker, Yorkton's Riderville.

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

A Spelling Lesson

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, people in Saskatchewan are coming to understand that a Sask Party government spells t-r-o-u-b-l-e. No matter where they look, Mr. Speaker, they see

an alphabet soup of incompetence and broken trust.

The Premier's off to promote the New West Partnership or NWP, which everyone knows is really spelled T-I-L-M-A.

[14:00]

Or take the Health minister, Mr. Speaker, who started this session ready to sign an MOU [memorandum of understanding] with BC [British Columbia] on premium surgeries and ended up as the second minister told to mind his Ps & Qs after he failed to consult over H-I-P-A.

G, D, and P gave the Finance minister grief, Mr. Speaker, and his budget calculations earned him a solid F. That meant the government's PST [provincial sales tax] cheque to the cities came back NSF [not sufficient funds], so they had to write them a \$54 million IOU [I owe you].

When they saw the poster for the Environment minister's pig roast BBQ [barbecue], Mr. Speaker, nearly everyone thought b-a-d. And she hasn't done any better with W-H-P-A, Mr. Speaker, with a plan to sell off Crown land with a mere OC [order in council] without scrutiny by MLAs. The one word she can't seem to spell is c-o-n-s-u-l-t.

It's literally a jumble of incompetence and broken trust over there, Mr. Speaker. And that's why the people of Saskatchewan are ready to spell the end of that government in 2011 when they write the letter X next to the letters NDP [New Democratic Party].

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

Moose Jaw Health Foundation Radiothon

Mr. Michelson: — Mr. Speaker, last week the Moose Jaw Health Foundation held its 4th annual Family First Radiothon. The 36-hour radiothon began Thursday at 6 a.m. and went till Friday at 6 p.m. All funds raised will go toward the women's health unit of the Moose Jaw Union Hospital for the purchase of new equipment such as Panda Beds, hydraulic birth beds, an advanced ultrasound transducer, new infant warmers, and a fetal heart monitor.

The event concluded with a dramatic finale as radio host Craig Hemingway was set to announce the total amount raised just before 6 p.m. on Friday, an impressive total of just over \$125,000, but a last-minute donation of \$50,000 by Bernice and Al Fox of Moose Jaw raised the grand total to \$175,796.

Kelly McElree, the CEO [chief executive officer] of the Moose Jaw Health Foundation, spent the entire 36 hours overseeing the successful fundraiser. While we can't be sure if it was exhaustion or just sheer joy, Mr. McElree became quite emotional as the grand total was announced.

At this time, I ask all the Assembly to join me in congratulating CEO Kelly McElree and the Moose Jaw Health Foundation Board, all the volunteers and donors, and radio station CHAB for another successful radiothon. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Just a reminder because it could come back to haunt us, members are not to use public displays in the Assembly, I remind, even including members' statements.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Proposed Long-Term Care Facility

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health has confirmed the government and the Saskatchewan health region have received a proposal from Amicus Health Care Inc. to build a 100-bed long-term care facility in Saskatoon. And that proposal is being discussed by the health region as we speak.

To the minister: who's building the facility? Which contractor has been lined up to construct this 100-bed facility?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, I would say that the member is right this time. She is right that the Saskatoon Regional Health Authority will be looking at a proposal put forward by the Catholic Health Ministry, Mr. Speaker. That proposal is an innovative way to look at funding long-term care in our province, Mr. Speaker. The health region is looking at that.

But what the proposal does talk about, the details that I do know, is that it would be the Catholic Health Ministry that would be building it. As far as contractors, that is up to them. If there are overruns, that is up to them, Mr. Speaker. We would simply be using this as a venue to rent or lease long-term care beds, Mr. Speaker, which are desperately needed in the Saskatoon area.

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

Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, we know that the public is going to be paying for this \$27 million project, and we know that the project has been discussed by the Saskatoon Health Region on a number of occasions and an announcement is imminent. It stands to reason therefore that the board has discussed the issue of who will be contracted to build this facility and the process by which that contractor will be selected.

So to the minister: who is being contracted with to build this \$27 million facility? And was this contract tendered?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, what the member doesn't understand is that this is a contract that will be entered into between the health region and the Catholic Health Ministry. The Catholic Health Ministry is responsible for construction, design. What we are looking at, Mr. Speaker, because this is an innovative way . . . Right now, Mr. Speaker, the member I think is concerned that there may be . . . it may cost too much.

When we took over, Mr. Speaker, there weren't enough long-term care beds in Saskatoon. So what we have right now is long-term care residents living in acute care settings at extremely high cost — about \$9,000 a day, Mr. Speaker, absolutely unacceptable. We're looking at innovative ways to make sure that long-term care, or our seniors can live in dignity in the facilities that they're living in near the end of their life, Mr. Speaker. It would be only the NDP that would be rejecting that.

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

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, this is a \$27 million project, and it's important that we ensure, as legislators, that taxpayers get value for their money. Now the higher the winning contractors bid, the higher the debt that Amicus will have to incur and the higher the premium that Saskatchewan taxpayers will have to pay to build this facility.

So to the minister: how much of a premium will taxpayers and patients be forced to pay to cover the debt-servicing costs on this project? And is it \$25,000 per year per bed, or \$2.5 million a year?

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Just before I ask the minister to respond, most members have been really paying close attention, but there were a couple of members that really were interjecting from their seats. I would ask them to allow the minister to respond without interference. I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this project is very exciting, Mr. Speaker, because what we're doing is looking at an innovative way, first of all to look at the capital, but more importantly the care that our seniors that will be receiving in a facility like this such as aging in place, Mr. Speaker, such as aging with dignity, Mr. Speaker, such as aging with their spouse in the same location. Mr. Speaker, that is something different than what we've looked at for many, many years.

This facility has an awful lot of positives, Mr. Speaker, and none of them, Mr. Speaker, is the whole care that our seniors will be receiving in this facility. Mr. Speaker, there will be an agreement between the Saskatoon Health Region and the Catholic Health Ministry that will not see the cost any higher than what we're seeing in other locations, Mr. Speaker, with a facility fee tacked on to cover some of the capital as we move forward, Mr. Speaker. But it is the Catholic Health Ministry that is responsible for construction, operations, all of those issues, Mr. Speaker.

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

Consultation on Changes to Legislation

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation and the FSIN [Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations] called on the government to pull back its changes to *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act* and conduct more consultation. Today Nature Saskatchewan added their

voices to the growing chorus of people calling on the government to slow down the process.

To the minister: will the government withdraw its changes to *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act* and instead conduct the meaningful consultations that Saskatchewan people so far have been denied?

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

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to this legislation. We believe in the principle of land ownership and we are committed to moving forward with this legislation. Mr. Speaker, I would like to read into the record a part of a letter that I received from the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities. It says, “Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the consultation meeting on May 6.” It goes on to say, Mr. Speaker, and I quote, “SARM supports the passage of the proposed changes to *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act* as found in Bill no. 132.”

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities represents 296 RMs [rural municipality]. They represent hundreds of thousands of people, Mr. Speaker, and they are in full support of what we are doing.

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

Ms. Morin: — Well, Mr. Speaker, one day she calls . . . now she calls it a consultation on May 6th. The other time she called it a workshop and said it wasn’t necessary for the FSIN to be there and express the voices on behalf of the 74 First Nations of this province.

The minister claims that she’s held consultations, but we know that this minister’s definition of consultation, indeed this government’s definition of consultation, is radically different from that of most people. Most people define consultation as something more than a passing mention that the government might be doing something in a letter or asking for input when the final decision has already been made.

To the minister: will she table in this legislature today the agenda for the consultations that she claims to have conducted along with the letter of invitation to those meetings and a list of the stakeholders who were invited?

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

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I’ll read this again for the member opposite. It was the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities who thanked me for inviting them to be part of our consultation meeting. And, Mr. Speaker, coming out of that meeting were suggestions that the stakeholder groups had brought forward. I discussed these with my cabinet colleagues this morning, and they are things that we were going to be moving forward on, Mr. Speaker.

These include using a portion of the revenues from the sale of these lands. It will go to the Fish and Wildlife Development

Fund for land conservation. We will be setting up a conservation land committee which continued . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I would ask the member from Regina Walsh Acres to allow the minister to respond to the question that was placed. Order. Minister Responsible for the Environment.

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, we are also committed to setting up the Crown land conservation committee which will give stakeholders an ongoing voice in the conservation of lands in this province. We are also going to be using the assessment tool, the science-based assessment tool that was developed within my ministry to be used on other lands such as unoccupied Crown lands to see if there’s other properties that we can put under wildlife habitat protection, Mr. Speaker.

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

Agreement Between Colleges

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, St. Peter’s College, a private institution, plans to merge with Carlton Trail Regional College, a public institution. The institutions already share a CEO; board members already play dual roles. A call was put out at the end of March for board members for the new entity. A new senate has already been appointed of which the minister is a member, and a joint syllabus has already been prepared for the fall. But the minister claimed yesterday that he didn’t know what was going on. Does the minister really expect Saskatchewan people to believe that he was, that he was entirely unaware of this merger?

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to provide an update about the significance that regional colleges play to the people of this province. Mr. Speaker, what we know is that 24,000 students are offered full-time, part-time, and a variety of other programs.

Regarding, regarding this arrangement, I’ll just go back to a news release that was issued last July 10th. We were there. There were federal representatives there and representatives from across the community at St. Peter’s, as well the Carlton Trail Regional College. And Professor Glen Kobussen said, and I quote, “This new partnership . . . will enable us to be more responsive and innovative, allowing us to better fulfill the needs of all of our stakeholders.”

Mr. Speaker, this builds on over 10 years of these colleges working together. It’s up to the colleges to actually map out a future, Mr. Speaker. As far as the ministry’s concerned, we’ll do and undertake our due diligence as required, and our key criterion will be what’s in the best interest of the students of this province.

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

Mr. Broten: — Let's remember the taxpayers in that thinking as well, Mr. Speaker. Let me get this straight, Mr. Speaker, a joint CEO, board members that serve double duty, a full-fledged plan for one entity, and yet the minister claims that it's just an idea, just a thought right now. But it gets worse, Mr. Speaker. Here's what the winter-spring edition of the *St. Peter's Newsletter* had to say, "The provincial government is encouraging the merger and the legislation is expected to be in place this fall to confirm the merger."

To the minister: will he admit that he is encouraging the merger and plans to introduce legislation this fall to remove Carlton Trail Regional College from public control?

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, what we certainly do encourage are grassroots ideas about finding new ways to find innovative cost savings and efficiencies to ensure that more taxpayer dollars, those dollars that the member opposite made reference to, so that more of those can be directed towards students and student services, Mr. Speaker. As far as the idea of working more closely together, this has been in development over the course of the last 10 years. At the secret announcement last July, Mr. Speaker, secret where hundreds of people were there, there was . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I'm having difficulty hearing the minister's response to the question. I ask the minister to complete his answer.

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. As I was saying, as we see these two organizations working more closely together, building on a decade of experience, what we have said is, as they undertake their innovations and their consultations, certainly we'll be doing our due diligence. We approach this with an open mind, with a sole criterion overriding all other considerations — ensuring that we're serving the interests of the students of this province.

[14:15]

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, the minister claims that nothing has been decided and that he plans to consult on this, but all the evidence suggests the opposite. Millions and millions of dollars of public assets are about to be handed over to a private institution, and this minister pretends he's going to engage in meaningful consultations this summer.

To the minister: why won't he just be straight with Saskatchewan people, admit that it's a done deal and that the public assets are being handed over to a private institution with no consultation?

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to speak about taxpayer dollars because in this case we're very proud of our track record. In fact what we were able to do is to reach out to St. Peter's. When they came forward with a proposal that was over \$12 million we said, can you help raise some money and we'll have a look at it. St. Peter's helped to raise more than \$3 million. Mr. Speaker, the provincial government then matched that.

Fortuitously that occurred just as the federal government came out with the knowledge infrastructure program. We were able to move forward with a \$12 million project there. But more than that, Mr. Speaker, just down the road, working in conjunction with the Ministry of Education, we were able to move together in a \$4 million facility, an educational facility in Humboldt. We opened that, made the announcement of that construction, Mr. Speaker. We're investing in the students of this province and certainly in and around Humboldt. And we're proud of our track record.

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

Mr. Broten: — WEPA [Western Economic Partnership Agreement], WHPA [*The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*], PST, SCN, EAs chiropractors, Bill 5, Bill 6, Bill 80 — that's just the start of this government's record on failed consultation. And now you can add St. Peter's and Carlton Trail to that pile. This government clearly does not understand that consultation should occur before major decisions are made, not after the train has left the station.

To the minister: when it comes to honest consultation, will the minister admit that he's as much of a failure as the Health minister, the Education minister, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, and the Premier? Will he admit that he has failed in proper consultation with Saskatchewan people?

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, to quote from today's *StarPhoenix*, Professor Kobussen: "It's a process, it's not a done deal." In fact our consultations are just beginning. But what we won't do is we won't take lessons on failure from the member opposite. We're investing in young people in this province. What they used to do is encourage them to leave the province.

Our track record on population growth and investing in post-secondary education offers the opportunity for our young people to see a bright future here in the province and a bright future that includes post-secondary education. Investments including more than \$120 million, Mr. Speaker, in a broad variety of programs that we've partnered with the federal government, with the private sector and other partners to ensure that the educational infrastructure deficit that we inherited from the members opposite is starting to be addressed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Funding for Foster Homes

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last fall the government approved up to \$350,000 in funding for the Rising Stars Children's Ranch in the RM of Prince Albert. To the minister: what is the purpose of this funding?

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, the purpose of the funding was to have a group home for foster children that are in our care.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well the government news release dated September 24th, 2009 makes it clear that the funding is for up to 10 residential care spaces for children at risk — in other words, a group home.

But an agreement between Rising Stars Children's Ranch and the RM of Prince Albert dated November 23rd, 2009 indicates that the development permit is for a single-family residence. As such it will be limited to four foster care spaces, and it will not be staffed as a group home.

To the minister: why is the government providing \$344,000 to build a single-family residence?

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, there has been some concerns brought forward by some residents in the rural municipality with the Rising Star proposal. They are trying to work through it with the RM councillors, and until that is indeed agreed upon, the project is on hold.

But it is . . . We thought that Rising Star quite frankly is a group that we have a record with in doing great work for our vulnerable children. They thought that they had an agreement with the rural municipality. And in fact there was some concerns raised, so Rising Star is working with the rural municipality.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Well, Mr. Speaker, many foster families throughout the province struggle to make ends meet even as they take in some of the most vulnerable and, in many cases, troubled children in our province into their homes. And that struggle to make ends meet happens for many families, has led to a chronic shortage for foster homes in this province.

Now we learn that the government has provided \$344,000 in capital funding to build a single foster home. To the minister: is it now the policy of the Government of Saskatchewan to provide capital funding to foster homes? And if it's not, how does this minister intend to explain to other foster families why they're not getting the same deal?

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, should this home, should the agreement work out with the rural municipality, the home will be a group home. It'll be a youth group home for foster children. It is for very young children, quite frankly, that are in the foster care system.

What we are doing is expanding capacity quite considerably to house foster children in this province, unlike the members opposite who absolutely ignored the problem, even though it was pointed out by the Children's Advocate and the Ombudsman and the Provincial Auditor year over year over year. They absolutely ignored the problem until homes were crowded to up to 21 children.

I am very, very proud to say, although there is a lot more work to do, we have reduced overcrowding in our foster homes by one-third in less than one year, Mr. Speaker. I don't think that's ever been done across our entire country where we have taken the pressure off the foster families in such a short period of time.

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

Coverage for Fibromyalgia

Mr. Quennell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My constituent, Don Fletcher, suffers from fibromyalgia. Mr. Fletcher is in the gallery today to ask the Minister of Health for coverage for Lyrica. Mr. Fletcher and his general practitioner have written to the minister and Saskatchewan drug plan on several occasions advising that Lyrica is the only medication that provides Don with pain relief.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister provide exceptional drug status for Lyrica so Mr. Fletcher can get relief from the pain he lives with daily?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — First of all, Mr. Speaker, our thoughts certainly go out to Don and any other person in Saskatchewan, which there are an increasing number of people in Saskatchewan suffering from fibromyalgia. It is a very difficult disease to live with or condition to live with, Mr. Speaker, and certainly we know some of the challenges that they face.

The drug that was mentioned by the opposition member is a drug that is covered by exceptional drug status here in Saskatchewan, but only for neuropathic pain or nerve pain, Mr. Speaker. It isn't covered for fibromyalgia. And that regulation and how a drug is determined to be covered for a certain ailment such as fibromyalgia, it goes through a common drug review, a national process, and then it goes through a provincial process, Mr. Speaker. This drug hasn't been approved nationally nor has it been approved provincially for fibromyalgia, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Saskatoon Meewasin.

Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Fletcher has heard the minister's excuses several times before. And with the greatest respect to the Minister of Health, Mr. Fletcher might be more of an expert of the procedures that the minister described than the minister is himself. Lyrica is the only medication that provides Mr. Fletcher with any pain relief, and now Lyrica is \$4 less expensive per month than his current prescribed medication, Gabapentin.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister meet with Mr. Fletcher today so Mr. Fletcher can outline his case to him?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, I'm certainly no expert when it comes to the efficacy of certain drugs. I don't think anybody in this Chamber could ever claim to be that. That's why we have a process that these drugs have to go through, whether it's a national drug review or whether it's a provincial drug review, Mr. Speaker.

The member opposite from Prince Albert yells about Avastin. Avastin was approved by the Canadian cancer agency and the provincial cancer agency. It was the only drug approved by the provincial cancer agency that that NDP government didn't fund. I don't think he really wants to go there.

But what I will say about these drugs is Pfizer has to make a recommendation or application to the national common drug review. If it's approved there, it comes to our provincial drug review. If the efficacy is there, Mr. Speaker, the drug is approved and we'll certainly cover it for fibromyalgia. To this point, those hoops have not been jumped through, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, again to the Minister of Health my actual question: will the minister meet with Mr. Fletcher today so that Mr. Fletcher can outline his case to him?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on December the 8th of 2009 was my last letter back to Mr. Fletcher. But I will be more than glad to meet with him once QP [question period] is done and any possible media scrum is done, Mr. Speaker. I'd be more than glad to meet with him in my office.

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

Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the answer from the Minister of Health. I'm sure Mr. Fletcher does as well, and I know he's looking forward to having that meeting. Again the cost of Lyrica has now changed, and I appreciate the government's reluctance to make the application to have the drug covered.

Is the government's reluctance to have the drug covered now gone that the medication is \$4 cheaper than the alternative for Mr. Fletcher, Gabapentin, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, as I outlined the process before, this drug has to go through the national common drug review. That organization will look at the efficacy, Mr. Speaker. I would say that very seldom is the price point the deciding factor, whether it's above the drugs that are available right now or whether it's below. What is looked at is the efficacy of the drug, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that it is effective for the population, that it is safe for the population, Mr. Speaker. I am certainly no one to make that call. I don't have the expertise. That's why we have processes and that's why we have drug review committees, Mr. Speaker, whether it's nationally or provincially.

This drug has been — the one drug that was mentioned — has been granted exceptional drug status but not for fibromyalgia, Mr. Speaker, and that's what the member opposite is asking for. Let the process work. Let Pfizer make application. It isn't myself that makes application. Let Pfizer make the application and let it go through the process. I hope it does so that it can be covered.

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

Mr. Forbes: — I'd like to ask leave to introduce guests, please.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much. There's been a few people come down, travelled down from Prince Albert to witness the proceedings. And I didn't see them come in. If they could just give a wave. Rory and Joan Johnson, I believe are up there. Thank you. And Norma Sheldon, and Arnie and Judy Kuhn, thank you very much for coming. I ask all members to welcome them to their legislature. Thank you.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the special committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice

Mr. Michelson: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice to report that it has considered certain estimates and to present its eighth report. I move:

That the eighth report for the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice be now concurred in.

[14:30]

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Chair of the Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice Committee:

That the eighth report of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice 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

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answers to questions 1,627 through 1,644.

The Speaker: — Questions 1,627 through 1,644 are tabled.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

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 Prince Albert Northcote.

Mr. Furber: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill No. 132, the wildlife habitat protection amendment Act, 2009. It's the Bill that has been under a great deal of scrutiny in this Assembly for the last several weeks. It is of great interest to a very large number of people throughout the province of Saskatchewan. And there are a very large number of organizations representing a very large number of people who are going to be affected by this who want a couple of things done to this Bill and with this Bill and that is, they want it off the table. They want it stopped so that the government can do something that it is abysmal at. Its track record is absolutely ridiculous.

We've read a long list, just today, of the Bills and issues that they have absolutely refused to consult with Saskatchewan people on — WEPA, or TILMA [Trade, Investment and Labour

Mobility Agreement], PST, SCN, educational assistants, chiropractors, Bill 5, Bill 6, Bill 80, WHPA. So that's the list in short.

Now this Bill, unfortunately, is not a good deal different than many of the other Bills that I've listed and issues that I just listed. But a body that's that large of issues and Bills that affect Saskatchewan people where there has effectively been no consultation is something that people are becoming alarmed at.

That they wanted to force through Bill 80 without consultation because it's unpopular is not surprising to a lot of people. But when they do it with Bills like *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*, it surprises some people, and they begin to wonder why when you are moving to do something without consultation what your motivation is. Why is it you don't want Saskatchewan people to have input on decisions that you're making on their behalf. Why do you do it behind closed doors? And what's the motivation? What are you trying to hide? What's the motivation for doing it in that way?

Because if you have confidence that what you're doing is right for Saskatchewan people, then you feel pretty open to take it to them and consult and ask them questions and get their input. Because that's what good government does. They allow for input. They will enlist the ideas and thoughts of their constituents because that's what we're elected to do.

And quite clearly now, we have a case where there are a great number of their members who haven't consulted with their own constituents on this Bill. And so if they want to do their jobs as MLAs, there's many different ways to go about doing that job. But I think a vital part of it, a most base element of being an MLA is consulting with your constituents about legislation that directly affects them.

And so to have the massive failure of consultation on WEPA, WHPA, PST, SCN, EAs, chiropractors, Bills 5, 6, and 80, I think it speaks to the arrogance that this government seems to carry with them. And one of the political columnists for Saskatchewan said in a recent column that he's surprised that a government could be so arrogant so early in their tenure as government. But I think it speaks to sort of what's going on with this, with Bill No. 132. Because it would appear that they're going to continue with this Bill and do everything they can to pass it as soon as possible, without consultation, because they're just arrogant enough to think that they can get away with it and that it won't matter to Saskatchewan people.

But what we're finding out more and more each day is that there's greater and greater opposition to this legislation. And we find out from individuals. We find out from our constituents, which I'm hopeful members opposite aren't ignoring. We're finding out from representative groups — wildlife federations, Ducks Unlimited, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, Pheasants Forever — groups that are opposed to this legislation who represent a very large number of people in Saskatchewan. And so I find it unfortunate that we continue to debate this legislation in the Assembly when it appears clear that there is enormous opposition to it and the government won't simply pull the Bill, consult with Saskatchewan people, and make necessary changes.

Now I do find some of the comments from the minister responsible, especially in what I believe on March 8th with her second reading speech, because she says a few things that appear contradictory. She says: "This Act will allow the government to protect sensitive land more efficiently, more effectively, and more sustainably than ever before."

So it's curious to me how we're moving over 3 million acres of land from the protection of the Government of Saskatchewan, how that will make the government more efficiently able to protect the sensitive land. I'm not sure if the members opposite have referred this to the efficiency secretariat. But I can assure the members of the government, the Saskatchewan Party, that if the government wants to more efficiently protect sensitive land, they should have some control over it. They should have some idea what goes on on that land.

Now additionally they say that they want to do it more effectively and more sustainably. Well I don't know how removing 3.3 million acres allows you to protect land more sustainably. I think it would be impossible to understand how that could take place.

Now it's a bit strange that that's her first paragraph in her second reading speech because logic dictates that it's impossible to accomplish those goals with this legislation, but it's set out in her speech anyway. Now the speech goes on to say two paragraphs later, that this Act:

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

That's what she said on March 8th. But we have received, as opposition members, a very large number of letters from individuals and organizations, including many of these listed. In fact well maybe not entirely the whole list but very close to, including every group on that list who argue vehemently that they were not consulted, not properly consulted. They say that in some cases that the minister making passing reference to the fact that this could possibly happen, to her, constituted consultation. They argue that that's not true, that they don't believe that it's proper consultation and that they've been genuinely consulted on this legislation.

And so when it comes to the issues that directly affect these organizations and the word of the minister, I will choose to believe the word of these many organizations ahead of the minister in this case. Because clearly with the campaigns that they've got going, with the people who have shown up in the legislature to protest, with all of the correspondence that we receive at our offices — I'm hopeful that the members opposite who are receiving them aren't ignoring them, that they're raising their voice in their own caucus meetings and cabinet meetings — it's clear, it's crystal clear that these organizations and individuals in Saskatchewan believe that they have not, have not been properly consulted on this.

And so in the first paragraph of her second reading speech she

says that they'll be able to protect the lands more efficiently by removing them entirely, more effectively and more sustainably than ever before by removing them entirely. And in her third paragraph of her own speech, she says that this legislation has been developed in consultation with a great number of these groups who, almost to a group, argue that that has not taken place.

So that is one of the most unbelievable beginnings to a second reading speech, I think, that this legislature has seen in a very long time because clearly it contradicts the facts. It contradicts reason and logic to believe that the Act would be able to protect lands more efficiently, effectively, and sustainably when you remove over 3 million acres from government protection.

And so as a part of the body of my speech, I will be reading onto the record some of the correspondence that we've received as individuals, as caucus members, from interested parties. And I know from some of these letters that are addressed to the minister that she's aware that these groups are each in opposition to what she's doing. But it seems like they absolutely plan to proceed in spite of that fact, in spite of the fact that there are many organizations and individuals who are vehemently opposed to what she's doing.

Now as a politician, as a legislator, one of the things that you value most is third party validation. Because given the nature of parliamentary democracy and politics, individuals might, and the minister might, try to make people believe that certain things are happening that would put the government in a better light. And so one of the best tools that you've got as a member of the legislature, be it the minister or any member, is to have third party validation, to have individuals who are not partisan come forward and provide commentary on what you're doing.

And in this case it's happened very frequently by a very wide variety of sources, including the organizations and individuals. But it's not limited to those groups. It also includes newspaper columnists. It includes reporters. So it includes a wide variety of people who believe that the way this is being done is not the proper way.

[14:45]

Now to provide further proof of that point, I would, if I could, read a column written by a *Leader-Post* journalist on May 1st of 2010 where he says, but as a former minister responsible for the portfolio, and he's speaking of Colin Maxwell:

... as a former Saskatchewan minister responsible for the portfolio (whose crowning achievement might very well have been the aforementioned, then-groundbreaking environmental stewardship legislation) and as the 17-year executive director of the Canadian Wildlife Federation, Maxwell speaks to this specific issue with some authority. And as someone who knows a little about where a young conservative government can be successful and where it can slide off the rails, Maxwell may be someone from whom Environment Minister Nancy Heppner or Premier Brad Wall can learn a lot.

Maxwell's purgatory in the PC caucus overflow was short-lived. The former Spiritwood principal would be

elevated to advanced education minister in July 1983. However, it was as minister of parks and renewable resources a year and a half later — a portfolio that became a perfect fit for him until 1990 when he left politics to take on a job with the CWF in Ottawa — that Maxwell really made his mark.

It was also a struggle to pass the legislation back in the early 1980s — especially given the concern from ranchers that land would be expropriated. But aided by a large rural caucus (including backbench MLAs like Harold Martens) the PC government convinced the ranchers that they could easily work with government.

Now contrast that with what we're hearing from Heppner, who is struggling to explain why it would be environmentally beneficial to sell 10 per cent of the three million acres of protected land "with a low ecological value."

Instead, Heppner has seemed intent on pitting ranchers against environmentalists when it's been the ranchers who have clearly been the environmental stewards of the land. (In fact, the only one [in fact, the only one] who seems to be suggesting that the ranchers won't be — or haven't been — good environmental stewards is Heppner, who seems rather intent on driving in that political wedge.)

Maxwell argues that the issue isn't those ranchers taking care of the land now, but what might happen . . . if that land changes hands.

It goes on to say:

But as someone who loves wildlife and who owned a SWF card (an organization that made him a life-time member) long before he owned a PC card, Maxwell believes some issues have always been viewed outside the partisan politics filter.

The Sask. Party government needs to adopt this approach.

One big knock on the Wall government that is common to conservative-minded administrations is that their ministers aren't always advocates for softer issue portfolios . . . And one of the worst is Heppner, who doesn't seem to have championed an issue beyond subsidizing low-flush toilets.

So perhaps it's time for the government to take a step back and stop looking at every issue from an economic development filter.

Talk to the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation about this bill. Heck, talk to some hunters who surely can't be happy about a potential loss of resources.

And maybe even talk to Colin Maxwell. He's been there before.

Again, third party validation, Mr. Speaker. The headline of the article was "Environment portfolio bigger than politics." And so when you have third party validation that comes out that

strongly against this legislation, it should send a signal. It should send a clear signal to you that you should stop, pull the legislation, consult with Saskatchewan people, and make changes that are needed and that are asked for by Saskatchewan people in order to accomplish whatever goal the government intends.

I think it's fundamental to work as a government to consult with the people who are going to be affected by this. And in this case, because every person who resides in Saskatchewan is going to be affected because they own the land, I think the consultations need to be broad-based. People need to understand what the implications are, what the motivation is, and what the possible outcomes might be when you introduce this legislation, when it's passed, and when it's implemented.

Now the minister has on many occasions suggested that well it's just a very small portion of the over 3 million acres that are going to be affected by this and that you should trust her that that's the case.

Well I took some pains to read the explanatory notes on this Bill and found it to say something very interesting and in fact very much like her second reading speech where she suggested that the legislation was developed in consultation with the stakeholder groups and that the Act would allow government to protect sensitive land more efficiently, effectively, and sustainably. She couldn't have been more wrong about that.

What she has been saying in this legislature and outside, about 10 per cent or so of the land being affected by this, seems to be contradicted in the notes to her own Bill. In the same way that when the Premier spoke to *The Globe and Mail* this week about getting rid of Saskatchewan debt, when his own document suggests that the debt of the province of Saskatchewan is going to go from 7.7 billion to 11.9 billion by 2014. People can find it ironic or illogical, overtly political or plain foolish. But I think that that's the case with the Premier. It's the same case with the Environment minister when she talked about stakeholders and when she spoke about being able to protect these lands more efficiently, effectively, and sustainably.

Now in her own explanatory notes on Bill No. 132 it says:

This amendment repeals the Schedule listing designated lands. The province is positioned to adopt a new strategic approach to evaluate and manage ecological, social and economic values on Crown land in the surveyed area of Saskatchewan and ensure protection of critical features while enabling sale of the land.

It goes on to say:

This new approach includes assessing [so the new approach, the entire new approach that they're taking with Bill No. 132 includes assessing] the ecological attributes of all Crown land with an initial focus on . . . The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act (WHPA).

So it says in her own explanatory notes that not only is the 3 million acres vulnerable, not only are the 3 million acres vulnerable to sale but so is any other land that the government currently is assessing. It says that "This new approach includes

assessing the ecological attributes of all Crown land . . ." and it only has an initial focus on WHPA. And "This information will be used to determine which lands may be sold, sold with a conservation easement or retained by the Crown." So quite clearly in her own explanatory notes every bit of land that the government currently owns is being evaluated for sale. That's what it says in her document.

Her washing machine outside that's constantly set on the spin cycle says something different, but her own document says exactly that. It says that every bit of land that's owned by the Crown is being evaluated and only the initial focus is on *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*. So why would anybody trust the minister when she says that it's only a very small portion and it's only a small portion that's owned by ranchers who are already good stewards when her own literature, her own Bill explanatory notes suggest that every acre of land owned by the province of Saskatchewan, by the people of Saskatchewan, by every resident of this province is open to sale. It's information that will be used to determine which Crown lands may be sold, sold with an easement, or retained by the Crown. So how would anybody believe her when she says that there's only a small portion that will be affected by the legislation?

I know not everybody in Saskatchewan will read the explanatory notes and find this out, but I think the people deserve a genuine answer to the question of why it is that her explanatory notes say something vastly different than what she says in this Assembly and to reporters just outside. Why is it that the legislation itself says exactly the opposite of what she's saying in here and outside?

There's a tremendous opportunity in your explanatory notes to put in that it's roughly 10 per cent of the land. She could have put that in here, but it's not in here. Additionally the legislation could be limited to those lands, but it's not. And it's not for a very obvious reason, I think, because they're not going to stop at WHPA lands. Their own explanatory notes suggest that. And so certainly one would question the value of believing her when she says that it's going to be 10 per cent.

Now her second reading speech went on to say a couple of other things that are puzzling and contradictory. It says that these changes will allow the Crown to sell land with permanent easements attached. Now the question might be, how is it that when you can make changes to this legislation, when you can bring forward changes to sell over \$3 million of Crown land, who many people, I would argue, believed that that was permanent.

We have heard stories of a gentleman from Saskatoon who donated land to the Crown because he believed that that land would be permanently protected by the government. And so when she uses the term permanent, I find it ironic because the person who donated the land to the Crown in the Saskatoon example donated it and found out later that it is likely to fall under the WHPA legislation. It's likely to fall under Bill 132 and be sold to a jurisdiction who wants to create a landfill on that land. And so he donated the land thinking it would become permanent wildlife habitat and is finding out that there is a strong possibility that if this goes through that it will be turned into a dump.

Now I think we could all argue that landfills are essential in Saskatchewan for environmental reasons and management. But when it comes to permanence, this person thought that this land would be permanently designated. And so when the minister says that the easements that are attached will be permanent, it's my understanding that the minister, because it's under regulations, can simply make that change. So there's no assurance that these changes with the easements attached will be permanent, absolutely no guarantee at all.

[15:00]

And so here we have her speech. First paragraph they said they'd be able to, by selling the land, would be able to protect it more efficiently, effectively, and sustainably. And in her third paragraph suggests that there'd been consultation and then goes on to suggest that the easements that would be placed on these lands would be permanent. So that's three paragraphs, the first three paragraphs of her second reading speech, and it contains information that is ironic at best. That's the first three paragraphs. It's a very difficult start to a second reading of a Bill, but at this point seemingly fitting.

And so I will continue with the third party validation because, as I'd said, it's one of the greatest tools a member of the legislature has. And in another column . . . sorry, article written in the *Leader-Post* on May 11th, the headline of this article is that "First Nations and conservation groups are calling for delay in changes to [the] Wildlife Habitat Protection Act." And it reads:

The Saskatchewan government faced new calls from First Nations and conservation groups Tuesday to delay legislation that will allow for the sale of some protected wildlife land.

Despite the government's recent attempts to placate concerns over proposed changes to the Wildlife Habitat Protection Act [and sorry], the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation said there are still too many issues — such a lack of transparency on what protected lands could be removed from the act in the future.

The group also wants a "no net loss" agreement so the overall amount of land protected doesn't decline.

And so that has been the subject of debate in this legislature as well because for the last, I believe, over 20 years, the policy of a number of different governments of different political stripe, the policy has been that any amount of land taken out of *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act* is replaced so that there is no net loss of land for the people of Saskatchewan.

Now I think it's unfortunate because if it's such a small amount of land as the minister suggests, then it can't be all that difficult to make a no net loss policy. It would seem obvious to me that if there are only a few ranchers, as she has suggested, who want to purchase this land, then it wouldn't be all that difficult for the government to support a no net loss agreement so that the same amount of land that's taken out of *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act* would be put back in so that there's always the same amount of acres under protection in Saskatchewan.

Now the article goes on to say:

“The combination of a lack of consultation and aggressive time line on this bill has effectively made it impossible to address our concerns and left many important questions unanswered,” [the Saskatchewan Wildlife] federation executive director Darrell Crabbe said in a statement.

Now again the minister asserts in her second reading speech that “This [Act] has been developed in consultation with a wide variety of stakeholders such as the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation . . . ” That’s the first group she lists. And yet we have a quote from the federation’s executive director who says that the combination of a lack of consultation and the aggressive timeline on this Bill has done some things that are undesirable. So how is it, in the third paragraph of her second reading speech, she says that this legislation has been designed in consultation with the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation, when some two months later the director of the organization that she quoted she consulted with comes out and says that there was a lack of consultation, and that’s a part of the reason why they want this Bill pulled?

I think it speaks to credibility. I think it speaks to the minister’s credibility sadly, sadly for the government and the people of Saskatchewan. I think it also speaks to her motivation. We’re still wondering what exactly is the motivation for doing this, for introducing this legislation and for forcing it through this spring session, if they’re intent on doing that. The same article goes on to say:

Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations Vice-Chief Lyle Whitefish also urged the government to allow for further discussion before changing the act that protects more than three million acres of Crown land.

“There is not a lot of land in this country now that’s protected and we want to ensure that long-term sustainability for the future generations to enjoy these protected lands,” Whitefish said.

Environment Minister Nancy Heppner told reporters that she was surprised by the wildlife federation’s news release . . .

Well I think that sums it up right there, Mr. Speaker. I think that sums it up right there. She doesn’t consult; she says she consulted. They write hundreds and hundreds of letters to her — individuals, various groups.

And she says that she’s surprised that they don’t like the Bill. I don’t know how anybody could be surprised when they protest at the legislature, they come in support of the opposition asking questions to pull the Bill, they have a letter-writing campaign by individuals, by their organizations and the people they represent. And she’s still surprised. She’s still surprised. I don’t know how that’s even remotely possible. I don’t know how anybody could be surprised. On May 11th, this is written May 11th, and we’ve had people in the legislature here protesting on a weekly basis. We’ve received letters on a daily basis, and she’s surprised that this organization would be in opposition to what she’s doing. It’s absolutely shocking to me that anybody would be surprised at this point.

The same article goes on to say:

Changes to the act . . . could see up to 10 per cent of the protected land sold outright and further parcels of land sold under protection of a conservation easement. An unspecified amount of acres with a high ecological value would remain under the act.

That’s her assertion, that’s the minister’s assertion.

But a major criticism has been that the government could in the future take more land out of WHPA protection by making a regulatory change, rather than having to go through the legislature. Heppner said she is looking at the possibility of having the lands that will remain under WHPA listed in legislation to allay the concern that lands could be shifted out of the act without scrutiny of the legislature.

Well, Mr. Speaker, she is looking at the possibility of having the lands listed in legislation. You know how you accomplish that in this legislature, Mr. Speaker? You pull the Bill. You pull the Bill, you make the necessary changes, and you bring it back. She should know that; she’s a minister of the Crown and a member of the government. That’s how you do it.

So to say that on May 11th, in a May 11th story, that you are looking at the possibility of listing lands that will remain under WHPA, why wouldn’t you do that in a genuine way? Why wouldn’t you pull the Bill, make the necessary changes, and bring it back? Doesn’t that seem like a logical way to go about things?

It certainly is logical to the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation, Ducks Unlimited, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations that you pull the Bill. That’s what logical. So again that’s from one article written by a reporter that covers the legislature. And again third party validation is exceedingly important in politics and in designing legislation. And that’s what this third party validation says in this case.

There are a very, vast number of letters and releases and correspondence that we’ve received about this legislation. And I think as part of the story that was written on May 11th, they got some of that information from a Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation media release that was put out on the same day. And it says:

The Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation continues to have grave concerns surrounding the recent Legislation aimed at dismantling the Wildlife Habitat Protection Act, 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.

And so what do they do with visionary conservation programs? They blow them up. They blow them up for what purpose? The people of Saskatchewan are yet to understand. They do it in opposition to the many groups who are directly affected. They do it in opposition to the general public who is largely opposed. And they do it for what purpose? The release goes on to say that again:

“The combination of a lack of consulting and aggressive time line . . . [And it goes on to say that] We need the Minister to table this legislation [and I believe they mean to pull it] until all the variables can be properly addressed.”

And so it's simple. She, the minister herself, says that she is looking at the possibility of having lands remain under WHPA listed in legislation. So she agrees that it should be pulled as well because the only way to do it is to pull the Bill, make the changes, and bring it back. So she's seemingly in agreement that the Bill should be pulled. So why are debating in on the floor of the legislature right now? Well it's because they haven't pulled the Bill. They refuse to pull it. They refuse to consult with the people of Saskatchewan on legislation that affects them on a daily basis, and I guess we should not be surprised that that's the case here as well.

The Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation in this case, Mr. Speaker, the release goes on to say, that the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation sees a “no net loss” agreement as being “The policy of every Provincial Government since The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act was introduced.” So that's that third party validation that I was speaking of a little earlier, Mr. Speaker, because it says quite clearly that it's “been the policy of every Provincial Government since the WHPA was introduced . . .”

And it also says that it's prepared and interested in discussing these issues, and it's “prepared to work with the government towards this goal.” And I think each member of the legislature would be interested in working with the government to maintain the no net loss agreement because it's a 30-year-old agreement, and the Conservative government of Saskatchewan — the Progressive Conservatives, excuse me — and the NDP have each had this policy and it's been in place for 30 years. The Saskatchewan Party government's in office for two years, and they think that they should blow it up.

The article goes on to say that, “The SWF is a predominantly rural organization. A recent poll on our . . . [membership] base indicates that we have over 7,000 landowners and over 3,000 livestock producers in our membership . . .” So the minister asserts that all of the producers of Saskatchewan are in agreement with the legislation she brings forward. But the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation membership — there may be some overlap here — but the two groups, total 10,000 folks in their membership, beg to differ. They don't agree with the minister. And so there again, third party validation.

[15:15]

They don't agree with the minister that this legislation should continue. And they want to help. They want to work with the government to create legislation that will benefit the people of Saskatchewan. And they go on to say that we need the co-operation and commitment of the provincial government to make that happen.

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

organization in the world.

And the members of the Saskatchewan Party government choose to ignore what they say to try to use them in a second reading speech to corroborate what they're doing in spite of the fact that they say, the Wildlife Federation says something that directly contradicts what the minister's saying in her second reading speech. The minister tries to use this organization to prove a point, and then she gets called out on it later and many times on the many different things that she says.

Again with the third party validation, Mr. Speaker, this one is from Nature Saskatchewan. The title of the article reads, “Too Many Unanswered Questions to Proceed with Changes to W.H.P.A.”

After two meetings with Environment Minister Nancy Heppner, Nature Saskatchewan has not received concrete information that would alleviate our many concerns over the substantial changes to the Wildlife Habitat Protection Act . . .

Removing W.H.P.A. Crown lands from the Act and placing them in regulations is very disconcerting as it leaves the future of these important wildlife lands at the discretion of the Minister.

The release goes on to say that “the conservation community's quarrel is not with farmers and ranchers, but rather with the provincial government for not consulting with us.”

So here is Nature Saskatchewan saying that their quarrel is with the provincial government for “not consulting with us.”

And again in the minister's second reading speech she says this Act “. . . has been developed in consultation with a wide variety of stakeholders such as . . . Nature Saskatchewan.” So again, absolutely contradicted in her second reading speech by Nature Saskatchewan is the Minister Responsible for the Environment in Saskatchewan.

So what possible shred of credibility could she have left with Saskatchewan people when she would attempt to use these organizations to prove a point that there has been consultation on this Bill when they say exactly the opposite? They say exactly the opposite. The third paragraph of her second reading speech says that this Act “. . . has been developed in consultation with . . . Nature Saskatchewan.”

Well why is it that on May 12th of 2010, Nature Saskatchewan would say that their “. . . quarrel is not with farmers and ranchers, but . . . with the provincial government for not consulting with us.” How is it possible that you have the minister on one hand saying that this legislation has been developed in consultation with Nature Saskatchewan, and Nature Saskatchewan comes out and says that they have not been consulted? How is it possible?

There's only one reason that this might have happened. The minister has embellished in her second reading speech that she's met with these groups. She's embellished it to suit an end. Clearly they have not been properly consulted and they feel that way and that's the same feeling that the folks from the

Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation have. They have the exact same feeling.

And so the minister's credibility is obviously in question, and it's in question by a very large number of folks in Saskatchewan. More to the minister's credibility are comments that have been made by the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, because she has alleged on a couple of different occasions that she has consulted with the FSIN on this Bill. But again, there's another group that disagrees with them, and it's the FSIN. In the release of April 29th of this year, the FSIN . . . It's actually, sorry, a letter to the minister on April 29th of this year, cc'd to the Environment critic and the leader of the NDP opposition, and it says:

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.

It goes on to say that what is more perplexing is that such a program excludes First Nations who possess such rights to these lands from the natural resources transfer Act of 1930. So they obviously don't care about an agreement that happened 30 years ago for no net loss. They certainly don't care about an agreement that was signed in 1930 that is to protect the rights of Saskatchewan citizens. It goes on to say, the letter goes on to say that:

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*.

And again, Mr. Speaker, again I go to the minister's second reading speech, paragraph 3, where she says, "This [Act] has been developed in consultation with a . . . variety of stakeholders such as . . . the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations." In her second reading speech she says that. In a letter to the minister, they say that, "There has been no attempt by your ministry to enter into a consultation process."

So who do you believe, Mr. Speaker? Do you believe the minister who has lost any shred of credibility on this issue or do you believe the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation, Nature Saskatchewan? The list goes on and on.

She states clearly that this legislation was developed in consultation with these groups. States it clearly in the third paragraph of her second reading speech. And letter after letter, after news release, after article in the newspaper says very clearly something directly opposite to that suggestion. Now I don't know what that's called where the Saskatchewan Party members come from, but I know what it's called where I come from. I know what it's called where I come from.

The letter to the Minister goes on to say that:

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 Ministries "Results-based Regulatory Review", is a reflection of the policy position that your government has taken with regard to the First Nations people in Saskatchewan.

So the vice-chief of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations says that this legislation and refusal to consult is a reflection of the policy position that your government has taken with regard to First Nations people in Saskatchewan. And so what he's saying clearly is that this government has made a conscious and clear choice to ignore the rights of First Nations people in Saskatchewan. It's a shameful position that members opposite take. To ignore the rights of First Nations and Métis people in Saskatchewan on their duty to consult, it's a shameful position that they've taken. And in this case, the FSIN states clearly that the government has refused to consult, which again is in direct opposition to the member's second reading speech.

The letter goes on to say that:

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" . . .

So again, very important third party validation against this Bill and against all of the actions taken by the Sask Party government with respect to First Nations people. They don't seem to care at all about what the citizens of Saskatchewan think about a Bill, about regulations, about any policy that they might make. They don't care. And it's demonstrated very clearly in this legislation, demonstrated very clearly. They're going forward with it in spite of all the people speaking against it.

The letter goes on to say that:

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 [people] prior to the decision being made to expand the sale of Crown lands protected under *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act* . . . 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 . . .

It also says that it's asking:

. . . 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.

And so I'll ask the minister today how she has replied to the question asked by the vice-chief of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations. How has she responded to that request to provide the information to an elected member of the FSIN? I challenge her today to produce the information to the legislature, to table it, to write a letter to the Assembly to inform the members of the Assembly just how she has answered the vice-chief's questions in this instance.

Clearly in this case, the minister responsible has, for whatever reason, suggested that there has been consultation and that the legislation has been developed specifically in consultation with these groups. I find that to be ironic at best and extremely disappointing because the groups affected come out and say something exactly the opposite of that.

[15:30]

Now here we have something else that's ironic. I believe it is a printout from the Government of Saskatchewan, the Environment department, from their government website. It has all rights reserved, copyright 2010, Government of Saskatchewan, so we know it's current. And it says this about the environment, about the Fish and Wildlife Development Fund, about special land provisions, and about Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration, Saskatchewan pasture programs, *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act* lands. It says this, that "You can help conserve wildlife habitat in many ways . . ." one of which is the Fish and Wildlife Development Fund.

But it also says: "Other ways you can help support the sustainable management and use . . . [is by] supporting legislation that conserves wildlife habitat; joining or supporting your local conservation group or wildlife federation; planting shelterbelts . . . protecting wetlands and sloughs . . . and maintaining natural areas, large or small."

So in a part of their website, they suggest that other ways to support sustainable environment in Saskatchewan is to join an environmental group. I would assume that they mean Nature Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation, Nature Conservancy — all groups who have come out opposed to this legislation. So how is it that you can join one of the groups who has no voice with this government? You can join a group. We recommend that you join a group that we're going to ignore. Please come out. Spend money and join a group that we don't care about their opinion of.

It's unbelievable to me that this is on their own website. So again we have irony when the minister suggests that the Act has been developed in consultation with these groups, when they all come out and say that it hasn't taken place. And we have more irony when the minister's own website suggests that individuals of Saskatchewan should support legislation that conserves wildlife habitat. That's on her website. That's on the minister's website — support legislation that conserves wildlife habitat.

Well we're waiting to see the legislation that actually conserves wildlife habitat. Not legislation being brought forward where the explanatory notes suggest clearly that this new approach includes assessing the ecological attributes of all Crown land and that only the initial focus on the land will be *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act* and that the information gathered by

evaluating all Crown land will be used to determine which lands may be sold, sold with a conservation easement, or retained by the Crown.

They say that and they introduce legislation to remove up to 3 million acres or more, depending on whether or not you believe the minister or her own explanatory notes. So there's irony with the minister and her comments in the legislature and outside the Assembly where she suggests that less than 10 per cent of the 3 million acres is at risk here, when her own explanatory notes suggest exactly the opposite of that.

There's irony in that she suggests that the Act has been developed in consultation with a number of groups who say that they haven't been consulted. And there's more irony on her own website where she says that individuals of Saskatchewan should support legislation that conserves wildlife habitat in Saskatchewan — unbelievable to me. And it goes further. It suggests that you should join a group or wildlife federation that supports these principles. And then they go on to ignore them.

So the irony in this government and with the minister responsible is absolutely shocking. It's absolutely shocking. And it's unfortunate because the people of Saskatchewan deserve better. They deserve legislation that reflects what they want, what they need. They deserve legislation that they're consulted on. They deserve a minister who won't make statements that are entirely ironic, and that's the best term I think you can use for these statements.

That's the best term you can use for statements wherein her own second reading speech suggests that groups have been consulted. The first paragraph of her second reading speech suggests in some manner that to remove these sensitive lands will allow the government to protect more efficiently, more effectively, and more sustainably these lands than ever before. That's ironic. It's ironic and the people of Saskatchewan deserve more than irony when it comes to legislation put forward in this Assembly on their behalf. They deserve more than irony from members of the Saskatchewan Party government, especially a minister who introduces legislation that removes land and then on her own website suggest that she should join a group that she ignores and that the people of Saskatchewan should support legislation that enhances and . . .

[Interjections]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Elhard): — Order. Order. This is an interesting conversation, but the member from Prince Albert has the floor. And if you'd like to carry the conversation on, you can do so behind the bar. I recognize the member from Prince Albert.

Mr. Furber: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to take this opportunity to put on the record more third party validation because, as I had suggested before, it's one of the most useful tools a member of the Assembly has, given the parliamentary democracy under which we work. And in this case it is a letter written to members of the opposition. And I'll read the letter:

We write concerning the government's statement that conservation stakeholder organizations were consulted about the Crown land sale program, in particular the sale

of land designated under *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*. Both the ministers of Agriculture and Food and Environment have publicly stated [that] WHPA lands will not be sold. 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.

It goes on to say that:

We request that you urge the government to delay the passing of the amendments to *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*, which would see these lands removed from the Act and placed under regulation where they could be sold at the discretion of the minister. The government has not properly consulted with the public on this very important issue which has the potential to cause significant consequence to biodiversity in Saskatchewan.

So again people that are following at home might ask, is Nature Saskatchewan one of the organizations that the minister listed in her second reading speech in that important third chapter where she tried to insinuate that they . . . was third party validation on her behalf and on the government's behalf with respect to the development of the changes to *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*? And if you will look at page 4004 in *Hansard* on March 8th, 2010, the last paragraph on the page, Nature Saskatchewan is indeed — as you may well be aware, Mr. Speaker — is indeed listed as one of the groups that the Minister alleges was consulted and that this legislation was developed in consultation with. She suggests that Nature Saskatchewan was one of those groups.

The letter written to opposition members on April 27th says that the government has not properly consulted with the public on this issue and that “We can assure you that no meaningful consultation regarding the sale of Crown lands has occurred with Nature Saskatchewan.” So again Nature Saskatchewan, another group coming out and denying that what the minister said was true. The FSIN, the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation, all denying that what the minister said was true in her second reading speech. They're denying it was true, so more third party validation for the opposition and for the people of Saskatchewan with respect to this legislation.

Again on the 29th of April, on the 29th of April in *The StarPhoenix*, the editorial board who is a group of folks that edit *The StarPhoenix* in Saskatoon came out and said this. The headline of the article is “Short-sighted of gov't to sell protected land,” and the article says a few things that are interesting. It says:

The provincial government's plan to remove from under the protective umbrella of the Wildlife Protection Act nearly three million acres of Crown land smacks of short-term thinking and political expediency that's detrimental to all citizens of Saskatchewan.

It's a very important first line in a column written by the editorial board because it encompasses a lot of things. As I had suggested, there must be some motivation when this many folks

in Saskatchewan are opposed to a Bill. There must be some motivation for government to ram it through. The editorial board of *The StarPhoenix* seems to believe that it's political expediency that's the motivation. We might come to find at some later date what the actual motivation was, but I think political expediency is at the start of it.

It also says that it smacks of short-term thinking. Not a small claim as you might well recognize, Mr. Speaker. It goes on to say:

And despite Environment Minister Nancy Heppner's claim that the move, which she wants to make by the end of May and would see about 10 per cent of the land sold to ranchers whose families have leased it for generations “isn't about monetary things,” her decision remains puzzling.

Even in a large province that boasts 43 per cent of Canada's arable land, the removal from wildlife habitat protection chunks of land that amounts to twice the size of Prince Edward Island is cause for consternation.

At a time when the entire world is becoming increasingly aware of the value of preserving natural habitat for wildlife for the sake of future generations as well as our own, the government demonstrates a breathtakingly short-sighted approach to its duty and obligation to act as a responsible steward of the public interest.

Now I'm not sure I've heard the editorial board of *The StarPhoenix* say anything that was more negative about a government, since I have taken an interest in reading *The StarPhoenix*, than the line used in this article right there: “. . . the government demonstrates a breathtakingly short-sighted approach to its duty and obligation to act as a responsible steward of the public interest.”

[15:45]

That is about as bad as it gets for a government, to be accused of being short-sighted and failing in its duty to act as a steward of the public interest. Not of a private interest, not of an individual interest, but of the public interest, of the interest of the people of Saskatchewan, they are breathtakingly short-sighted in their approach and duty and obligation — a statement that I think members opposite should take very seriously, should take to heart, and should act on.

And the way that they can act on it is to pull the Bill, make the reasonable changes, the changes that would benefit all the people of Saskatchewan, and reintroduce the Bill. Reintroduce the Bill in this Assembly so that it can have its proper scrutiny. It goes on to say that:

However, wildlife protection and conservation groups, First Nations leaders and others are quite right to be concerned that, once private buyers acquire Crown land, there are no restrictions on the further resale of the land or any guarantees that the habitat will remain protected in the long run.

So what the editorial board is suggesting is that, while for any

number of years — in some cases generations — the ranchers and landowners have been wonderful stewards of this land, there is nothing in this legislation that prevents sale of that land. And then while they were tremendous stewards while they owned the land, virtually anything could happen to the land after it's sold. And I think the editorial board makes a good point there. They make a good point that once you give up control of the land — in spite of the fact that the people who have utilized the land, some cases for generations, have been wonderful stewards — that there might be a negative effect after that land changes hands.

For instance, if there is a dispersal sale after a steward is deceased, somebody else will get that land, and they might take a vastly different approach than the landowner currently or the lessee currently who would become a landowner. And so I think it's an important point that the editorial board has made here. It goes on to say that:

It simply isn't acceptable that Ms. Heppner seems determined to push through changes to three-decade-old legislation without properly discussing them with groups other than the ranchers who have a stake in protected land.

As Darrell Crabbe, executive director of the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation aptly notes: "We just think that the future generations of Saskatchewan would be better served if there was full consultation with everybody and the original protection was left in place.

"This is a huge issue for us. We're talking about millions of acres of land that we consider to be a jewel in the crown of Saskatchewan."

Again the article goes on to say:

For a government that's heading into an election next year in a province whose economy shrank by 6.3 per cent in 2009 [and actually, Mr. Speaker, amounts to the economy of Saskatchewan contracting back to 2005 levels] and is struggling to keep its spending in line with its diminished revenues, any source of revenue — especially when it's tied closely to making some of its rural support base happy — might seem attractive.

So again it's insinuating that one of the further motivations of the Saskatchewan Party might be because they can't manage the budget that they, in this case, took an ostrich approach to an export-based economy. We export more than 80 per cent of what we produce. The Finance minister comes to Prince Albert and says that we're not going to take part in the global recession. The Premier says many of the same things while we're in the throes of a global recession. And anybody that knows anything about the economy would understand that when there's a global recession and when you export over 80 per cent of what you produce, you're going to take part whether you like it or not.

The editorial board suggests that, because the Premier and Finance minister ignored the fact that we would enter and take part in the global recession, that the economy shrank by 6.3 per cent, that that's a part of the motivation for bringing forward

this legislation because they might make a quick buck because they can't manage the budget of the province of Saskatchewan. They don't understand that you're going to take part in a global recession whether you want to or not, as an exporting jurisdiction, that they need the money.

Now that they increased spending by 32 per cent over two years has a great deal to do with it as well. But again that is the editorial board, of the province of Saskatchewan making the assertion that the reason this legislation is brought forward is because of the money. They need the money. The article, the editorial goes on to say that:

It's easy to understand why groups such as Ducks Unlimited are concerned about putting in place conservation easements before any protected land is sold, so that subsequent owners are prevented from draining wetlands or breaking it up, and about the mechanisms the government is putting in place to assess the value of property that Ms. Heppner thinks "no longer has to be under wildlife habitat protection."

"We're not convinced that they have the means to be able to accurately define which lands have greater or which lands have lesser ecological value," suggests Brent Kennedy, DU's manager of provincial operations.

So the program that's being touted by the Minister of the Environment that will assess all of the lands in Saskatchewan, the piece that she alludes to in her explanatory notes where she says that "This new approach includes assessing the ecological attributes of all Crown land with an initial focus on . . . The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act." That's what she says in her explanatory notes. Ducks Unlimited manager of provincial operations says that "We're not convinced that they have the means to be able to accurately define which lands have greater or which lands have lesser ecological value." So again the minister's contradicted in her assertions that they're able to do that and do it accurately and properly. And she's contradicted by a provincial manager, a manager of provincial operations for Ducks Unlimited.

And so it would seem at every turn the assertions made by the minister, the website that she is responsible for as a minister, the words that she says in this Assembly are all contradicted by people that are directly affected. She suggests again that there was consultation that took place, and many groups in Saskatchewan say exactly the opposite. They say exactly the opposite of what the minister asserts.

Now the article of April 29th goes on to say, "Given the steady loss of wetlands in Saskatchewan through drainage, with farmers making economically rational decisions that are at odds with the needs of wildlife, it's easy to understand from where Mr. Kennedy is coming." So the editorial board and the manager of provincial operations for Ducks Unlimited each contradict what the minister says in terms of their ability to assess Crown lands in Saskatchewan. The article goes on to say that:

The call by DU and other conservation groups for the Saskatchewan government to develop a wetland policy to conserve and restore wetlands in the province has gone

unheeded. This even though wetlands are crucial to protecting water supplies, reducing effluents from washing into lakes and rivers, and recharging groundwater supplies.

Instead, the Environment minister is acting to further erode the protective legislation already in place. No wonder those who take a longer view of the province beyond its four-year election cycles are concerned.

So there you have it, Mr. Speaker. There you have it. The editorial board of *The StarPhoenix* says that "... the Environment minister is acting to further erode the protective legislation already in place" for land in Saskatchewan. And so again, this entire speech has been about irony — irony that on her own website she suggests joining a group that she's ignoring in this legislation; irony that she says in her second reading speech, these groups are consulted, quite clearly they say they're not; and irony with the very fact that she is the Environment minister in Saskatchewan when she's further eroding the protective legislation in place for designated lands in Saskatchewan.

It's absolutely shocking and sad that that is the Environment minister's position and the position that she finds herself in where she is further eroding protective legislation because I would suggest, as I'm sure most anybody else in Saskatchewan would suggest and assert, that it is the Environment minister's responsibility to do exactly the opposite of what she's accused of doing by the editorial board in Saskatoon at *The StarPhoenix* in this case. Because I would argue, and I'm sure Saskatchewan residents would also, that it is the Environment minister's responsibility to protect the land that we have and to enhance legislation or change legislation that enhances that protection, to create and design legislation that comes into this Assembly that benefits the environment in Saskatchewan. And the editorial board at *The StarPhoenix* suggests that she's doing something exactly the opposite of that.

And so there is no question in my mind that people in Saskatchewan would disagree with the approach that's being taken and do disagree with the approach that's being taken by the Environment minister in the province of Saskatchewan, the member from Martensville.

In another article, or sorry, another letter that's written by a resident of Saskatchewan to an opposition member, it says . . . Well first I'll read what these folks were sent by their member organization, in reference to how the Saskatchewan Party government consults. It says:

We write concerning the governments statements that conservation stakeholder organizations were consulted about the Crown land sale program, in particular the sale of land designated under the Wildlife Habitat Protection Act (WHPA).

Both the Ministers of Agriculture & Food and Environment have publicly stated WHPA lands will not be sold. We can assure you that no meaningful consultation regarding the sale of Crown lands has occurred with Nature Saskatchewan . . . Nature Saskatchewan was never asked for an opinion about the

sale of Crown lands. The Crown Lands Stakeholder Forum, which did provide an opportunity for discussion about the management of future Crown lands was abolished by the Minister of Agriculture.

We request you to urge the government to delay the passing of the amendments to the Wildlife Habitat Protection Act which would see these lands removed from the Act and placed under regulation where they could be sold at the discretion of the Minister.

The Government has not properly consulted with the public on this very important issue which has the potential to cause significant consequence to biodiversity in Saskatchewan.

[16:00]

If we do nothing, the legislation will pass, and we'll have to explain to our children and grandchildren how we let this happen. The letter to the member of the opposition says this. It says, then as a member of Nature Saskatchewan . . . The organization which wrote to their members the article that I'd just written, they contacted their members with those words. The individual says this:

Then as a member of Nature Saskatchewan, I was horrified to receive this email. And I urge you and all opposition members to please do your utmost to stop this legislation which would allow the sale of designated wildlife habitat protection Act protected land to be sold at the discretion of the minister.

And so that note that I had written is indicative of many different letters that the NDP opposition members have received about the government and this misguided legislation. And they simply ask that we do all we can to stop it.

The minister suggests that she wants to make changes to it, and the only way to make those changes is to pull the Bill, do some meaningful consultation for a change, and make the changes, resubmit the Bill, and we'll move forward. In light of the fact that they refuse to do that and many other things, I will take my seat to allow another member of the legislature to express his opinion and the opinion of people he's been contacted by on this debate. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Elhard): — I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to weigh in on debate here today, not because of the nature of the debate and the fact that we have a Bill before us that's been derived without any consultation with the public, but because it's a matter that's very important to me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and important to my constituents, important to many, many, many across this province. And it's our job and our role as legislators to take that opportunity to weigh in on these matters, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And I'll take the opportunity to do so because this is a major failure of the Sask Party government to put forward legislation that has no reflection of the groups for whom it reflects, who

puts forth legislation without any consultation with the groups for whom it impacts, and to expect to simply ram this through in this spring setting without the public being engaged the way that they should have been from day one, Mr. Speaker.

When we're talking about this Bill, we need to understand what's at stake here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and not only what's at stake, but what we're speaking of. And of course we're talking about protected habitat of environmentally sensitive lands, Mr. Speaker. And what we need to recognize is that these lands have been invested, have been purchased by the people of this province through many, many different mechanisms and through many different ways — some of which have been bequests from someone's estate given upon death to the province, to the people of this province to protect them, and to hold for the purpose of habitat preservation, Mr. Speaker.

So we have land that's been purchased by the people of the province. We have land that's been bequeathed by many across this province, Mr. Speaker. We have land that's been purchased by hunters and fishers, Mr. Speaker, by wildlife branches across this province, Mr. Speaker, who have worked tirelessly to ensure that this kind of protection in land has occurred, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And it's all for naught it would appear, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Those efforts for years and years and years and years, the stewardship by so many groups — environmentalists, hunters, fishers, and trappers — all for naught, Mr. Speaker, to advance an agenda that's misunderstood at this point, and certainly the interested partners have not been a part of developing this piece of legislation.

We see that as it relates to First Nations, Mr. Speaker. At one point there was discussion and it seemed to be recognition by this government — and we pushed and urged for that — was to be a duty to consult which is expected by governments at this point in time, recognizing our history, Mr. Speaker. And that duty to consult has turned into a shameful duty to insult on so many fronts, Mr. Speaker. And we see that with our First Nations people, and we see that in a complete lack of consideration for treaty rights, treaty considerations, Mr. Speaker. So this is many, many, many groups that this affects.

And when we're talking about basically our jewels here in our province being our wildlife and our flora and our fauna, Mr. Speaker, our natural environment, our biodiversity, we're all seeing that being sacrificed and compromised and put at risk by very deliberate actions of this Sask Party government and this Sask Party Premier who are intent on advancing an agenda that we're not certain who the benefactors of this agenda is, Mr. Speaker.

But we would ask them to slow down. We would ask them simply to slow down, Mr. Speaker, and have the discussion in this legislature and to have the discussion with the public and the groups for whom this is of huge interest to — the groups for whom have worked to put this land in place.

Now one of the goofiest justifications that we heard from this minister, who's made many silly statements on this front, many damaging statements on this front, but one of the goofiest had to be that this was being advanced because, as she suggested,

her government believed in land ownership. Well, Mr. Speaker, that just doesn't make any sense. This land is owned. It's owned by the people of this province, across this province, Mr. Speaker, and it's been put there by their dollars, by their hard work, and with their work towards the goals that have been achieved through this sort of protection, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And we see it all for naught at this point in time, all for naught.

And I think that when you look at well over 100 wildlife branches across this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that work year-round . . . And you would know this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because certainly you have active branches in your own constituency, and across this province we have branches in every one of our constituencies. And they do good work, Mr. Speaker, for the preservation of the land, for the enhancement of habitat, for the promotion of hunting best practice, for introducing individuals and young people into the sport.

And it's all about land and wildlife management, Mr. Speaker. And they've played a major, major and significant role in protecting habitat. So when they speak and they say, we're concerned, and they say, we haven't been consulted — even though the minister pretends that they have — we listen to those groups, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We stand with those groups and we say, let's slow this process down.

They're not asking for anything too wild as far as a consideration here right now, Mr. Speaker. They're asking for this process to be stopped at this point in time, for this Bill to be pulled, for the considerations to be granted that haven't up until this point in time, and for those groups to be consulted, those that haven't been consulted on this important matter. We're talking about something that this government has the power to do on any given day. They could choose to do that immediately. They could've done it two weeks ago. And we hope that they will do that, Mr. Speaker.

We are hearing across this province the public weighing in on this in a major way as well. We're getting many, many calls to our offices. We're getting many calls into, I know into my own office as well that are coming from constituencies that aren't my constituency, Mr. Speaker, that are individuals who are feeling that they're not being represented in this debate, Mr. Speaker, individuals who are removing politics from the equation, Mr. Speaker, and are saying . . . In fact many, many individuals who are stating that they had voted for this Sask Party government in the last election and that they are absolutely dismayed on many fronts, but on this front which is very important and actually a fundamental issue to many, many people across this province.

Now they're trying to get a hold of the individual that they elected. And in the case of the Sask Party MLAs, they can't have that conversation. They won't even meet with their constituents on these matters. And so they're coming in through our offices by email, by letter, in person. And I know our Environment critic has been working so diligently on this file and is, I would assume and I know, basically encumbered with an absolute pile of information and requests for meetings coming in and a rather overwhelming . . . And it's a sad statement about how this government is going about creating legislation and how they think that they can simply force through their agenda on top of the people of Saskatchewan

without any of the considerations and conversations with the groups for whom it affects the greatest.

Many of those groups that we talk about here have been the key contributors to ensuring that these lands have been protected. And that something so vital to these groups, to have that ripped away from them, to be driven — driven and advanced — despite all their pleas otherwise is of huge concern to those groups and to the broad public, Mr. Speaker.

And I reference a *StarPhoenix* editorial from April 29th, 2010, just to speak to what the editorial board from *The StarPhoenix* is stating in Saskatoon, the title being “Short-sighted of gov’t to sell protected land.” And I’ll just make a few statements out of this telling editorial. And of course this is printed in Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker:

The provincial government’s plan to remove from under the protective umbrella of the Wildlife Protection Act nearly three million acres of Crown lands smacks of short-term thinking and political expediency that’s detrimental to . . . citizens of Saskatchewan.

I’ll move on:

At a time when the entire world is becoming increasingly aware of the value of preserving natural habitat for wildlife for the sake of future generations as well as our own, the government demonstrates a breathtakingly short-sighted approach to its duty and obligation to act as a responsible steward of the public interest.

I’ll repeat that: “. . . a breathtakingly short-sighted approach to its duty and obligation to act as a responsible steward of the public interest.”

Now that’s a scathing statement, Mr. Speaker. And it’s fair, and it’s bang on. It’s a direct statement, and it’s a statement that is attributed to this Sask Party government that has lost their way on so many other fronts, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

[16:15]

When we think about a government that has no willingness to listen to the public and the groups that have expertise, that have interest in the matters that affect them most, this government advances their agenda despite any of the objective and considerate pleas of groups.

And we think of a government that rams home legislation with no consultation and major changes with no consultation. And there’s no wonder, Mr. Deputy Speaker, why so many across this province are speaking about the Sask Party breaking trust with the people who have elected them so early on in their mandate.

And this is a very interesting development in Saskatchewan politics, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to see a government that’s basically set aside the people who have elected them and said, this is our agenda and we’re going to advance it all costs and without any consultation. And it’s an arrogant state. It’s an arrogant state and it’s one of self-righteous . . . it’s a self-righteous position, and it disregards the objective

information available to governments, the excellent groups available to governments in helping to make good policy decisions.

And we see that on so many different fronts. We see the no consultation here with so many groups that this affects, Mr. Speaker, and who would be authorities on this matter. We see that on so many other issues. We see that as it relates to our film industry that’s been under attack under this government, with no consultation, making massive cuts of SCN. And that has a dramatic impact on our economy and our film industry, Mr. Speaker.

We see that in the torn-up agreement, the torn-up agreement with no consultations, just ripped up an agreement that had been ratified with chiropractors in this province. Unbelievable, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to go through a process and have the chiropractors ratify an agreement that affects over 100,000 patients in this province, and then to rip that agreement up.

And then we hear the Premier wondering, oh you know, where has he lost his trust. It’s a question that he’s asking. You know, where has that happened? Well it’s these direct, these direct broken promises, a lack of consultation, and the arrogant ways of this government that has cost this government the people’s trust.

A government without trust, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is one that’s without roots. It’s one that’s not representative of the people. And they can spend — because we know that they spend most of their money on marketing and spin, photo opportunities — when you’ve broken trust, none of that matters, Mr. Speaker, and people don’t buy it. They don’t trust it, Mr. Speaker. They see through it. They feel like they’re getting a slick ad sales job on them, Mr. Speaker, and that’s not how they should be consulted.

It doesn’t mean that every single group at all times, Mr. Speaker, are going to be in agreement with the agenda of a government. That’s not the reality, Mr. Speaker, but the point is that they’re brought to the table with the respect and dignity that they deserve and that their voice is heard and their input is brought forward. And that through public debate the various perspectives can be exposed, a dialogue can occur, and that a government can explain why they’re advancing an agenda that in this case seems to be hugely ill-advised and certainly, certainly is greeted with huge opposition across this province — rightfully so — by some incredibly strong groups, Mr. Speaker.

We look at why that we should expect anything different. You know, I mentioned the chiropractors — no consultation, a ripped up agreement, broken trust. I reference that with respect to the film industry as well and the damage done to our economy as a result, and the damage done to that industry by this Sask Party government — no consultation.

We see that by the closure of a very important kidney transplant program, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a program where we have individuals, over 100 in this province right now waiting for kidney transplants needed for their life, Mr. Deputy Speaker, who are having . . . that opportunity has basically, the door has been shut by having that program closed down by this government, by this Sask Party government. So we see it on so

many fronts. And we have the resources to get that program going.

We have a government that's not willing to consult on this front and to put forward a plan to open those doors. And that's a shame, Mr. Speaker. It's a shame that this government isn't prepared to do the hard work, to do the consultation, and to find the solutions that Saskatchewan people are requiring of their government. And yet this Premier wonders where did he break the trust.

Mr. Speaker, we look at the labour legislation, the regressive attack on the working people of this province who do the heavy lifting within our economy, Mr. Speaker, and we see them being set back in a major way by this government, having their feet absolutely kicked out from underneath them, Mr. Speaker. Pieces of legislation, Bill 5, Bill 6, 43, and 80 that take away their livelihood, Mr. Speaker, take away the prosperity and the well being of their family for the advancement of whom, Mr. Speaker, for the advancement of whom, with no consultation, Mr. Speaker. In fact being told something else, being told before an election that no, no, you'll be fine, we're not going to touch that legislation. And then we see a government come to office and in a hugely two-faced manner go and do the exact opposite of what they said. And then the Premier wonders, well where did I lose the trust. I'm explaining it to him here right now, Mr. Speaker. I'm explaining it.

And I know Saskatchewan people can cite these examples for that Premier if he'd spend more time, Mr. Speaker, with the people of this province instead of out ripping around the United States with high-priced contracts to get him good press in the United States of America, Mr. Speaker, hanging out with Republicans down south. He needs to start listening to the people here in Saskatchewan because we see a government's that out of touch. It's out of touch. It's arrogant and it's not listening to the people of this province.

We see it in education with the advancement of a plan to eliminate educational assistants. A government that is saying one thing, doing another, then trying to cover up something else and trying to in fact then have someone else take the blame for their decisions, Mr. Speaker. Running and hiding, Mr. Speaker. And the Premier wonders, well where did I lose the trust. Where did he lose the trust?

We look at the health privacy of patients, Mr. Speaker, something that is absolutely vital to individuals, something that's important to individuals to be protected, to be protected, Mr. Speaker, being put forward by this government to be shared by this government, Mr. Speaker, without any consultation. Without any consultation. In fact they didn't even consult, Mr. Speaker — and you might find this surprising, Mr. Speaker — they didn't even consult with the Privacy Commissioner on this matter. Something that has a huge consequence for Saskatchewan people and that something that Saskatchewan people are hugely opposed to, no consultation.

We see that when this government goes out and signs a new agreement with municipalities last year, as it relates to revenue sharing. They do a lot of fanfare, they do the photo opportunities, Mr. Speaker. But then when we come around to the year, and it's time for them to honour that contract, what do

they do, Mr. Speaker? They rip it up. They rip it up and with no consultation.

And an agreement . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And now there's a member that's shouting across here and she's recognizing and she's highlighting some of the decisions in years past. And I know she's probably referencing the circumstances and context of a debt-laden province after the last Conservative government that was in office, Mr. Speaker. Because I think she's referencing decisions at a point in time where this province could barely make payroll, Mr. Speaker, and basically the bankers in New York were calling us on our debt and we were in a bankrupt circumstance, Mr. Speaker. And that's a member opposite . . . I'm glad that they still remember the debt that was put upon us by their party back in the 1980s. And, Mr. Speaker, that is a huge concern to Saskatchewan people.

We look here now too, and these are the other consequences where we now are selling public land, protected and put in place by the hunters, fishers, individuals across this province, Mr. Speaker, landowners, all people of this province. We see a government that gets himself into such a financial mess, one of Grant Devine proportions, Mr. Speaker. And now they're looking for quick and easy solutions, Mr. Speaker. And the fact that there's monetary considerations when you're talking about habitat lands, Mr. Speaker, is an absolute shame. When you're looking at something that's been protected and placed in protection for a very specific purpose by the people of this province, to be now be attacked by the lack of financial management of this Premier and the Sask Party is a major problem, Mr. Speaker.

And we stand opposed to this kind of reckless management, this kind of knee-jerk response. The deficit that they've created is something that they need to get under control, but they don't need to be having a fire sale on habitat lands, environmentally sensitive lands, Mr. Speaker. We need to be making sure our flora, our fauna, our biodiversity are enhanced, Mr. Speaker, for generations to come, not going in the other direction.

And I can't, I can't fathom that. Well no government in any jurisdiction would get away with what this government is doing here right now. And this government's not going to either. And we see that with the groups that have come out, that have expressed their concern and their opposition. And they're very upset that they weren't included in the consultation process because there wasn't one.

And when we're talking about groups such as the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation, Mr. Speaker, that play a vital role in our communities, the health of our, the well-being of our communities with over 30,000 members in this province. Mr. Speaker, when they're coming out so strongly opposed to this piece of legislation and with a very simple request — let's pull this Bill, let's sit down, let's consult, let's get this right — that's a very fair request, Mr. Speaker. For this Premier and the Sask Party to push their agenda ahead against the will — and I'll list the other groups here, Mr. Deputy Speaker — but against the will of the one group, being Saskatchewan's Wildlife Federation and its 30,000 members, that is hugely disconcerting, Mr. Speaker.

So it questions, who is this Premier actually representing? Who does this Premier represent? And we know there's some special interests, Mr. Speaker, that drive this Premier's decisions. That's what we know, Mr. Speaker. And that we understand that those close to the Premier have great influence over the Premier, and we suspect that's where this piece of legislation comes from. But the point is, it hasn't gone to the people who should be involved in those consultations. We need to make sure this is in the best interests of Saskatchewan people. And as it relates to reducing habitat lands, that certainly isn't the direction to be going, Mr. Speaker.

We think of groups like Saskatchewan Environmental Society, a strong legacy in this province and good work, stand opposed to this Bill and the way it's advancing. We think of groups like Nature Saskatchewan who have stated their opposition with this Bill, who have simply said, let's pull this Bill. Let's get it right. Let's get it right. And we think of groups like Ducks Unlimited that have said, we weren't consulted through this process and we have concerns. This is something that needs to be addressed, Mr. Speaker.

And we have the First Nations of our province, the FSIN stating their opposition and their huge frustration, like many of the other groups, that despite the minister's claims that they were consulted with, nothing could be further from the truth. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Well just think about that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that we have a minister of the Crown who suggests that she consulted with many of the groups I just listed off. Now you have those groups coming out and their spokespeople stating, you know, that never happened. And then the Premier wonders why are his numbers crumbling as it relates to support in this province and why has he lost the trust of Saskatchewan people. Why has he lost the trust of Saskatchewan people?

And I hear it right now. Members opposite, I see the arrogant state of members opposite right at this point in time who just want this Bill passed. They want to get this session done. It's not been a good session for them, and they want to get back to their respective communities, and they want to just advance this Bill.

But I might say this Bill has huge opposition in each and every one of those members' constituencies. Wildlife branches across this province stand opposed to this piece of legislation. Wildlife groups across this province stand opposed to this legislation, yet that Premier and the Sask Party will simply ram this ahead. Simply ram it ahead. That's disappointing, Mr. Speaker, and Saskatchewan people expect more and should expect more from their government, Mr. Speaker.

[16:30]

And the member from P.A. [Prince Albert] — who is up in the boreal forest, in many ways the gateway to a beautiful North, Mr. Speaker, a precious resource is both south of there and north of there, Mr. Speaker — and the member from P.A. says well we just simply are getting things done, Mr. Speaker; he shouts across to me here. Yes, well he sure is, Mr. Speaker. He sure is just getting things done, Mr. Speaker. He sure is. He's selling off land that's been put there by the hunters and fishers

of this province. He's getting things done by removing protected lands that are there for our wildlife, for our flora, for our fauna, Mr. Speaker, for generations to come. He's getting things done by increasing debt to the tune of . . . basically a scope and scale that we haven't seen in a generation, back to the last time Conservatives ran this province into the ground.

Mr. Speaker, this is, you bet this government's getting things done. They're getting them done quickly, and that's the concern because there's some important areas that do require their attention, like the broken promises as it relates to rural health care, the doctor shortage that's grown under this government, the doctor shortage that's grown under this province in a huge way under the Sask Party's government, Mr. Speaker, and the surgical wait times that aren't getting shorter under this government but that are getting longer, in fact 100 per cent longer, doubled in Swift Current, the Premier's own health riding.

And the Premier wonders, the Premier wonders why don't people trust me? These are the prime examples. These are the areas that this government should be putting its interest into, its attention to in a consultative fashion and getting things done as the member likes to say. That's where they should be getting things done — not by selling off protected habitat lands, not by growing our debt and deficit, Mr. Speaker, so that it encumbers generations to come, limits the opportunity and prosperity that's deserved by Saskatchewan people, by the entrepreneurs who work so hard within our economy, for the working people who toil every day to bring home a paycheque, Mr. Speaker, all put at risk by this government.

The article that I was referencing before, *The StarPhoenix* editorial goes on to highlight, and this is on April 29th, 2010: "It simply isn't acceptable that Ms. Heppner seems determined to push through changes to three-decade-old legislation without properly discussing them with groups other than the ranchers who have a stake in protected land." No consultation. It goes on:

As Darrell Crabbe, executive director of the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation aptly notes: "We just think that the future generations of Saskatchewan would be better served if there was full consultation with everybody and the original protection was left in place.

"This is a huge . . . [concern] for us. We're talking about millions of acres of land that we consider to be a [crown] jewel . . . of Saskatchewan."

Mr. Speaker, I agree with Mr. Crabbe wholeheartedly, absolutely. Our land in this province, our wildlife, our flora, our fauna, is a jewel, Mr. Speaker, without a doubt. To see it being put at risk by this government is a major, major shame. And it speaks as well to the lack of understanding of this government as it relates to very basic understanding of the interconnection of our wildlife and the food chain and life cycles, Mr. Speaker.

And we see a major gopher problem within this province, Mr. Speaker. And you're from the Southwest, and so you would certainly know that, and it's not just within the Southwest. But at the same time, we're going to take habitat lands, a natural environment that's very conducive to animals such as hawks,

Mr. Speaker, and we're going to reduce and eliminate that land. We're going to till that land, and we eliminate the hawks further from the food chain. And we haven't done enough on this front to be honest, Mr. Speaker.

This is something that we should be working on if we want to be effectively balancing our natural environment and addressing our gopher issue. We need to be addressing the number of hawks within this province. To see a move like this that is completely going in the other direction and it hinders and hurts the population of hawks, thus it allows gophers to flourish across this province, something that is a huge consequence to producers, farmers and ranchers across our province, as you would know, Mr. Speaker.

And we're going to take land away? We should be doing the opposite. We should be protecting more land. We should be protecting more habitat. We should be putting forward common sense solutions that make sense.

We see a Premier, the Sask Party Premier who puts forward a plan to shoot every last coyote in the province. Broad brush — every last coyote has to go. Without a doubt, coyotes are a major issue in some parts of the province, and RMs and communities need mechanisms to be able to address those problems and individuals, landowners. But solutions could be had. Compromises can be found. But not this Premier who doesn't get what's going on within the natural environment; he says every last coyote's got to go. So he puts a bounty on coyotes, Mr. Speaker, that goes right across this entire province.

Well what do we know is that we eliminate all coyotes in this province. We have a major problem again with gophers as I speak to. We take away a natural predator. And we see rats flourish, Mr. Speaker, from farmyard to farmyard, from town to town, something that's a huge concern for Saskatchewan people if and when that occurs. And if you take away the predators in our natural environment, just wait.

And I know the Premier knows a little bit about seeing something like a rat infestation take over because they've had some challenges within his own home community. He should have an interest in making sure that communities and families are protected from those sort of circumstances, Mr. Speaker. And by taking land away from natural predators such as hawks, by eliminating indigenous species and indigenous plant life, this is the wrong direction to be going.

To be putting forward ill-fated coyote programs where a bounty is put on every single last coyote in the province to deal with the problem in a broad brush, Mr. Speaker, it's a poor program. And what we know as well — and it's a major problem, and we need to get the bottom of this — is that we're paying many, many, many individuals for coyotes from outside of our province because they're hauling the hooves into the province and that they're cashing them in, picking up the cheque. And this is something that we need to look at because it's a loss of public dollars that are flowing back for another purpose to another jurisdiction. That just shows again the failure in setting this program up.

So when we look at this land that's been worked at by many different governments, Mr. Speaker, of different political

persuasions, by individuals and groups across this province to protect this habitat that's a Crown jewel here in Saskatchewan there for a very important purpose, by groups such as the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation, Ducks Unlimited, Nature Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan Environmental Society, Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, and we deprive them the right to engage in debate over the lands for which they've directly been involved in contributing and protecting, that's an absolute shame.

And we see the flurries of emails, of letters coming into the office. And we see the letters of opposition inside the newspapers across our province. I'll cite, from the same article that I cited before, a quote here from Ducks Unlimited. I quote:

“We're not convinced that they have the means [they meaning the Sask Party government] to be able to accurately define which lands have greater or which lands have lesser ecological value,” suggests Brent Kennedy, DU's [Ducks Unlimited] manager of provincial operations.

There's concerns, Mr. Speaker, not only that the consultation hasn't been adequate, but there's concerns by very important groups that the evaluation and the assessments, Mr. Speaker, the capacity to conduct those is not where it should be, Mr. Speaker. And these are the kinds of discussions that need to go on as we go through consultations.

I'll reference another article here, Mr. Speaker. “Sask. habitat protection proposal raises furor.” Says it raises furor. This is from the CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] on April 28th, 2010. And I'll quote from it: “Wildlife groups and environmentalists in Saskatchewan are upset with the government plan to remove more than 1.2 million hectares of land from the Wildlife Habitat Protection Act.”

1.2 million hectares, so we have environmental groups, and we have wildlife groups coming together to stand opposed to the poor policies of this Sask Party government. I go on in the quote here: “‘Those properties are owned by the people of Saskatchewan, and I just don't think most people would want to see them sold off,’ said Darrell Crabbe, executive director of the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation.”

I go on: “It's a very sad day when the dollar plays a bigger role than our future generations.” This is the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation, Mr. Speaker, making a statement that “It's a sad day when the dollar plays a bigger role than our future generations.”

And I concur, Mr. Speaker. I concur wholeheartedly, and I thank the Wildlife Federation for their leadership on this front, proud to be a member of the Wildlife Federation to see the work that they're doing in making sure that the proper consultation occurs on a Bill that has a very significant impact on Saskatchewan's environment and our landscape and wildlife.

We go on to see further in other pieces of news media here. We see that in May 1st, Murray Mandryk of the *Leader-Post* cites by title “Environment portfolio bigger than politics.” He cites some of the work done by, in fact, the PC [Progressive Conservative] government in the 1980s as it related to protection of lands and talks about basically the process that's

before us here at this point in time, and then makes a statement about the current Environment minister. I quote:

Instead, Heppner has seemed intent on pitting ranchers against environmentalists when it's been the ranchers who have clearly been the environmental stewards of the land. (In fact, the only one who seems to be suggesting that ranchers won't be — or haven't been — good environmental stewards is Heppner, who seems rather intent on driving that political wedge.)

And one of the members, just as important that they could hear there, the member from Regina Qu'Appelle, I'll repeat that last phrase there again: "In fact, the only one who seems to be suggesting that the ranchers won't be — or haven't been — good environmental stewards is Heppner, who seems rather intent on driving in that political wedge." The article goes on and I quote, "And one of the worst is Heppner, who doesn't seem to have championed an issue beyond subsidizing low-flush toilets."

Mr. Speaker, there's I guess a bit of advice coming from this same article, from Mr. Mandryk's article. I quote, "Talk to the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation about this Bill. Heck, talk to some hunters who surely can't be a happy about a potential loss of resources." It's pretty common sense advice coming there, Mr. Speaker. And it's something that's falling on deaf ears, something that hasn't happened.

This government's advancing this agenda at all costs. For the benefit of whom, I'm not sure, Mr. Speaker, because what's the rush? Why can't this Bill simply be retracted as the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation and their 30,000 members across Saskatchewan are calling for and to have the consultation that never occurred and make sure we get this right? Why can't it simply be retracted like Nature Saskatchewan is recommending and the discussion and the dialogue that has to occur in a meaningful way has the opportunity then to occur and we can make sure we get this process right?

And why, Mr. Speaker, is this Premier and the Sask Party so intent on reducing the size and amount of protected wildlife lands — habitat lands — in our province? Doesn't make any sense to me, Mr. Speaker, and I know that Saskatchewan people will stand opposed to that principle and that position, (a) the position that he doesn't need to consult with anyone, Mr. Speaker, and that he can simply advance his agenda even when it's hugely not in the best interests of Saskatchewan people. And they'll stand opposed to the idea of losing protected lands, Mr. Speaker, something that Saskatchewan people value, something that's a jewel to our province, has a major impact on our tourism, Mr. Speaker — our natural environment.

As a hunter myself and a fisher myself, Mr. Speaker, I certainly sympathize with the Wildlife Federation and the hunters and fishers that are organizing across this province — writing letters, coming together, standing in protest of this Sask Party Premier's reckless abandon to put forward policies that don't reflect their needs — and stand up with those groups, Mr. Speaker, calling for that consultation to occur.

[16:45]

I go on and quote another article here, in the *Leader-Post* on May 11th. It's not just the hunters and fishers and their wildlife groups, Mr. Speaker, that are calling for this Bill to be shelved, consultation to occur. And I quote, "First Nations and conservation groups calling for delay in changes to Wildlife Habitat Protection Act." Calling for delay in changes. This isn't a radical request. There's no reason, Mr. Speaker, to rush this Bill through as this government is doing at this point in time. And we need to stop that process.

The Saskatchewan government faced, I quote here:

The Saskatchewan government faced new calls from First Nations and conservation groups Tuesday to delay legislation that will allow for the sale of some protected wildlife land.

Despite the government's recent attempts to placate concerns over proposed changes to the Wildlife Habitat Protection Act, the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation said there are still too many issues — such as lack of transparency on what protected lands could be removed from the Act in the future.

The group also wants a "no net loss" agreement so the overall amount of land protected doesn't decline.

I quote from the article, and I quote Darrell Crabbe with the Wildlife Federation, "The combination of a lack of consultation and the aggressive timeline on this bill has effectively made it impossible to address our concerns and left many important questions unanswered."

And that's Darrell Crabbe, the executive director of the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation that represents over 30,000 hunters and fishers and wildlife enthusiasts across this province — 30,000. Over 100 wildlife branches across our beautiful province, Mr. Speaker, are standing up for the Saskatchewan they believe in, standing against and opposed to the Sask Party Premier and his plan to sell off protected habitat, to sell off lands that serve our population well and to sell off lands that are owned by Saskatchewan people, put there by their hard work, without any consultation.

And it's not just this sale that's a concern, Mr. Speaker. The fact is that these changes make a significant difference into the future. With the changes in this legislation, the minister on her whim, or in the future, whoever's the Environment minister on their whim and whimsy, they can sell protected, environmentally sensitive habitat lands, Mr. Speaker. I look at members opposite, and I can't even imagine that they think this is the right way to go, can't imagine it because Saskatchewan communities, Saskatchewan people stand opposed to the Sask Party's plan on this front.

And they don't trust the Premier to consult, Mr. Speaker, because they've learned on so many other fronts that they can't trust this Premier to consult or to get the plan right. They're saying, pull the legislation. Let's get this, let's get this right.

The article goes on:

Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations Vice-Chief

Lyle Whitefish also urged the government to allow for further discussion before changing the act that protects more than three million acres of Crown land.

“There is not a lot of land in this country now that’s protected and we want to ensure that long-term sustainability for the future generations to enjoy these protected lands,” Whitefish said.

This is Vice-chief Lyle Whitefish, FSIN. You have hunters, you have fishers, you have the Wildlife Federation standing opposed. You have the Assembly of First Nations, representing the over 70 First Nations in this province, opposed. And yet this government, this Premier’s so arrogant to proceed, Mr. Speaker. He disregards the very request, the humble request of Saskatchewan people and organizations to sit down, to discuss this legislation, to understand this legislation and to build it together in a co-operative environment that meets the needs of all. It’s an arrogant position, Mr. Speaker, put forward by a Premier Saskatchewan people are learning they can’t trust, Mr. Speaker, as it relates to consulting with Saskatchewan people.

They’ve learned they can’t trust this Premier as it relates to health care delivery in this province, the massive shortage of doctors in this province, surgical wait times. They know they’ve learned they can’t trust this Premier as it relates to the cost of living that burdens so many, Mr. Speaker, across this province. And they certainly know they can’t trust this Premier as it relates to the management of our finances, Mr. Speaker.

And now we have a Bill before us that multiple governments, multiple governments have presided over, Mr. Speaker, of different political persuasions — the PC government from the 1980s, the New Democrats through the ’90s and into the 2000s — that ensured that that legislation stood strong and that it was improved to ensure that there was no net loss of environmentally sensitive lands.

Mr. Speaker, when we talk about the kinds of people who are caring about this piece of legislation, they’re the kind of people that put together fish fries, Mr. Speaker, to organize for programs within their communities to give new opportunities to youth within those communities.

Wildlife branches across this province, individuals who work incredibly hard to the benefit of Saskatchewan people, to the management of our wildlife, management of our environment. To be disregarded the way they are by this Premier, this Sask Party Premier, is a huge slap in the face of hard-working, good people. Mr. Speaker, a huge slap in the face.

So we’ve seen the opposition from group after group with a request that’s incredibly simple, incredibly simple. They say to the Premier, and they’ve been saying this from day one is, just pull this legislation back, Mr. Premier. Just pull it back. And they did so quietly and they did so modestly and they put forward those humble requests. Not this Premier who’s too arrogant to listen, Mr. Speaker. Not this Premier who’s lost the trust of Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker. He advances his agenda because it benefits someone, Mr. Speaker.

The point is there should be no rush in this legislation. It’s a simple request. Let’s pull that piece of legislation. This

government needs to sit down with the groups for whom it affects who care about the matter at hand and to get this right. The fact that this Premier somehow disregards that sort of a request is hugely telling, Mr. Speaker. It’s telling of how we got into the financial mess that we’re in. It’s telling of how we have a Premier who can’t respond to the pressures in health care, Mr. Speaker, and we see huge compromises on those fronts.

It’s telling, Mr. Speaker, as it relates to the lack of consultation, the no consultation that’s gone on, Mr. Speaker. And that’s representative of so many other decisions of this government, Mr. Speaker. And it’s unfortunate this government won’t consult.

Now I think maybe one of the gravest concerns out of all of this, Mr. Speaker, is that the Environment minister has actually stated, the minister of the Crown has stated that she has consulted and that this Premier has consulted with Saskatchewan people and with the groups that I stated here. But now all the groups put out their press releases — the Wildlife Federation, the FSIN, Nature Saskatchewan — and they say no, that’s not correct. We haven’t been consulted. So you have a minister of the Crown, Mr. Speaker, with a Sask Party government that’s been discredited as it relates to putting forward information, who’s saying one thing. And you have groups, Mr. Speaker, good people from across this province who are saying that never happened, Mr. Speaker.

My question to Saskatchewan people is, who are you going to believe? Are you going to believe one of the most partisan and political members of this Assembly, the Minister Responsible for the Environment who puts forward political interests far ahead of the actual portfolio that she presides over? Or are you going to believe the groups that care about the issues that they’re weighing in on, the good people from across this province? Who are you going to believe?

I know who I’m believing, Mr. Speaker, and I know who I stand with — Saskatchewan people. The individuals, the groups, the organizations that are there to protect and enhance our natural environment, our wildlife; I know who I’m going to believe, Mr. Speaker.

And you know what, Mr. Speaker? As I look over here right now and I look at the members opposite, I don’t believe for a second that 50 per cent of that caucus actually believes the Environment minister themselves. I don’t believe it. I don’t believe that they believe when the Environment minister says, I consulted with those groups. I think there’s a few of them that know that that never happened.

I think and I know a couple of those individuals over there who would, actually would like their Environment minister to put their portfolio ahead of politics. And you have one of the most important portfolios as it relates to Saskatchewan, as it relates to the world. And we have a minister of the Crown who is completely partisan and puts political agendas far ahead of her portfolio, the people of Saskatchewan who they’re supposed to be representing.

I don’t believe it for a moment, Mr. Speaker, that the members opposite believe what that member’s saying. And I guess I ask the members opposite, do you believe your Environment

minister? Do you believe your Environment minister? Do you believe your Environment minister? I don't have a single, I don't have a single response over there that suggests that they support their Environment minister, Mr. Speaker. I have one. I have one out of 38 that believes their Environment minister, Mr. Speaker. I see two. I see three. So three of them believe their Environment minister, Mr. Speaker. Unbelievable, Mr. Speaker.

And I can understand why it's difficult to believe because you have an Environment minister who stands up here as one of the most partisan individuals in this Assembly, who puts forward politics ahead of the well being of our environment and their portfolio on a daily basis, who says I consulted with the Wildlife Federation, who says I consulted with the First Nations. And then those groups, Mr. Speaker, who many of us know on both sides of this Assembly, for whom we believe and we trust, say no, that never happened.

Well who are you going to believe, Mr. Speaker? I can't bring the Speaker into the debate, I realize that, but who are they going to believe? I don't know, Mr. Speaker, but for me it's plain and simple. I'm going to stand with the Wildlife Federation members of 30,000 strong across this province. I'm going to stand with the First Nations who say they haven't been consulted. I'm going to stand with Nature Saskatchewan when they say that they haven't been consulted. And I'm going to believe that far ahead, Mr. Speaker, ahead of this Environment minister, Mr. Speaker.

A government, a government . . . Oh, and I'm going to go back here to, the member here makes a statement here and makes a statement about, because I tell you one thing, Mr. Speaker, we stand behind ranchers in this province in a major way.

And I'm just going to state here back to Murray Mandryk's article here from May 1st. And this is for the benefit of the Minister of Social Services who's, I can't hear exactly, but saying something, it sounds not helpful towards ranchers. And I tell you, the ranchers in our province have been exceptional environmental stewards, Mr. Speaker, exceptional environmental stewards. And that has nothing to do with this debate, Mr. Speaker, because the ranchers should be a full part of this consultation and full part of this debate because they have played an exceptional role in protecting wildlife in this province.

So I'm going to read this quote here:

(In fact the only one who seems to be suggesting that ranchers won't be — or haven't been — good environmental stewards is Heppner, who seems rather intent on driving in that political wedge.)

Mr. Speaker, the title of that article was, "Environment portfolio bigger than politics." And, Mr. Speaker, I agree. The Environment portfolio is bigger than politics. And to see the games being played by that Environment minister and by that Premier, who Saskatchewan people have learned they can't trust on so many different issues that matter to them, is of huge concern, Mr. Speaker.

We see a Premier that has lost the trust of Saskatchewan people,

who's willing to arrogantly force this agenda forward against the will of Saskatchewan hunters and fishers, against those who care about the environment, Mr. Speaker, against the First Nations and a complete disregard for treaty considerations, Mr. Speaker. That's a huge shame, when you have a Premier who's so willing to advance his arrogant position against the will of others when you have a simple solution. And it's put forward by the important groups that I believe and that I trust and that I stand with, Mr. Speaker, and those are the people that say let's pull . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Being now 5 p.m. the Assembly will adjourn until tomorrow morning at 10 a.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 17:00.]

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Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
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