



FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Don Toth
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
Allchurch, Denis	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Atkinson, Pat	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Belanger, Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Hon. Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Boyd, Hon. Bill	SP	Kindersley
Bradshaw, Fred	SP	Carrot River Valley
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Brotten, Cam	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Chartier, Danielle	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
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Furber, Darcy	NDP	Prince Albert Northcote
Gantfoer, Rod	SP	Melfort
Harpauer, Hon. Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harper, Ron	NDP	Regina Northeast
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Higgins, Deb	NDP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Hutchinson, Hon. Bill	SP	Regina South
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Junor, Judy	NDP	Saskatoon Eastview
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Krawetz, Hon. Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
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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
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Quennell, Frank	NDP	Saskatoon Meewasin
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Ross, Hon. Laura	SP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
Schriemer, Joceline	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Stewart, Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Taylor, Len	NDP	The Battlefords
Tell, Christine	SP	Regina Wascana Plains
Toth, Hon. Don	SP	Moosomin
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Vermette, Doyle	NDP	Cumberland
Wall, Hon. Brad	SP	Swift Current
Weekes, Randy	SP	Biggar
Wilson, Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Wyant, Gordon	SP	Saskatoon Northwest
Yates, Kevin	NDP	Regina Dewdney

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, seated in your gallery are a number of people, and I'm going to introduce two of the individuals seated up there. First gentleman that I'm going to introduce has been in the legislature a number of times. Mr. Speaker, we are honoured today in the province of Saskatchewan to have the ambassador from Ukraine to Canada. His Excellency Ihor Ostash is here representing Ukraine, and we've already had the opportunity to meet once and we're going to be doing that in the course of today and tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, but the other gentleman who's seated next to the ambassador is the deputy governor of the oblast Zhytomyr. Zhytomyr, as many who would know the geography of Ukraine, is a province, and oblast is equivalent to a province. And the deputy governor, Mr. Mykola Deysan, is here. I had the privilege . . . and I can honestly tell everyone that Mykola treated us royally in September in his province, in his oblast. We were able to visit industries. We were able to see so much, Mr. Speaker.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, in their booklet about Zhytomyr region, they have one sentence, and I'm going to just say it. It says, "The economic potential of Zhytomyr region offers opportunities for different kinds of business partnerships." And that's what the vice-governor is here to do. He's going to be signing a memorandum with the province of Saskatchewan for expanded trade and agriculture — that's where we're going to start — and then potentially to expand into so many different regions.

[The hon. member spoke for a time in Ukrainian.]

And I hope that you have a great stay here in this province for the next two days. Thank you very much.

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join the Deputy Premier in welcoming . . . [inaudible] . . . to the province of Saskatchewan, Ihor Ostash and particularly the deputy from the Zhytomyr region, Mykola Deysan. But we'd also like to mention that we have . . . This week Agribition is on here, something that you might be very interested in attending. And so welcome you to our province and I hope your stay is enjoyable. Thank you very much.

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to

you and through you to everyone in this Assembly, I'd like to introduce 12 individuals and their guests who were recognized this morning for their service with the housing authority. Some of them have 25 years of services, and three individuals have 35 years of service. Together there's 400 years of volunteerism in the Assembly this morning, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to introduce Evelyn Baxter from the Codette Housing Authority with 25 years; Betty Edworthy from the Weekes Housing Authority for 25 years; Geraldine Peppler from the Yorkton Housing Authority, 25 years; Grace Strobel, Waldheim Housing Authority, 25 years; John Hendricks, Mildren Housing Authority, 25 years; Robert Piercy, Mildren Housing Authority, 25 years; Walter Gardiner, Bethune Housing Authority, 25 years; Ernest Millar, Bethune Housing Authority, 25 years; and Melvin Kozlowski from the Battleford Housing Authority for 25 years.

And, Mr. Speaker, we also have two people here on 30 years: Jean Babiuk from the Sturgis Housing Authority and Lloyd Hunchak from the Blaine Lake Housing Authority.

I'd also like to recognize some people who were unable to be with us. Yvonne Wilson from the Lashburn Housing Authority, Dianne Epp from the Laird Housing Authority, and Leanne McDonald from the Sturgis Housing Authority. Mr. Speaker, I also would like to recognize a number of the officials who are with us today who have worked very hard.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join with me in thanking these people, not only for the work they do in the housing authority but for the many hours of volunteerism in other parts of their life as well. Thank you.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to join in with the minister in welcoming these very special guests that do tireless work for communities right across the province. And that is a very impressive number, over 400 hours. So I know, on behalf of the opposition, I too would like to join the minister in welcoming those folks.

And while I'm on my feet . . . But we should give them a round of applause right now. While I'm on my feet, I would like to ask permission, leave from the House if I could make an extended introduction.

The Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Centre has asked for leave to do an extended introduction. Are the members agreeable?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to the government for agreeing. This is a very special day for many members of our society who have service animals who help them out daily in their work, both in a private setting and a

public setting. And so they have travelled to Regina, to their legislature, to hear first reading of the Bill, the service animals protection Act.

And I'd like to take a moment and introduce all the people. And I think that they're here on the main floor. And first I'd like to introduce Robin East who has been introduced in this House before. He's a stalwart advocate for those people living with disabilities. Robin is here with his guide dog, Seinfeld, and he's the national president of the Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians and also the national Guide Dog Users of Canada. And he pointed out as we were coming in today that he's never seen a situation in the House where we've had so many guide dogs in the House. So this truly is a first and they're doing very, very well.

I'd also like to introduce John Bishop and his guide dog Bliss, Shan Noy with guide dog Danson; Summer Hartzfeld with guide dog Lake, Michelle Busch with guide dog Jimmy, Blaine Deutscher with guide dog Dewey, Richard Letourneau with guide dog Oswin, Bernie Nielsen with guide dog Emma, Darlene Smith — and her husband Dan; Dan's up there — with guide dog Duffy, and Marlene Hoce is . . . actually Marlene is between guide dogs right now. And she feels very privileged to be here because she believes very firmly in the good work that guide dogs do.

These folks represent different organizations too, to make sure their voice is heard — Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians, blind sports Canada, Canadian Council of the Blind, the Canadian National Society of the Deaf-Blind. And I know that they met together in the spring to form a new allegiance called the equality for blind Canadians. And actually Robin is the national president for that. And they're working hard to make sure their issues are heard.

Now we might be joined up in the gallery. I'm not sure if we have folks from CNIB [Canadian National Institute for the Blind]. Selene Daniel-Whyte and Lisa Telfer, also from CNIB, were going to be here today, but I'm not sure if they got here. But I do want to introduce . . . Oh up there? Okay, they are here. Great, good to see you.

As well we have some folks from the canine police units here in Saskatoon and Regina because this is also an important Bill for them because service animals are not only a private issue but a public issue. And we've heard about that recently in the last couple of weeks. I want to take a moment.

Up in your gallery is Sergeant Steve Kaye, canine unit supervisor in Saskatoon, but also with Steve is the president of the Canadian Police Canine Association. So this is something that's happening right across Canada. Also joining him from Saskatoon is Constable Todd Horsley and Constable Chad Malanowich. From Regina, we have Constable Jason Gunderson, Constable J.R. Tunison, and Sergeant William Hayden; he's the coordinator of the Regina canine police unit. I should tell you that Jason, Constable Gunderson and Sergeant Hayden were in Manitoba actually when they passed their legislation. So it's very impressive that they could be here today to be part of this.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, they're here to witness the first

reading of the service animal protection Act, and they're hoping for good things to come out of that. So I would ask all members of this House to give them a warm welcome to their legislature. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with members opposite in welcoming these people to the legislature today. I think it's commendable that people come forward and take a position on things that are important in their own lives. I think we should as well take a moment just to reflect on the good work that's provided by guide dogs and the service that's provided to the people that use them, Mr. Speaker.

In particular I'm familiar with Robin East who's been here before, and I've done fundraising work with him for retinitis pigmentosa, and certainly specifically welcome him.

And also Sergeant Steve Kaye in the gallery, who is from Saskatoon, as the member opposite had indicated, he is with the police service in Saskatoon. My personal experience with him is that I've done a ride along with him and know him from Saskatoon, and we certainly spent an interesting and educational evening. But probably more important, one of the greater challenges that he had in his life was that he was a police driving instructor and taught the member from Prince Albert Carlton police driving. And in any event, it appears to have worked well enough. He is with us today, which speaks volumes about the effectiveness of the training that was given.

In any event, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all the government members, I'd like to welcome these people to the legislature today. Thank you.

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and, through you, to all members of the Assembly three very important guests seated in your gallery. They're coming here today from Sacred Heart Community School, and I'm speaking of teacher-librarian Carolyn Yaskowich, teacher Angie Sazynski, and reading star Monica Trinh.

Mr. Speaker, Sacred Heart Community School is a school that takes literacy and reading very seriously, and they've been very active participants in the accelerated reading program. Last year, when Monica was in grade 6, she scored 1,001 points in the program, reading a total of 109 books. You know, to put this in some context, Mr. Speaker, the points are assigned for the varying degrees of difficulty for the books. But that Monica won with 1,001 points wasn't enough for her. This year she's in grade 7, and she set her sights on 1,300 points for the program. And to give you some idea about that, Mr. Speaker, Sacred Heart has displayed out front 10,574 books read this year to date, and that means about a total of 9,137.5 points.

So Sacred Heart is a school that champions literacy and reading. Certainly Ms. Yaskowich and Ms. Sazynski are the people that are helping the students to really take up that

challenge. And today, Mr. Speaker, we have Monica Trinh here with us who is a champion in that regard. So please join with me in welcoming these very important people to their Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In addition to welcoming all the visitors to the Assembly today, I do want to specifically and expressly welcome His Excellency Ambassador Ostash, to the Legislative Assembly today and the vice-governor visiting from Ukraine, Mr. Speaker. And so the House knows, the governor was going to be here as well, but the president of Ukraine is visiting that region.

And so as has been mentioned, we're very honoured to be able to be signing the agreement with this region of Ukraine, to have the ambassador here. And I think it's important for all of us to very formally welcome His Excellency the ambassador to this Legislative Assembly today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and, through you, to all members of the legislature a group of 17 students in grades 1 to 9 at Curtis-Horne Christian School which is located on Hill Avenue here in Regina Lakeview. And they're accompanied by their teachers, Jeff Mathieson and Amy Mathieson and Alina Boutilier, as well as chaperones Stew and Joan Mathieson, Gloria Radomsky, and Debbie Ashworth. I ask all members to welcome them here today.

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

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to single out and to introduce to you and, through you, to all members of this honourable Assembly two of my constituents from the long list of great Sask Housing volunteers introduced by the Minister of Social Services: Walter Gardiner and T. Ernest Millar. If you gentlemen will give a wave, there you are, thank you. Both for 25 years have dedicated volunteer service to the Bethune Housing Authority. On behalf of the people of Thunder Creek particularly, I wish to thank you both and hope that all members of this honourable Assembly will extend a warm welcome to Walter and Ernest.

[13:45]

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to the rest of the Assembly, I'd like to recognize a couple of people in the east gallery: Larry Hubich, president of the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, and Jim Britton who is working on issues surrounding saving our services in the Crowns in the province. And also seated with them is Heath Smith from the SFL [Saskatchewan Federation of Labour], a staff member there. I'd ask all members to welcome them and give them a hand for all the work they do for working people in this province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with the member opposite in welcoming these people to the legislature. I know this a recurring introduction from the member, but I think it's only appropriate considering the necessary work and the interrelationship that those particular individuals have with the Assembly. So on behalf of all members, I would like to welcome them to the Assembly today.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps close to last — but certainly not last in my books — I'd like to introduce two guests seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. Today in the Assembly is my wife, Ruth Eliason, who is in Regina for a day or two, and our new daughter, Ingrid Louise Broten, who is a few days over five months. So this is Ingrid's first trip to the legislature, so it's been fun to show her around. I ask all members to join me in welcoming them.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Advanced Education and Immigration.

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the Assembly, three individuals I'd like to highlight within your gallery . . . Mr. Kyle Addison is here, the president of the University of Regina Students' Union, who does such impressive work for the university. As well a couple of individuals who you'll be familiar with, that is Ms. Katie Colhoun and Chelsea Laskowski, both former Pages here within the Assembly, both University of Regina students. To all three, I hope all members would join me in welcoming them to their Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Rosetown-Elrose, the Minister of Highways.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to this Assembly, I'd like to introduce some friends and constituents in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. They're also here for the event that the Minister of Social Services described a little while ago. Bob and Faye Piercy, Ted and Margaret Herd, and John and Marlene Hendricks — I look forward to speaking to you folks after question period. And I'd ask all members to please give them a warm welcome to their Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of concerned citizens of Saskatchewan who are concerned over the deterioration of our highways. This particular petition applies to Highway 310 which, according to the petition, is significantly deteriorated to the point that it is becoming a potential safety hazard for those residents who have to travel on this highway each and every day. Mr. Speaker, the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the Sask Party government to commit to providing the repairs to Highway 310 that the people of Saskatchewan so need.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the good folks from Ituna, 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 on behalf of concerned Saskatchewan citizens, more specifically Saskatchewan renters who are facing a combination of rising rents and low vacancy rates in many communities and that many of these renters have suffered increases of hundreds of dollars each — whether in large communities or small, it's pretty common across the province — and that the argument that private market would deliver sufficient affordable housing in the absence of rent control has proven to be false. And the prayer reads, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to consider enacting some form of rent control with a view to protecting Saskatchewan renters from unreasonable increases in rent.

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

Mr. Speaker, I present on behalf of concerned Saskatchewan citizens.

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

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of citizens who are concerned that many Saskatchewan seniors live on fixed incomes and are victims of physical, emotional, and financial abuse, and that seniors have a right to social and economic security and a right to live free from poverty, and also that seniors have a right to protection from abuse, neglect, and exploitation:

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

I present these petitions on behalf of over 70 people from Colonsay, Saskatoon, Bethune, Lashburn, Allan, Meacham, and Elfros. 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 eliminating poverty in

Saskatchewan. And we know that freedom from poverty is an enshrined human right by the United Nations and that all citizens are entitled to social and economic security. And people living in poverty have long identified solutions such as the Saskatoon health disparities report and the Canada Without Poverty, Dignity for All campaign. All call for a comprehensive poverty elimination strategy including income, food, and housing security.

Mr. Speaker, the people signing this petition come from the communities of Saskatoon, Regina, Moose Jaw, Lanigan, Loon Lake, Drake, and Guernsey. I do so present. Thank you.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand today to present a petition in support of hospice and palliative care in Saskatchewan:

We, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan, wish to bring to your attention the following: that all Saskatchewan people deserve quality end-of-life and bereavement care; that hospice and palliative care is known to help enhance the quality of life for those facing advancing illness, death, and bereavement; that a publicly funded and administered hospice and palliative care system including residential hospices would increase end-of-life options for Saskatchewan people.

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan cause the provincial government to enhance and increase publicly funded and administered hospice and palliative care, including in-home hospice services and residential hospices, in order to ensure that all Saskatchewan people have access to high-quality end-of-life care.

Mr. Speaker, I so present.

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

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition on behalf of Furdale residents. The government ministry has directed SaskWater to cut off supplies of water for domestic use to Furdale customers. The same government ministry has directed that customers may no longer treat non-potable water using methods approved by Sask Health. The 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 as well as for livestock irrigation lines. 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 Corman Park in Saskatoon. I so present.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise once again here today to present petitions on behalf of concerned residents from across Saskatchewan as it relates to the unprecedented mismanagement of our finances by the Sask Party. They allude with concern to the two consecutive deficit budgets, Mr. Speaker, all at a time where this government has been granted revenues at all-time historic highs, Mr. Speaker. That shameful mismanagement is costing Saskatchewan people, and in fact we see debt mounting to the tune of \$4.2 billion over the next four years, Mr. Speaker. And the prayer reads as follows:

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

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

These petitions today, Mr. Speaker, are signed by concerned citizens and good folks of Regina Rosemont. I so submit.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Carrot River Valley.

Another Step Towards the 2010 Grey Cup

Mr. Bradshaw: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Riders showed once again that they thrive in pressure situations. And once again the Rider nation was there to cheer our team to victory and a Western Division title over the Calgary Stampeders.

The Riders beat the Stampeders 20-16. The Rider fans were a little quiet at the start of the game due to the Stampeders taking an early 11-0 lead. Rider momentum came back as Darian Durant found his game late in the second quarter and marched the offence down the field, finishing off with the Getzlaf touchdown. The Calgary Stampeders were posed to go into the half with the lead, but ball hawk James Patrick picked off Burris, ran the ball back, and set up the go-ahead touchdown. There is no doubt that the play of the game came with three

minutes left in the game when Jerrell Freeman recovered the ball in the Riders' end zone to negate a potential Calgary touchdown. Whew.

The Riders have now taken another step towards the 2010 Grey Cup. Unbeknownst to the rest of the House, I predicted the Saskatchewan-Montreal Grey Cup back in the spring. On behalf of all members of this House, I want to congratulate the Riders on their victory. And as they move on to the Grey Cup, just remember one thing: the 13th man should be in the stands, not on the field. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Western Division Champions

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise today to congratulate the Saskatchewan Roughriders, the 2010 CFL [Canadian Football League] Western Division Champions. The entire province was watching yesterday as the Riders prevailed over the Calgary Stampeders for the second consecutive year, winning 20 to 16 over our rivals to the west.

In front of thousands of Rider fans in attendance at Calgary's McMahon Stadium, Rider nation now has an opportunity for redemption. The team will set their sights on avenging last year's championship loss to Montreal.

After the game, an army of green took over the Green Mile on Albert Street in Regina. With horns blaring, fans whooped and hollered and waved flags, jerseys, and anything green that they could find. They braved the cold for a few more hours just to show their support for our team. Hundreds of fans were waiting for the team as they arrived home last night, staying warm inside the airport and excited to congratulate their team. And today, Mr. Speaker, at 4 o'clock, fans are going to be gathering at City Hall to do one more celebration.

And now we're off to the Grey Cup, Mr. Speaker, for the third time in four years. Rider fans are optimistic, enthusiastic, and ready for a win next weekend. Rider fans will no doubt brave the bitter cold in Edmonton this coming weekend in support for the fourth Rider championship. Next weekend, fans will be out in full force at the game in Edmonton, and when we bring home the Grey Cup the province will be ready to celebrate again.

Mr. Speaker, congratulations to Saskatchewan Roughriders, the 2010 CFL Western Division Champions and soon to be the 2010 Grey Cup champions.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Yorkton.

November

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I bring to the attention of the Assembly a worthy cause that is of interest to many Saskatchewan men. Mr. Speaker, this month is becoming increasingly known as Movember, a month dedicated to raising awareness and funds for prostate cancer.

Prostate cancer is a highly treatable disease. Ninety per cent of the time it is completely curable when diagnosed early. Mr.

Speaker, one in seven men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer. In 2009 almost 900 Saskatchewan men were diagnosed, and 230 died from the disease. Almost all prostate cancer, about 98 per cent, occurs in men over the age of 50.

One way we can show our support for patients and families is by growing a moustache this month and collecting pledges — a visible reminder that we care and are taking action. Proceeds go to Prostate Cancer Canada, which supports research, patient support, education, and awareness. Last year Movember raised \$7.8 million across Canada.

The Ministry of Health's website provides patients with clear, interactive information on screening, diagnosis, and treatment. A provincial prostate cancer pathway is now being developed to help patients on their journey. It will provide timelier access to services and improve patient care and satisfaction.

I thank health providers and prostate cancer support groups who do such good work throughout Saskatchewan, and I encourage participation in Movember. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[14:00]

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

Agribition Celebrates 40th Anniversary

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to recognize a true institution, the Canadian Western Agribition. The burning of the brand takes on special meaning this year, Mr. Speaker, as Agribition celebrates its 40th anniversary as the premier cattle and livestock show here in the province.

People from across Canada and from 70 countries around the world are coming to Regina this week, Mr. Speaker, to see the livestock, take in the trade show, watch the rodeo, and experience all the colourful sights and sounds that make this a truly Canadian and Saskatchewan event.

Some people have been coming for years, Mr. Speaker, even decades, and for them this will also be a chance to catch up with old friends and keep up with the latest developments in their industry. That's been the secret of Agribition's success, Mr. Speaker — staying true to the vision and the solid grassroots principle of its founders while responding to the changing world and the changing marketplace by creating a showcase for modern developments in the agricultural industry.

Mr. Speaker, to create an event like this with 1,000 exhibits, and it's possible to do with only hundreds of volunteers and staff, to produce . . . with the realization that many people who work so hard to carry on this Saskatchewan tradition. So I ask all members to join with me in congratulating Agribition on its 40th anniversary.

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

Everyday Heroes Recognized

Hon. Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr.

Speaker, four residents from my constituency of Regina Qu'Appelle Valley were honoured yesterday, November 21, with the Rescue Recognition Award from Lifesaving Society during a ceremony at Government House. They are everyday heroes whose selfless acts of bravery helped others. They showed true Saskatchewan spirit in helping those in need.

The Kapell family — Ron, Nancy, and Brandi — were honoured with Rescue Recognition Awards for their heroic efforts on November the 14th. A boy and a man and their dog had fallen through the thin ice on Rochdale Lake. While Nancy was on the phone with 911, Ron and Brandi took off towards the lake. They used an extension cord to pull the father out of the icy water. The boy had managed to pull himself on to the thin ice and crawled back to safety. The group went back to the Kapell house and waited as EMS [emergency medical services] arrived to help. The dog did not survive, but the man and the boy are fine.

Irma Molnar also was rewarded on Sunday. Two years ago, Ms. Molnar came across a very similar event that the Kapell family faced on November 14th. While out on her daily walk, Ms. Molnar witnessed Randy Durovick, who had fallen into the lake when he went to retrieve one of his dogs that had taken after a flock of geese. Ms. Molnar rushed to the shore and by chance found a piece of PVC [polyvinyl chloride], and used it to pull both Mr. Durovick and his dog to safety.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of the Assembly to join us in recognizing the Kapell family and Ms. Molnar for their heroic efforts. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Service Animal Protection

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

We know there is no current provincial legislation that protects service animals here in Saskatchewan, but yet it is a well-established fact that service animals provide important and unique services to people living with disabilities and to peace officers in carrying out their duties. We need only to think back a few short weeks ago when the Saskatoon police canine unit was used in the tragic search for a missing baby's body in the Saskatoon landfill.

Service animals often do their jobs in public, and in the case of police service animals, in dangerous circumstances at risk to themselves, such as police service dog Icon, who was stabbed in early November 2009. But after receiving a blood transfusion, he is now fully recovered and Icon is back on the job. But we can also recall Steve Kaye's canine partner, police service dog Cyr, who was shot and killed in the line of duty in 2001.

Mr. Speaker, Washington state's Layla's Law was the first to protect service animals. And now Manitoba, Ontario, British Columbia have followed the lead to protect service animals. In Manitoba, the need for such legislation came to light when a guide dog belonging to a visually impaired woman was attacked by another dog. As a result, the traumatized guide dog

could no longer perform his duties, and the owner had to take the dog to New York for costly retraining.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in recognizing the contributions of service animals here in Saskatchewan and that we commit ourselves to doing all we can to help them do their jobs safely and without harassment.

Thank you very much.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Biggar.

Economic Update

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Leading economic indicators show that Saskatchewan continues to do well under our government. Here are but a few. Our population is now at an all-time high, 1,045,622. It has grown by 16,498 people in the past year, making Saskatchewan the fastest growing province in Canada. Saskatchewan's population has now grown by more than 50,000 people since the start of 2007 — the fastest and most sustained period of population growth in decades.

New employment numbers for October show 5,200 more people working in Saskatchewan than one year ago, setting an employment record for the month of October. Full-time jobs are up by 11,300. Private sector jobs increased by 11,200. October marks the ninth consecutive month of year-over-year employment increases for Saskatchewan.

The number of Saskatchewan people receiving regular employment insurance benefits declined again in August, down 740 or 5.6 per cent year over year.

To quote Scotiabank's latest macro outlook for this province:

Saskatchewan is expected to be one of the country's strongest performers in 2011, with real GDP growth of 3.3 per cent. The recovery is being led by a resurging potash industry, investment in the resource sector, and continued expansion of the province's service sector — feeding off strong immigration.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, this province is moving forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Prince Albert Pulp Mill

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier and deals with the discussions around the Prince Albert pulp mill and the negotiations that are apparently going on at the present time. My question to the Premier deals with the responsibility for the environmental liabilities associated with the P.A. [Prince Albert] pulp mill.

Is it true, Mr. Premier, that the responsibility for the costs of the liability around environmental damage, that should be the responsibility of Domtar, are being shifted to the taxpayers of

the province? Is that true?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the government has never stopped working with respect to reanimating, reopening the pulp mill. The government has been facilitating meetings between the current owner, brought into the province by the failed deal of the previous government, and potentially future owners.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that, you know, there's been some progress lately, but that meetings are still under way. Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that the liability split that existed between the government and Weyerhaeuser, Mr. Speaker, would remain unchanged should there be a new deal that would reopen the mill.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, in asking the question again to the Premier, I want to make it clear that these negotiations, so-called, have been going on now for three years since the present government took over. And in fact it wasn't a failed deal, but a cancelled deal by the Premier and his government back three years ago.

But my question to the Premier is this: can he guarantee the taxpayers . . . And I want to make this clear because there's liability in the hundreds of millions of dollars, potentially, around the cleanup that Domtar is presently responsible for. Can the Premier guarantee that there will be no shift to the taxpayers of the province outside of what already exists in the present formula?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the previous deal that the member references would have involved 100 million taxpayers' dollars being risked in this particular pulp mill. It wasn't the government that cancelled the deal. It was the voters of Prince Albert and the voters of the province of Saskatchewan that said no to that deal.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that since that deal was cancelled, we have been working with potential new participants in the industry, Mr. Speaker. We continue to work with those participants. What we do need in this case though is a willing seller, Mr. Speaker. Maybe the opposition can assist in this regard because they worked very carefully with the company that currently owns the assets — that we do need to be a willing seller. And I repeat again, the liabilities that existed prior to the mill closing in 2006 under the NDP [New Democratic Party] watch, those liabilities — the split between the government and the new company, if there is to be a new company — remains unchanged.

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

Arrangements Regarding Long-Term Care Facility

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, the evidence is mounting that

the Sask Party is using taxpayers' money for an insider deal that benefits Sask Party donors and immediate family members of a Sask Party cabinet minister. Miner's Construction and its president, Michael Stensrud, donated nearly \$19,000 to the Sask Party, some of that directly to the Minister of Justice, and they've been awarded an untendered building contract worth \$27 million. Bridge City Electric, a company that has also donated almost \$8,000 to the Sask Party and is owned by the Minister of Justice's brother, now has the electrical contract.

To the Premier: why is the Sask Party using taxpayers' money for an insider deal that benefits Sask Party donors, cronies, and family members?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. She comes into the House day in and day out and makes these accusations that are absolutely unfounded, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, she talks about a contract for electrical work being done at Amicus. This contract was tendered, Mr. Speaker. The tender that came in was \$140,000 less than any of the competitors, Mr. Speaker. In fact if she would like, I've got the other tenders here in my hand, Mr. Speaker. I'd be glad to put them across the floor to the member opposite so she could start apologizing to some of the strongest, best-grounded families in this province, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, for a government that says it had nothing to do with it, they now seem to have quite a bit of information. Maybe they can give us the information that they had blacked out.

Mr. Speaker, when you look at the list of eight major contractors displayed on the sign at the Amicus construction site — located in the Minister of Justice's riding, by the way — you find that the major contractors are either Sask Party donors or they're from Alberta. Miner's Construction gave the Sask Party \$9,000; Bridge City Electric, \$8,000; North Ridge, \$1,300; RBC [Royal Bank of Canada], the banker, gave them \$30,000; Interwest Mechanical, \$2,000 — in total, over \$70,000 in donations to the Sask Party.

Does that minister and that Sask Party really expect us to believe that it's a coincidence that all of the major in-province contractors on the Amicus project are Sask Party donors?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, if that member would like to go further, I'm sure she could take the rest of question period with the number of companies that have donated to the Saskatchewan Party.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite says that it's a, you know, it should have been tendered, Mr. Speaker. But under their watch, there were a number of projects that went sole source, Mr. Speaker.

Last Thursday the member stood in her place, Mr. Speaker, and

talked about how, under NDP land, it would have never ever happened. Mr. Speaker, that is absolutely false. All you have to do is look at the sound stage. How many tenders went out for that, Mr. Speaker? Did they tender phase 1? No. Did they tender phase 2? No. Did they tender phase 3? No, they didn't, Mr. Speaker. They sole sourced the whole operation.

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

Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, obviously the Sask Party's a bit nervous about this because they were going to sole source some schools in Regina, and now they're going to be tendered.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the minister keeps saying this is a matter between the Saskatoon Health Region and Amicus, that they have nothing to do with this. But the Saskatoon Health Region didn't find out about this until January. And even their heavily censored FOI [freedom of information] request reveals that the minister was in discussions about this deal last October.

Mr. Speaker, the deal was cooked up in the Premier's office. The lawyer that put the deal together, Mr. Donlevy, is the brother to the Premier's chief of staff. The Minister of Justice's brother is the electrical contractor. It simply isn't credible that no one in the Premier's office, no one from cabinet, knew nothing about this project involving family members.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is a fully funded taxpayer project. When is that government going to accept responsibility for this insider deal with Sask Party donors and cronies, Mr. Speaker?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, all I can say is, for 16 years under the NDP, none of this discussion happened because they didn't build one new long-term care bed in this province for 16 years.

Mr. Speaker, we are getting it done. We are making sure that seniors have appropriate housing, Mr. Speaker, not in acute care centres like City Hospital, but in appropriate long-term care facilities, Mr. Speaker. And we will partner with credible organizations like the Catholic Health Ministry any time, Mr. Speaker, on something that government never did because they didn't build a new long-term care bed.

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

[14:15]

Health Care Workers' Contracts and Health Region Funding

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, that's simply not true. Oliver Lodge, Balcarres — I can think of many places that we have built new facilities. That's simply not true. And the minister talks about 16 years of what we did. He's had three years and he's done nothing.

Mr. Speaker, contract talks with doctors are going nowhere;

with residents and interns, going nowhere; and now contract talks have broken off with 3,000 health professionals represented by Health Sciences.

To the minister: where is the money in this year's budget to settle all of these outstanding health service contracts?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, I'll try and correct the inaccuracy at the start of her question. I said not a new long-term care bed was built. They replaced beds, Mr. Speaker, but they didn't add to the complement of long-term care.

As far as negotiations, Mr. Speaker, as far as negotiations between the number of health care professionals that have contracts outstanding, Mr. Speaker, as I've said in past negotiations, whether it was with the service providers, whether it was with SUN [Saskatchewan Union of Nurses], it wouldn't be appropriate for me to get into those negotiations on the floor of the House, Mr. Speaker. But I will say is that the health care provider unions have settled; so has SUN; and I think there will be a settlement soon for the outstanding contracts, Mr. Speaker, as we move forward.

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

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Finance has told all ministries to submit a zero growth budget for 2011. The last budget forced health regions to cut services. Sunrise Health Region had to find \$2.8 million worth of savings. Kelsey Trail was told to find 1 million in savings, Saskatoon 25 million worth of savings, and Regina 11 million worth of savings, to just name a few. Mr. Speaker, the cuts came in lab services, long-term care beds, ambulance services, therapy reductions, therapist reductions, and staffing reductions. Every cut affects the health care services Saskatchewan people receive.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: we have outstanding, unsettled contracts with doctors, residents, interns, and over 3,000 health care professionals. Where is the money coming from in the 2011 zero growth budget that the Sask Party's putting together?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, I would say that the health regions throughout this province have done a marvellous job with the budgets that they've been allocated, Mr. Speaker, because what they have done is they've looked at many outstanding issues such as premium time pay. There are health regions in the first six months have cut the premium time pay that they're paying out by over 20 per cent, Mr. Speaker. That is astonishing, Mr. Speaker. It saves the system millions of dollars. So that's where they're finding the efficiencies.

They're also finding efficiencies around sick time where they've reduced the amount of sick time that we see in the system by 5 and 7 per cent in the first six months of this year, fiscal year, Mr. Speaker. Health regions are doing a very good job managing within their budgets.

As far as the contract negotiations, like I said, they will proceed along a timeline, Mr. Speaker. It isn't an event; it is a process, Mr. Speaker. We're well into that process, and I think we'll see agreements in the near future.

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

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, there's a disturbing pattern forming with the Sask Party. They've left 300 residents and interns without a contract for almost two years. They've been dragging their feet since April of 2009 to negotiate a contract with the doctors. They negotiated a contract with chiropractors and tore it up. And now they are refusing to negotiate a contract with over 3,000 specialized health care professionals.

Mr. Speaker, is the minister's refusal to negotiate contracts with doctors, resident physicians, chiropractors, health care professionals because he doesn't care about the health services that people in Saskatchewan get, or has he run out of money?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, the accomplishments of this government in the first three years in health care are really quite astonishing, Mr. Speaker. We have increased the number of nurses working in the system by 830.

Now they're hollering across the floor. I know they don't understand targets and they don't like to set targets because they won't meet targets, Mr. Speaker. Our government has set a target, and it has met and surpassed that target. We're setting targets for health regions on overtime, on sick time. Health regions are meeting those targets, Mr. Speaker.

We understand there's a physician recruitment issue in this province. Under the NDP, they would have stuck their heads in the sand, Mr. Speaker. Our government is addressing it, Mr. Speaker. I will not take any advice from that opposition at the way they handled health care for the last 16 years compared to what we've done in the first three.

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

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When the minister talks about the health districts finding efficiencies in the overtime, what I'm hearing is that those shifts aren't being replaced. If somebody is sick, nobody's being called in. So you may be artificially saving money, but you're putting people at risk — not only patients, but the workers. And then you pay for it in other places because you simply can't overwork the workforce continually like it's happening. So this is an artificial saving.

And that's what I'm hearing. The vacancies, the shifts are not being replaced. So it's not going to in the end save us any money because we're damaging the system, we're damaging the workers, and we're certainly damaging patient care.

And I think the minister talked about 16 years. Three years and we've seen nothing with this government except settling the nurses' contracts. And he seems to ride all of his apples in one

basket on that one. And even the nurses are saying they're still understaffed and overworked, so he's won nothing.

So to the minister: where's the money going to come from, from these contracts? There is no money anywhere. And now there's zero growth for next year. There's no money next year. What's his message to people waiting for contracts?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — I'm not quite sure what the question was there, Mr. Speaker. But I will say that health regions have worked very hard to reduce the premium time pay. She says that the staff is being overworked, Mr. Speaker. Well I can't imagine what would've been the situation in the hospitals if it still was under the NDP where they wouldn't have recruited any more nurses, Mr. Speaker. We have more health care professionals now working in the system than any time before — more positions, more nurses, and more service providers, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the health regions have done a great job in addressing the overtime, the sick time, Mr. Speaker. There's more work to be done. There's lean processes going through the Health ministry and the regions, Mr. Speaker, that will find more efficiencies, Mr. Speaker. I believe that yes, there is more work to be done in the health care system, but I think we're on the right track.

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

Protection for Service Animals

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Manitoba and Ontario have legislation to protect service animals but despite this, the Sask Party government has so far refused to do so. Following question period, I will introduce *The Protection of Service Animals Act*, and this Bill would establish the offence of harming service animals with significant fines and allowing for the courts to provide for compensation and, if necessary, obedience training orders. To the minister: will the Sask Party government commit today to pass this legislation?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've done media on this earlier and we've instructed our officials to have a look at the legislation that's been introduced in other places. I can advise the members opposite and the people from the public that are in the House today that our government has expressed concern over this issue before. We currently have a Bill before the House, *The Animal Protection Act*, which has increased fines from 5,000 to \$25,000 and jail penalties from six months to 24 months.

Mr. Speaker, the Manitoba Bill, which I've seen, has got a maximum fine of \$10,000. We're somewhat ahead of the Manitoba legislation. So what we'll want to be looking at Mr. Speaker, specifically, is whether there's things in the other legislation that is not already caught either in the Criminal Code, in our human rights legislation, or in *The Animal Protection Act*. And, Mr. Speaker, I can advise you that the

officials are working on this right now, Mr. Speaker, and if appropriate we will pass this type of legislation.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We know the legislation that's before the House now largely addresses animals of production, animals on the farm, and even though the minister did go on about pets and different kinds of animals. This is a very specific piece of legislation talking about service animals.

To the Minister of Social Services: many people living with disabilities who use service animals value the work that they do, and this is an important piece of legislation. In fact they felt very heartened by the work that was done in Washington state many years ago by Layla's Law named after a dog, Layla, that was traumatized by harassment. Will the minister today make a commitment in this House to do all she can to make sure this legislation is passed?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I had indicated that we have officials looking at this legislation. We will want to make sure, Mr. Speaker, that we do not have any gaps that exist in our existing legislation and whether there is anything that can or should be increased.

Mr. Speaker, the existing legislation, *The Animal Protection Act*, does cover all types of animals. Dogs, cats, service animals, pets, and a variety of any type of animal, Mr. Speaker, is caught by this. So, Mr. Speaker, it is not that we are without concern for this. And we are looking at it to determine whether there are other things that should be done as well. And, Mr. Speaker, I can advise you that the officials within our government are actively looking at this and will continue to do so, Mr. Speaker.

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

Housing Issues

Mr. Forbes: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I am looking for more decisive action on that Bill.

But I want to talk about the government's inaction on housing. It's beginning to have dire consequences for homeless people in Saskatoon. You know, the average cost of a two-bedroom apartment in Saskatoon has soared to more than \$900 a month under this government. Vacancy rates remain low, and the number of rental units in this province is falling.

Last Friday the Saskatoon Salvation Army announced that their men's shelter was full and they had to turn people away. To the Premier: people's lives are at risk. When is this government going to stop failing families in need and get serious about addressing the housing crisis?

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, and to the members opposite, we all know that it is regrettable when anybody finds himself without a place to stay, especially in this kind of weather. And I think the members opposite know that there's a policy that's still in place from when they were government that'll put people up in hotels to ensure that they have a roof over their heads at night. In terms of the situation in Saskatoon, we are looking into it, but I understand that all requests were handled without using hotels.

But, Mr. Speaker, we have done a lot since we've become government. There were 16 years of inaction by those government. But we have raised emergency shelter rates for single individuals and for families to 80 per cent more than the NDP had. We've increased shelter spaces in Regina and Saskatoon and Lloydminster and Prince Albert.

We've almost doubled the funding for mobile crisis centres, and that's in addition to the 13.3 per cent increase that all CBOs [community-based organization] have received. Mr. Speaker, this is not an issue we're taking lightly.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, sadly this is not the first time people in crisis have been turned away because of this government's failure to act. Last fall the YWCA [Young Women's Christian Association] shelter in Saskatoon announced that they have been forced to turn more than 3,000 women and children away in the previous year, and things have not got much better.

A study by PATHS [Provincial Association of Transition Houses Saskatchewan] revealed that many women fleeing domestic violence are afraid that, if they try to leave an abusive home, they won't be able to afford a roof over their head. Front-line workers tell us that they are spending more and more time helping people in crisis find an affordable place to live, often at the expense of helping them to address other issues.

To the Premier: why is this government failing women living with abuse by failing to provide affordable rental housing?

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, this is an issue that we are looking at seriously. And I think the members opposite should remember that they failed to increase shelter rates for 13 out of 16 years, and in that time inflation went up 30 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, we have been working on this issue. We've increased funding for housing programs by 45 per cent. We've worked with the federal government to make sure we have \$161 million that's in place for new housing and renovating houses. We have 700 new affordable housing units and 1,250 more on the way.

Mr. Speaker, we've also increased the shelter rates and the Saskatchewan rental housing supplement four times, and they're indexed both to the cost of living. And we've increased the income threshold for seniors to qualify for social housing.

Mr. Speaker, this is a huge issue. We know there is. And we're in discussions with people all the time. We also know that we've had the cost of living influences and we're dealing with them as well.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I have to acknowledge the minister acknowledging the role of the federal government. I found it interesting last week the federal government in one of its committees, parliament, released some work around housing or a poverty reduction strategy. Is the minister starting to think along those lines? I hope so because the issue is much bigger than finding housing for people. It's keeping them housed. It's addressing all of the issues that keep people from moving from place to place and making them unable to provide stability for themselves and their children.

[14:30]

They need support like counselling, addiction services, and child protection services. They need predictable rent and clean, safe housing conditions. And this government has done very little to provide for any of those things.

To the Premier: when will this government come forward with a comprehensive strategy for more affordable housing and address the factors that give rise to homelessness?

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, what the members opposite are asking for is a strategy. What we have is action, Mr. Speaker. The action since we became government has given \$40 million worth of enhancements to our income assistance program. We've taken 80,000 people off the tax rolls in this province. We've doubled the low-income tax credit. We've nearly doubled the number of seniors eligible for benefits. We've increased the amount of money . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. I'd ask the members to allow the minister to respond to the question.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I don't understand why the members opposite aren't worried about things like disability tax credits. We introduced a low-income seniors' prescription drug plan. We've increased the minimum wage three times since January of 2008 to 9.25 an hour. We've increased the funding to CBOs by 13.3 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, is there more work to do? Yes, there is. Are we working on it, Mr. Speaker? Yes, we are.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 617 — *The Protection of Service Animals Act*

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

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 617, *The Protection of Service Animals Act* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member from Saskatoon Centre that Bill No. 617, *The Protection of Service Animals Act* be now read the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — First reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — When shall the Bill be considered a second time? I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

Mr. Forbes: — Next sitting of the House.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table answers to questions 240 through 374.

The Speaker: — Answers to questions 240 through 374 are tabled.

STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Ruling on Priority of Debate

The Speaker: — Before government orders, I wish to inform the Assembly that a notice regarding a proposed matter for priority of debate was received in the Clerk's office at 11:25 a.m. today, for which I thank the Opposition House Leader.

Pursuant to rule 27(5), it is my duty to determine whether or not the matter should have urgent consideration with regard to the extent it concerns the administrative responsibilities of the government, could come within the scope of ministerial action, and the probability of the issue being brought before the Assembly within a reasonable time by other means.

The fundamental principle underlying rule 27 was to provide the opportunity within a proper framework of parliamentary procedure, where none existed, for the immediate discussion of any matter deemed to be of such urgency and importance that the business of the Assembly should be put aside in order to discuss one specific, particular subject.

I've considered this matter carefully in the context of my responsibilities under rule 27. The motion proposed does not contravene any of the restrictions outlined in subsection (6) of the rule. However by the information presented by the member for Regina Dewdney, it is not apparent that the operation of the

Salvation Army shelter is within the administrative jurisdiction of the Government of Saskatchewan.

I agree with the member that the matter raised is of public importance. The broader scope of the matter is perhaps within the scope of some sort of ministerial action. But from the information presented by the member, I do not find it evident that the situation would change appreciably if the matter came under debate utilizing the regular notice provisions of our rules.

In the immediate future, there will be an opportunity for this matter to be placed on the order paper. The member can provide notice as early as tomorrow to debate this matter on Thursday. According to the rotation, the Opposition House Leader may designate this motion as his priority item to be debated on Thursday. For this reason, the decision of the Speaker is to deny the request for priority of debate.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 156 — *The Freehold Oil and Gas Production Tax Act, 2010*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Energy and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of a Bill, Bill No. 156, which repeals *The Freehold Oil and Gas Production Tax Act* and replaces it with *The Freehold Oil and Gas Production Tax Act, 2010*. This legislation is being amended along with the companion legislation, Bill 157, *The Oil and Gas Conservation Amendment Act, 2010*.

Mr. Speaker, oil and gas and indeed all of Saskatchewan's vast natural resources continue to drive this province forward. The contribution of the oil and gas industry to Saskatchewan, its people, and its communities has meant a strong economy, job opportunities, and the delivery of important social programs and infrastructure. The province has earned a reputation with industry for creating a positive business environment for resource development. Our royalty and tax regimes have earned praise from the industry for their certainty and for their stability.

Ensuring resource industries continue to invest in Saskatchewan requires our government to provide those industries with the best possible support services we can. And that's one of the reasons why the Ministry of Energy and Resources has undertaken a significant modernization of our oil and gas business processes and computer systems. Many of the systems the ministry uses for oil and gas, legislative requirements, business processes, and supporting information technology systems were developed more than 20 years ago. Clearly, change was required. It was a change that our ministry's staff and other staff throughout the government indeed identified, certainly. But it was also a change that the oil and gas industry, through their companies and associations that we regularly deal with, saw as necessary.

The industry has grown significantly in the last 20 years, and

the processes it uses and the services it expects have grown as well in terms of size and complexity. And combine that with growth, with changes in technology and business requirements, and we needed systems in government that were more responsive. In modernizing our systems, we have consulted with the industry throughout, and we have certainly done so with this legislation. And I'll speak more with the consultation process a little bit later in my remarks.

The centrepiece of our efforts is our process renewal and infrastructure management enhancement projects, more commonly known as PRIME. Through PRIME we are dramatically transforming how our government and the oil industry interact, and we are improving our ministry's overall efficiency and service.

One of our PRIME projects, which was announced in November of 2009, was the province becoming a full partner in the Petroleum Registry of Alberta. The registry is a joint government and industry strategic alliance that enables Canadian upstream oil and gas producers to carry out their complex business and regulatory activities in an efficient and seamless manner. The registry uses a single-window, web-based information management system. That system will enable the collection, validation, and dissemination of volumetric, infrastructure, valuation, and royalty information. And all that information will be in a central, secure, and shareable digital format.

Becoming a regulatory partner was one of the government's early deliverables out of the New West Partnership. However in order for PRIME projects to be implemented — including the registry — and to realize anticipated benefits, we needed to make significant legislative and regulatory changes to *The Freehold Oil and Gas Production Tax Act*.

Mr. Speaker, these changes necessitated the repeal of the old Act and the development of a new one, *The Freehold Oil and Gas Production Tax Act, 2010*. Members will have the section-by-section detailed explanations in their legislative packages. But briefly let me note that the replacement Act will enable the ministry to conduct its business and communicate with industry through electronic means. The ministry will be able to electronically receive and disseminate and approve industry forms, reports, plans, surveys, maps, applications, records, statistics, and other information.

The new Act, which is better organized and easier to follow, will bring consistency to the way taxes are being administered, enabling efficiencies in the taxation system and allowing more timely payment of industries' payment of taxes.

The new Act will remove the specific due date for paying freehold production taxes from the legislation and add regulation-making power, instead, to prescribe the due date in *The Freehold Oil and Gas Production Tax Regulations 1995*, as done in other energy and resources statutes.

The Act will ensure that crude oil recovered from waste processing facilities will only be subject to recovered crude oil tax if the oil cannot be allocated back to the wells it was originally produced from.

The new Act will clarify audit provisions and make them similar to those within *The Revenue and Financial Services Act* which governs the collection of taxes by the Ministry of Finance. It will move penalty amounts to the regulations to make it easier to keep them at a more modern level where they will be more of an effective deterrent than they are currently. It will modernize the wording of the offence provisions in the Act and increase the maximum fine to the level where you'll have a greater deterrent effect. It will modernize, expand, and clarify regulation-making powers. And finally, the new Act will include a number of other housekeeping amendments to update the overall legislation.

The relevant regulations will be revised as part of PRIME's modernization process. The revisions that necessitated the new Act were made in consultation with stakeholders in the industry who are fully supportive of the ministry's PRIME project. These stakeholders have included companies and officials with the industry's two major organizations, the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers and the small exporters and producers association of Canada. The feedback from both CAPP [Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers] and SEPAC [Small Explorers and Producers of Canada] received over the summer was positive with respect to the new legislation.

Mr. Speaker, the advanced business processes and renewable technology that PRIME will deliver are part of an ongoing effort to provide better service to our key industries and to keep our province competitive and strong. Saskatchewan is a great place for the oil and gas industry to invest. The PRIME enhancements we're undertaking will make it even more so.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move the second reading of Bill 156, *The Freehold Oil and Gas Production Tax Act, 2010*.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Energy and Resources has moved second reading of Bill No. 156, *The Freehold Oil and Gas Production Tax Act, 2010*. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina Dewdney.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm extremely pleased this afternoon to stand and speak on this very important issue. Mr. Speaker, as we all in this Assembly follow the oil and gas industry in our province, it is an integral part of our economy, and it's an important driver of our economy, Mr. Speaker, and employs literally tens of thousands of people across Saskatchewan and Western Canada.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there's a number of issues that have been raised by the oil industry about orphan wells and the freehold oil and gas production areas, Mr. Speaker, with members on both sides of the Assembly. Mr. Speaker, it's very important as we look at legislation and revitalize legislation, renew legislation, Mr. Speaker, that we take the time to consult with those in the industry to see whether or not that the changes being made are those that they actually would like to have made. In many cases there are significant changes that the industry would like to see.

One particular company, Mr. Speaker, may want one set of changes, where another may want something slightly different. So in those consultations, rarely would you find unanimous

opinion on a direction of a change, Mr. Speaker. So it's necessary for us as members of the opposition to also take some time to consult with the industry in detail about the very changes that are made through this legislation, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, at a time when we're actually seeing a reduction in oil production, Mr. Speaker, a reduction in gas production in the province of Saskatchewan from 2007, we also have a reduction in the total number of wells being drilled each year from 2007, Mr. Speaker. It's a time when the industry is in a contraction because of the rules and the operation of the current government.

[14:45]

So, Mr. Speaker, it becomes important then to examine the rules as they are and see what changes need to be made to help the industry. Because from 2007, Mr. Speaker, the members can say that everything's rosy in the oil and gas industry, but, Mr. Speaker, the reality is in 2007 oil production is greater than it is today. And the reality is in 2007 gas production is greater than it is today. And, Mr. Speaker, in 2007 more wells were drilled than they are in this year, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, those are all important issues to the industry. And we need to do what we can to encourage the development of the oil industry so that it continues to expand and provide meaningful jobs in our communities and meaningful jobs in our province, Mr. Speaker, but also is able to expend where they need to to extend the life of wells and to extend the production cycle for wells in our province, Mr. Speaker.

And modernization of the legislation is one way to make changes that are helpful to the industry, Mr. Speaker. There are always concerns that get raised when you make changes, though, to legislation, Mr. Speaker, including some of the electronic information that's now going to be used instead of the previous paper registry of information, Mr. Speaker. It does open up some additional concerns around both security of that information, Mr. Speaker, and privacy issues that come with that increased threat, potential threat to the security of that information.

Mr. Speaker, those are all things that in one hand may benefit the industry by speeding things up but on the other hand may cause some concerns for some companies in the oil and gas industry here in the province of Saskatchewan.

So it's incumbent upon us to take the time to meet with companies, to check with representatives of the companies to ensure that the changes being made benefit both the company and the government — not just the government, Mr. Speaker — and that these particular changes being made may impact fairly all of the players in the oil and gas industry in our province, Mr. Speaker, not just maybe the big companies or the small companies but all of the players in the industry, Mr. Speaker, so that as we move forward with this new legislation and the regulations that will follow, the oil and natural gas industries in our province are better off.

And, Mr. Speaker, the minister I'm sure has done some consultations with the industry. You wouldn't put forward this comprehensive a Bill without some consultation. But, Mr.

Speaker, we need to ensure that the voices of those out there who may have a dissenting opinion or may have a different view from the majority are heard at least and are fully understood as we move forward with this legislation. And, Mr. Speaker, without doubt, we have heard some of the same concerns I'm sure the minister heard in his consultations as we travelled about the province. Companies have raised various concerns with us and various members of the opposition about how to improve, Mr. Speaker, the freehold oil and gas industry in our province.

But, Mr. Speaker, this is a very comprehensive Bill, a very complex Bill. Some of the changes are simply updating wording and words used, Mr. Speaker. But in some cases, there's significant changes in direction of policy. And, Mr. Speaker, for those very reasons, we are going to need to take some considerable time to examine this Bill at length, consult others. And, Mr. Speaker, so at this time I would adjourn debate.

The Speaker: — The member from Regina Dewdney has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 156. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. I recognize the Minister Responsible for Energy and Resources.

**Bill No. 157 — *The Oil and Gas Conservation
Amendment Act, 2010***

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of Bill 157, *An Act to amend the Oil and Gas Conservation Act*, henceforth known as *The Oil and Gas Conservation Amendment Act, 2010*. This legislation is being done in concert with the amendments to the companion legislation, *The Freehold Oil and Gas Production Tax Act, 2010*.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan's people have benefited from the province's diversity and wealth of our natural resources. Indeed our current status as a have province in Canada is due in large part to the strong performance of our resource sector. Investments made in our resource industries have created job opportunities for our growing population, strengthened the prosperity of our communities, and provided revenue for important social programs and infrastructure.

Ensuring that resource industries continue to invest in our province requires our government to provide those industries with the best support services possible. We need to be continually seeking new and innovative ways to make our processes more efficient and effective for the industry. By doing that, we contribute to Saskatchewan's reputation as a great place for the oil and gas industry to invest in and do business. And the benefits to our province and communities flow from that.

That's why our ministry is modernizing its business and regulatory systems targeted to the energy and resource industries. We are doing so not just by what we are doing in this Act but in the other one as well, the one I previously spoke

to. They want to be able to interact with government — the industry does — on a pretty much a 24-7 basis for their information needs. Industry has become flexible and adaptable in the way it receives and sends information. We in government can do no less.

Accordingly we have undertaken as a major component of our modernization process a complete redevelopment of our oil and gas business processes and computer systems. This redevelopment is occurring through our process renewal and infrastructure management enhancement project, the PRIME for short. This initiative, to be completed in 2012-13, will use technological advances to transform how the industry files and obtains data with and from the ministry. And PRIME will make information more readily accessible to the industry for future economic development plans in our province.

Mr. Speaker, while much of our ministry's efforts are focused on oil and gas processes and data system redevelopment, we require amendments to *The Oil and Gas Conservation Act* to provide the ministry with the legal authority to implement PRIME initiatives and improve and streamline Saskatchewan's oil and gas regulatory processes.

The first PRIME project announced in November of last year was Saskatchewan becoming a full partner in the Petroleum Registry of Alberta. The registry is a joint government and industry strategic alliance that enables Canadian upstream oil and gas producers to carry out their complex business and regulatory activities in an efficient and seamless manner. The registry uses a single-window, web-based information management system. That system will enable a collection, validation, and dissemination of volumetric infrastructure, valuation, and royalty information. And all that information will be stored in a central, secure, shareable digital format. Becoming a registry partner was one of the government's early deliverables out of the New West Partnership.

Members of this House will have the section-by-section detailed explanations of the amendments in their legislative packages. But briefly let me state that the amendments we're bringing forward in this Bill are necessary to enable the government to conduct its business and communicate with the industry through electronic means by implementing the registry and other PRIME-related electronic information submission and access systems. Through the amendments, the ministry will be able to electronically receive, disseminate, and approve industry forms, reports, plans, surveys, maps, applications for records, statistics, and other information.

These amendments will develop more efficient, transparent, and consistent compliance assurance and enforcement processes. They will expand the authority to license, approve, and permit the drilling and operation of wells and other facilities. They will streamline the legislative requirements required in the issuance of licences, approvals, and permits. They will expand the scope of the Saskatchewan orphan well and facility liability management program to match Alberta's, including other key oil and gas industry initiatives such as mid-stream, non-producer, and oil field waste management facilities.

They will consolidate legislative requirements related to the issuance and transfer of licences in a logical order. They will

modernize the wording of offence provisions, increase the maximum fine to a level where it will have a much greater deterrent effect. They will modernize, expand, and clarify regulation-making powers. And finally, the provisions in this Bill will implement various housekeeping amendments to modernize and update the Act. Among these are clarification that the legislative purposes of the Act include regulation of wells for the other non-renewable resource management purposes as defined within *The Mineral Resources Act* of 1985 and management of wastes such as carbon dioxide through wells licensed under the Act.

Mr. Speaker, these amendments are part of an ongoing effort to keep our province competitive, strong, and a great place for the oil and gas industry to invest. The amendments are a result of consultation with the industry which is very supportive of these changes and in particular is very excited to see Saskatchewan partner with the petroleum registry.

I note the consultation ministry officials had over the summer on amendments to this Act, with companies and officials representing the two main industry associations: the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers and the Small Exporters and Producers Association of Canada. Ministry officials have consulted with the Surface Rights Arbitration Board and representatives of the Saskatchewan Mining Association and the Saskatchewan Potash Producers Association.

Mr. Speaker, through the electronic changes that this Bill enables — in particular, the petroleum registry — our government will be able to provide companies self-service anytime, anywhere from data entry and information for access to those systems. And it's important to an industry that's constantly on the move and in the field. Anything our ministry can do to help the industry players reduce administration, reporting, and fixing errors, the more likely they'll want to expand their operations in our province long-term. And that will benefit the people of Saskatchewan in the form of jobs, social programs, and investment in our communities.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to move the second reading of Bill 157, *The Oil and Gas Conservation Amendment Act, 2010*.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Energy and Resources has moved second reading of Bill No. 157, *The Oil and Gas Conservation Amendment Act, 2010*. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina Dewdney.

Mr. Yates: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm encouraged by the enthusiasm by the members opposite to immediately move this forward. But like the previous Bill, Mr. Speaker, this is a complex Bill with implications in a number of levels for both the industry, Mr. Speaker, and for industry players. And, Mr. Speaker, it will take some time to review and consult with the various stakeholders across the province and the associations responsible to see whether or not they truly agree with the changes being made, Mr. Speaker, and if they help the industry to move forward.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it's very important today to help the industry move forward because, as I noted earlier in the previous Bill, Mr. Speaker, today we see a reduction in oil production from 2007, at the time of change of government. We

see a reduction in gas production from 2007, at the time of change of government, Mr. Speaker. And we actually see a reduction in the amount wells being drilled in our province, Mr. Speaker, from 2007.

On top of that, we saw a general reduction or contraction of the economy last year, Mr. Speaker, in the range of 3.9 per cent, Mr. Speaker, after being adjusted when the final numbers came in, Mr. Speaker. And we saw a situation where the *Sask Trends Monitor*, Mr. Speaker, said that Saskatchewan really has had no economic growth since the change of government. The improvements in 2008 were really as a result of the inflationary cost of items that consumers had to pay. And in fact since then, Mr. Speaker, we've seen a contraction in the economy.

So, Mr. Speaker, it hasn't been a very bright situation for our province despite the members opposite cheerleading out there saying that everything is going wonderful. But, Mr. Speaker, so positive changes being made to help the oil and gas industry will be viewed by them as both positive and viewed by us as well, because we all share a view of wanting to have the most prosperous province that we can. We like to see the economy grow and prosper because, Mr. Speaker, all of us understand without doubt that it's a strong economy that allows the prosperity that our province would feel and the advancement of programs for the people of the province, Mr. Speaker. So in order to advance the programs or the agenda of the people, you need to have a strong economy returning good returns to the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

[15:00]

So, Mr. Speaker, any changes that result in a positive improvement in the economy, something we haven't been able to see in the last three years, Mr. Speaker, would be positive. It would be positive for the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And any real positive change would help the government afford to be able to move forward in helping the people of the province, Mr. Speaker, with issues like health care, education, affordable housing, and many, many priorities of the people of our province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I did note in the minister's second reading speech that some of the changes are a result of the New West Partnership. Mr. Speaker, it's about moving our rules to those of Alberta, Mr. Speaker, and moving our regulations to be compatible and comparable to those of Alberta. That in and of itself isn't necessarily a negative, but that requires some in-depth studying of the issues and talking to the industry to make sure that they are in favour of moving to the Alberta rules and regulations, Mr. Speaker, instead of, in a partnership, having Alberta move to ours.

And, Mr. Speaker, those are all things that require consultation and time in order to check with those individuals, Mr. Speaker, with the industries and with the stakeholders, with their associations, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that the changes being made are in fact ones that we would like to have made and that they would like to have made on their behalf.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we also have some concerns about the one . . . And it may just be not fully understanding what the minister's intent was in a second reading speech, but the talk

about some of the recordings being less recordings of activity by the industry, Mr. Speaker . . . Now that just may be a misunderstanding of how it's being interpreted by us or by how the minister brought it forward. But, Mr. Speaker, that's also an area of concern that we'd like to . . . And we'll have to have the opportunity to ask the minister what that will actually mean and how the industry will benefit and also ask the industry whether or not they're in favour of that change, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, any time that you're moving to consolidation or an amalgamation of rules in an industry, whether they be with Alberta and Saskatchewan or any other jurisdiction, Mr. Speaker, it's important to understand the impact because the impact can be both negative and positive. And we need to fully understand the impact on our province, on our producers and the net result that comes about of those changes to the people of Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Speaker, with the complexity of this legislation, the breadth and depth of the changes, Mr. Speaker, it's going to take us some time to do the required consultations — meetings with individuals and associations, Mr. Speaker — to get the feedback we need to be comfortable, one, that proper consultations were done, industry was appropriately listened to, the net benefit is there for the province of Saskatchewan, for the well-being of the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And for those very reasons, Mr. Speaker, at this time I'd like to adjourn debate on this Bill to give us adequate time to consult with the stakeholders across the province, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The member from Regina Dewdney has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 157. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried. I recognize the Minister Responsible for Corrections and Public Safety.

Bill No. 158 — *The Correctional Services Amendment Act, 2010*

Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at the end of my remarks today, I will move the second reading of Bill No. 158, *The Correctional Services Amendment Act, 2010*. Mr. Speaker, Bill 158 proposes amendments to the existing corrections services Act to enable corrections officials to listen to suspicious telephone calls made by inmates in its four secure correctional centres.

Mr. Speaker, we know from experience and anecdotal past and statements that have come out of our institutions that there has been activities conducted from within of unacceptable acts and behaviours. As recent as a few months ago, the paper outlined the gang activity and drug dealings that had gone on within the institutions, and this was actually stated by some of the members that were within the institutions.

The only way previously, Mr. Speaker, to combat this situation was to get a court order, so one could then listen to the conversations between inmates or between inmates and the general public. Now if you look at the time element involved, if you have somebody that you figure is making a suspicious

phone call and you need to go and get a court order, by the time you come back with a court order, chances of that call being conducted in the same manner is basically very, very negligible. So Mr. Speaker, something had to be done within the system. And this was identified early on in our mandate, and actually it was a recommendation in *The Road Ahead*, our plan for the future in the correctional systems in the province.

So what was done, Mr. Speaker? A request for proposal was submitted and a process resulted with a company called synergy inmate telephone solutions of San Antonio, Texas, winning the contract to install phone monitoring systems within our institutions. And, Mr. Speaker, the inmate telephone monitoring system was installed in all four secure provincial correction centres in June of 2010.

Now as I've just briefly spoke about, the purpose of the system is to reduce the ability of inmates to conduct organized criminal activities inside the correctional centres and in the community. The system also assists in protecting victims and the public from unwanted and harassing phone calls from inmates. And again, Mr. Speaker, we understand that this has happened on various occasions where people from within the facilities are calling witnesses, for an example, and harassing witnesses, those that are on remand getting a hold of the witnesses which is totally unacceptable. And there's been other cases of just straight harassing phone calls to the general public.

And again one can realize, if you're looking at gang and drug activities, how this could be conducted from within a facility if you have unlimited access to a telephone and not be monitored, where you can actually conduct your gang activities from within a facility. And this has been known to have happened. And what's surprising, Mr. Speaker, is this has been going on anecdotally for many, many years, and it's kind of a surprise that this has not been addressed prior to now to have phone monitoring systems within our facilities.

And just as an aside, with the selection of synergy inmate telephone solutions, it should be noted that this company which won the RFP [request for proposal] is well known for its ability to do this service. And also within Canada and Alberta's correctional systems, this company has the contract for a similar phone system in that province.

Now just to talk about the operation of the system and the administration of the system, Mr. Speaker. The system is provided to Corrections at no cost. This is a no-cost solution to what we had wanted. Now in exchange for the no-cost solution, the company receives a commission of the gross revenue generated by a fee per call charged to inmates. And yes, inmates do pay for calls now. And previously a lot of the calls that were conducted from our institutions was at taxpayer expense.

Now a percentage of the commission will be retained within CPSP [Corrections, Public Safety and Policing], and that will be used for enhancing leisure materials within the institutions. That's where a portion of that money will go, to such things as board games and cards, etc.

Now talking about the fee for the phone calls, sentenced inmates pay for most local and long-distance calls. They'll pay

\$1.35 for local calls and \$1.85 for long-distance calls. Free calls can be made to lawyers, Provincial Ombudsman, and the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission. That's an example. To government agencies, the calls will be free. Remanded offenders receive three free local calls a day as well as their privileged calls. However they will be charged a fee for long-distance calls. Now within the system, inmates can make collect calls. The recipient is charged 30 cents a minute plus whatever additional charges the telephone service provider bills.

Now the system itself, Mr. Speaker. Call data is stored on a secure website in Canada and can be retained indefinitely, except for recorded conversations which are purged after 90 days. Calls that are used as evidence in court are retained.

And how it works, Mr. Speaker. All inmates are assigned a PIN [personal identification number] number and a voice recognition to validate their identity when accessing the phone system. This will minimize the ability of offenders to make harassing phone calls to others. The system is user-friendly. Each inmate is assigned a voice mail inbox that provides a series of options. These include notification of how much has been deposited into their phone account or setting a time for a future call. Inmates in all four secure adult corrections facilities complete around 80,000 calls a month on 200 phones installed across the province. Inmates' friends and family can deposit money for prepaid phone calls into kiosks in correctional centre lobbies or through a secure online web page.

TeleMate customer service is provided to inmates by Synergy to help inmates who have phone problems. Inmates call TeleMate directly. The system can restrict an inmate's calling. For an example, Corrections might limit an inmate's calling privileges to one completed call per hour or four attempts per hour. This limits excessive use. To minimize harassing calls to witnesses or to the public, staff can block an inmate from calling any given phone number while still allowing other inmates to dial the same number. On being admitted, inmates will be informed that all telephone calls are being recorded and subject to interception within the requirements of the law.

Now to speak to the legislative amendments. The system is currently being operated on a limited basis to comply with the legal authority provided in the existing regulations and legislation. To fully utilize all features of the new telephone system and to ensure that offender rights are respected, adult corrections is working with Justice to make the revisions to *The Correctional Services Act* as well as *The Correctional Services Administration, Discipline and Security Regulations*.

Without these amendments, monitoring telephone calls infringe on specific rights under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It should be noted, however, that a number of judicial rulings have established that telephone monitoring is legal if the infringements are prescribed by law. Courts in other jurisdictions have ruled that inmates have a diminished expectation of privacy. The courts have also ruled that similar established systems do not violate privacy laws. Other provinces have amended their own legislation, and a Bill is before parliament to amend federal legislation.

CPSP sought a privacy assessment through the Information and

Privacy Commissioner, actively seeking their advice on privacy issues related to the phone system. Phone conversations continued to be recorded but to comply with Charter principles, adult corrections has turned off the ability to listen to phone conversations until the regulations and Act have been amended. The ability to listen to existing recorded calls will be retroactive to the date stated in the Act. No one other than police with a court order is currently able to listen to recorded telephone conversations.

When the amendments are passed, the facility director will be able to approve listening to the calls if they have grounds to show risk to the public, other inmates, or staff. Only two employees at each correctional centre will receive training in listening to the calls, and passwords are required to do this.

It should be noted also, Mr. Speaker, because there's been questions about monitoring calls to legal counsel, all lawyers on file with the Saskatchewan Law Society have their phone numbers programmed into the system. When an inmate calls any of these numbers, the record feature does not activate, so those calls remain private. The system has a built-in audit system that will provide an inventory to all listeners.

Mr. Speaker, I move that *The Correctional Services Amendment Act, 2010* be read a second time. Thank you.

[15:15]

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister Responsible for Corrections and Public Safety that Bill No. 158, *The Correctional Services Amendment Act, 2010* be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And it's a pleasure to rise and add some comments to Bill 158, *An Act to amend The Correctional Services Act*, Bill 158.

Mr. Speaker, the minister's comments were fairly thorough, and he talked about the Bill giving employees of the Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing the authority to listen to calls being recorded by its new inmate telephone system. And as the minister said, this new telephone system has been in place at the four secure adult correctional facilities since June of this year — that's June 2010 — but that the function that allows the calls to be replayed and recorded or listened in has not been activated yet, and that the legislation will allow a facility director or authorized corrections personnel to listen to what is considered suspicious calls.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the opposition is supportive of any measures that will enhance public safety and the safety of corrections workers and the safety of inmates, Mr. Speaker. And it's good to see, after listening to the previous minister of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing, the member from Prince Albert Carlton, when he said that he was unaware that there was any gang problems in our jails, I can speak on behalf of all of my colleagues that we're very pleased to see that the new minister is more on top of things, at least at this one aspect anyway. So we're pleased to see that there is some action being taken.

I don't think anyone would disagree that gangs aren't a serious problem in our jails. And they pose a risk not only to the safety of inmates but the safety of the guards and the workers in the institutions. And I mean there is intimidation of inmates who are making an honest effort to rehabilitate themselves. And they are a threat to the public safety and a scourge in our society, Mr. Speaker. So it's good to see the minister acknowledging this and taking some steps to alleviate the issues where he can.

Now the government has indicated that the system will have the ability to block telephone numbers and promises that the victims and the general public will be protected from harassing phone calls. This is an extremely important measure, Mr. Speaker. There have been many instances in the past where potential witnesses have been intimidated and where victims have been re-victimized by inmates making threatening, intimidating, and harassing phone calls. So anything that we can do to reduce that happening is, for sure, welcome.

Now that said, Mr. Speaker, this legislation does raise a number of questions, questions which we are not sure have been adequately answered. Will outside parties with whom inmates communicate be aware that their conversations are being recorded? Will this legislation withstand potential court challenges? I know the minister spoke to a number of issues that he feels have been addressed and that they're within the means or within the boundaries of the law. So that will be good to get a little more detailed responses on that. And who will decide that an inmate's conversation is suspicious and should be monitored? What will raise those suspicions? What will qualify as being considered suspicious in the guidelines and regulations that are put forward?

Mr. Speaker, we all remember what happened in a case reviewed last year by the Information and Privacy Commissioner when a pharmacist accessed the personal health information of a former client inappropriately. What safeguards are in place to prevent corrections workers from monitoring calls out of simple curiosity? There are a number of questions.

And also in the Bill, subsection 56.1(3), it clarifies that nothing in section 56(1) applies to privileged communications. And examples of privileged communications are those between an inmate and his or her legal counsel or the Office of the Ombudsman. The regulations will contain a list of persons, officers, and entities that shall be considered privileged.

So I know the minister referred to a couple, and there is of course legal counsel and Office of the Ombudsman that are referred to in the explanatory notes that accompanied the legislation when it was tabled. So it will see if there's any further . . . I'll be anxious to see what further clarification there will be when we get into more detailed questioning on the Bill.

Mr. Speaker, I guess one of the things that I should comment on, in the explanatory notes it says that this Act will allow regulations to be made retroactive to January 1, 2011. So the minister had also made comments talking about different cases and the work that had been done to look to see if this type of activity was approved and how it operated in other provinces and states. And the minister made the comment that it was legal if prescribed by law, which is fine, Mr. Speaker. I understand that. But here what we have is obviously the department is

looking at or the ministry is looking at enacting this process on January 1st, 2011, and is covering the possibility that the regulations may not be in place by then. So the legislation is going to be . . . The regulations and legislation will be retroactive and will obviously come into effect on January 1st, 2011.

So it raises a number of concerns in that the phone system was put in place in June of this year. So we're five months later. The legislation is here in front of the House. I would assume that the ministry has put some consideration into regulations and that they could be fairly quickly enacted. Now obviously the minister is looking to next spring for this legislation to be passed and making it all retroactive to January '11.

So it's kind of no matter what happens in this legislature, if there was a need to fast track this legislation, the ministry has made allowance for this whole process to kick in and begin, whether or not the legislation has been passed or whether the regulations have been put in place; that even though it won't be prescribed by law, it will be in place in the province of Saskatchewan. So, Mr. Speaker, that raises a number of concerns, and there are questions that will need to be asked as we continue to work our way through this legislation.

The minister also spent a bit of time talking about fees and the costs of this system and that the company who installed the phone system last June — well previous to June because it was installed by June — earns a commission and there is fees charged on each call that go to the company with a portion of that commission coming back to CCSP.

Now the government said and the minister made in his comments today, announced that inmates making outgoing telephone calls will pay between \$1.35 per call and \$1.85 per call, plus long-distance calls, to pay for the system's operation. So, Mr. Speaker, here we have people that may be struggling to keep in contact with family and looking for rehabilitation. And I would say, not everyone, but there are many people that are in institutions that are looking for rehabilitation and being able to start their life. They are being charged and asked to finance a new phone system in the correction system in the province of Saskatchewan.

So when we look at these charges, it doesn't sound like a great deal. But when you don't have any money and when many of these inmates who communicate with their family members will often reverse the charges — so they're calling collect — so this new fee will actually be borne by family members in many, many cases across this province. And, Mr. Speaker, I have to question whether that's the best route to go.

The minister also talked about 30 cents a minute. Now I missed if that was a long-distance fee or what exactly the 30 cents a minute . . . But if you were being charged a fee of \$1.85 per call plus 30 cents a minute . . . Mr. Speaker, you can call anywhere in the world and not be charged 30 cents a minute. That is absolutely outrageous in this day and age. When we look at the competition in the phone systems, when we look at the connectivity around the world, I would venture to say that there are very few new residents to the province of Saskatchewan that came from other countries, other continents, that would pay 30 cents a minute to phone home and be able to stay connected

with family.

And, Mr. Speaker, this is a bit of an outrageous cost when we look at it. It's unheard of. It's absolutely unheard of — 30 cents a minute — anywhere in the world. Now maybe on these systems . . . But when many of those calls are being called collect to family members, those family members are going to have a real shock when they start paying 30 cents a minute for a collect call plus the fees on top of that.

Mr. Speaker, moreover I think the government is leading people to believe that this fee is being put in place to operate a system that is designed to enhance public safety, but it's really not. I mean this fee is being put in place to pay for the government's privatization of the inmate telephone service in the province of Saskatchewan to a company in Texas.

Mr. Speaker, that raises many other questions. And yes, this company may have expertise, but, Mr. Speaker, in this world of technology and connectivity, I would really question if this was the best system to put in place in Saskatchewan corrections facilities and if there were no other options that were available to them that could provide the same system, same support a little more cost effectively for the members that are actually paying for that and the family members that are actually paying for this system.

So, Mr. Speaker, when we see that family members of inmates, the support system — I mean, really the only support system that many of these inmates have is family members — now they're being put in really a difficult position to have to pay for this, which, I mean, we don't know what their financial situation is at home. We don't know if they're able to. It could cause more problems down the way and in other areas.

But, Mr. Speaker, it is going to be inmates and inmates' families who are subsidizing privatization, this government's privatization agenda, this kind of a phone system that is supposedly there for inmates to be able to access communication to family members.

No comment, you know, no disagreement with being able to provide that safety and enhanced public safety and safety inside institutions. But, Mr. Speaker, we need to be clear about what's happening here. And it's inmates and inmates' families who are subsidizing this government's privatization of the phone system, starting with the corrections facilities in the province of Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Speaker, I know many of my colleagues are anxious to be able to make comments on this Bill, and with that, I would adjourn debate on Bill 158.

The Speaker: — The member from Moose Jaw Wakamow has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 158, *The Correctional Services Amendment Act, 2010*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

[15:30]

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 144

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Duncan that **Bill No. 144** — *The Litter Control Amendment Act, 2010* be now read a second time.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise and offer a few comments on the Bill 144. And for those that did have the opportunity and may be interested in this particular legislative piece, I just want to basically bring about some of the issues surrounding the Bill 144.

And first of all I guess — for those that are paying attention — the existing legislation allows the government to increase or decrease both environmental handling charges and refundable deposits. The proposed Bill that we're talking about today lays out a schedule of new environmental handling charges for a variety of containers and takes away the government's ability to set environmental handling charges outside the legislature. It does however allow the government to continue to set the refundable deposit by cabinet order.

And, Mr. Speaker, at the same time the Bill allows or introduces provisions which prevent anyone from suing the government to recover environmental handling charges paid after April 1st, 1998. The minister indicated the changes are intended to address a current lawsuit and to prevent the province from being liable for up to \$1 million or more in other potential legal actions.

And certainly one would ask, as a result of the lawsuit, what were some of the challenges with *The Litter Control Act*? And obviously the Supreme Court of Canada made a decision in the 1990s which required that service fees collected for a specific purpose could not exceed the cost to government of delivering that service. Otherwise it would be . . . This would be considered a tax.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's always a concern. It's always a serious matter when you change a law retroactively and to try and limit people's right to take legal action. However we realize there may be a legitimate goal to be achieved here, and obviously the opposition needs a bit more time to carefully consider the implications of these retroactivity provisions.

And, Mr. Speaker, as you know, there's a lot of different groups out there that do a lot of fine work. And one of them is SARC [Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres], the Association of Rehabilitation Centres, and SARC has always worked very closely with every government and every existing government for a long time. And it should be noted that they are the ones that . . .

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

Mr. Hart: — With leave to introduce guests, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member has asked leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and thank you to the member for yielding the floor.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have in the west gallery 30 grade 4 students from the Punnichy Elementary School. They're here today to observe the proceedings in the House. I understand that, at least I was told that they were at Agribition earlier today, and I believe this is their last stop before they head back home.

They're accompanied today by teachers Sherry Lesser, Andrea Wiens; educational assistants Lenora Kay, Lori Mountstephen; chaperones Jerry Lee Roszell, Billy Joe Pratt, Wilfred Isaac, Sheldon Pratt, Gerda Schultz, Clifford Hunter, and Tyler Arnold. I'd ask all members to give these grade 4 students a hearty welcome to their legislature.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 144 — *The Litter Control Amendment Act, 2010*
(continued)

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I too want to welcome the students, and I certainly hope that their stay at the legislature is both informative and also entertaining if possible. But certainly I would like to join the member in welcoming his students. And obviously it's always nice to see all peoples of Saskatchewan — the Aboriginal people in particular — come to the Assembly and learn how the Assembly works.

But, Mr. Speaker, we're certainly talking about the amendment to *The Litter Control Act*. And as I was mentioning earlier, just a few minutes earlier before I gave way to the member in his introduction, that SARC is one of the organizations that takes advantage of some of the opportunities when you talk about dealing with a lot of the refundable deposits that we have on our cans and so on and so forth.

And as I understand the Act here, what the Act is trying to do here is to try and limit the amount of openings that people might have to try and sue the government. As I understand the Act and the information that was shared with me, that there is a lawsuit right now. And the lawsuit's alleging that *The Litter Control Act* is actually . . . If you don't use the amount of money that you collect from all the deposits that people pay out through the levies — the environmental handling charges — if they don't use all that money to do all the programs that SARC

takes advantage of, if you exceed that money, it's considered a tax.

And people are trying to use some of the loopholes within the environmental . . . or *The Litter Control Act* to try and lay a lawsuit to the government saying, well some of these actual containers that are being looked at in terms of getting a refund on it, in true form some of them don't get handled properly. Some of them there is no use for them, and they simply go into the landfill. And I think there's some grounds there in terms of some of the points that they want to raise.

And that's why I think it's important that we pay attention to some of these Bills because there are implications on this legally, but certainly financially, if we don't pay attention to a lot of these Bills. And what you don't want to do as a government is certainly compromise some of the work being done by SARC. So it is a very interesting point of information that the minister's trying to propose here, in terms of the amendment.

Obviously *The Litter Control Act*, there's a lot of premise attached to how we want to govern Saskatchewan when we talk about the environmental handling charge, also the notion of polluter pays. And we're seeing evidence of that, that as some of these streams come on board — I'm talking about some of the waste streams, whether it's refundable bottles or whether it's used batteries or whether it's used computer parts — there's always the notion people have out there that, if people that produce these goods and services that eventually . . . that you dispose of, there should be a mechanism in which you look at how you dispose them and how you properly dispose them. And that's why you have all these environmental handling charges.

And certainly you want to make sure that people out there are aware of some of the organizations that do good work in trying to deal with these streams of . . . I don't want to use the word garbage, but for lack of a better word, some of these streams of garbage.

And I think one of the organizations I've always maintained, certainly I think other ministers and other folks in both parties, can certainly maintain and allude to the fact that SARC is one terrific organization. They do a lot of powerful human resource building. They work with a lot of different groups and organizations. They take out tons and tons of garbage or things that people would traditionally throw away and they recycle that. And that of course is always a win-win situation for any person and certainly for the people of Saskatchewan.

So when we look at the Act itself, *The Litter Control Act*, and you look at the amendment being brought forward by the minister, it's very simple that he just wants to have some retroactive legislation that deals with some of the minor details that may open up the government to other lawsuits — as I'm assuming that there is a lawsuit pending — and that this Act and this amendment would certainly make some provisions in there that would protect the government somewhat.

So I would say, Mr. Speaker, that while it is an important part of being government, the retroactivity issue, though, we have to look at as an opposition party to make sure that there is no

complicating factors. But at the outset, we want to make sure people out there know that we are very supportive, we're very co-operative, and we're very aware of how SARC operates. And that's one of the primary focuses that we as an opposition are going to look at when it comes to any kind of amendment in relation to *The Litter Control Act*.

So I would again re-emphasize that SARC is one of the organizations that we don't want to see impeded, we don't want to see hurt in any way, shape, or form. And any time we have Acts or legislations or amendments from the environmental department or from the environmental ministry, we want to make sure that we examine them very thoroughly.

So, Mr. Speaker, again, to the folks that may be listening out here, paying attention and following what the Act's all about — this is again simply an amendment on *The Litter Control Act*. And what it does is it certainly introduces provisions which prevent anyone from suing the government to recover environmental handling charge paid after April 1st, 1998.

And of course, it is . . . There is a current lawsuit, as the notes indicated. And we want to make sure that we look at all the aspects of this and to make sure everything is fine. At the outset, as we've indicated by number of other speakers, that it isn't something that we're going to . . . It's not a hill we're going to die on. We just want to make sure we know exactly what's going on.

And this certainly, at the end of the day, doesn't compromise what has been done in the years and years of work in building up SARC and making sure we have all these different streams that our landfill is certainly getting from the public in general, that we're able to recycle and reuse some of those streams of product as best we can. And certainly that's something that we share in terms of the visionary aspect attached with reusing, recycling, and reducing a lot of the things that we as a province do.

So, Mr. Speaker, at the outset, I would point out that the Bill 144, *The Litter Control Amendment Act*, that we are looking at it and we'll take our time to see what's going on. And when the appropriate time comes, we will certainly move as quickly as we can to make sure that there is efficiency in what we're doing here. But to also point out that the organizations like SARC are not hurt or impeded and that the general public out there, the interests of the general public, which preventing lawsuits against the government certainly is, I would assume, part of that interest, but to make sure that they know that any environmental handling charges that they pay for, that it is going to meet the needs of what they're paying for. So that's pretty important to do.

So in relation to that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would move that we adjourn debate on Bill 144, *The Litter Control Amendment Act*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Athabasca has moved to adjourn debate on Bill 144, *The Litter Control Amendment Act, 2010*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 147

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Draude that **Bill No. 147 — *The Public Interest Disclosure Act*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm happy today to enter the debate on Bill 147, *The Public Interest Disclosure Act*. I certainly want to say at the outset that we do support, as a caucus and opposition, the purpose of the Bill.

We have seen the Bill in different forms, a Bill something like this, a whistle-blower Act, protection, over the years, and would be really quite excited if this was what it said it was going to be. And it would give security and protection to workers in the workplace across the province because the Sask Party government came into government promising people more transparency and more accountability, and frankly we've seen none of that.

And I think people in the public service who deliver a service to the whole province, deliver services to the whole province, that I don't think we quite appreciate how far and wide the public service extends into our lives and what service they do for us. And I think it's extremely important that people that work in government have a way to point out things that they find are wrong. And I don't think we have that, and we don't have it here.

I was reading through the Bill, and I see that there's exemptions for health districts, health regions, and they're going to fall still under *The Labour Standards Act*. Well I know that some health regions are actually telling their employees they are not allowed to speak about anything. Now that to me does not sound like a system where we have people that can feel comfortable in their work, making sure that the work is safe, that the work environment is safe, and that they and the people that they serve are safe.

This isn't a statement that I think says much to our system when public workers, public employees like nurses and maintenance workers and housekeeping and dietary and LPNs [licensed practical nurse] and RNs [registered nurse] and the wide variety of people that work in the health system are told that they can't speak to anybody about anything, that there will be repercussions.

And I think we've seen in this very legislature last session, when we were not told . . . The public was not told about an inmate being at large, and the Sask Party government wrongly accused a member, a man working in the system and fired him with no proof whatsoever. They had the wrong person. But the message it sends out when you do that to somebody, when you go on a witch hunt and then actually fire somebody without proof that that's the right person even — I mean, that's a huge mistake in itself — but the whole process of allowing a government to go after an employee because they disclosed something as vital to the public interest as having a criminal at

large, that sends a message that this Bill clearly does not fix. And if the government is truly interested in sending a message to the public servants and the people of Saskatchewan that they are interested in transparency and accountability, they're going to have to do a lot to regain that trust because at the moment that trust is not there.

[15:45]

If we're going to see an integrity commissioner, the commissioner would have its first job looking at the Amicus deal. There is no integrity in that deal. And my colleague from Nutana has pointed that out in many, many, many ways. And it just continues to unfold like an onion. The more you peel back, the more you find, the more you see. And it doesn't get any better. There is no integrity in that. And if we're looking at an integrity commissioner, that would be the first thing the commissioner would want to look at.

And somebody would probably point that out from a department. And what would happen to that person? I don't think that that person would be protected by this Act. I think that there would be repercussions because that would be a very black mark against the government and I don't think . . . For one thing for sure, the Amicus deal is not over. The scrutiny of Amicus is not finished. And I think the public is waiting to see what's next.

And I know there's different iterations of the Amicus deal being planned with government and the school boards for construction of school facilities and other long-term care facilities. People are waiting to see exactly how it's going to be done. Where will be the integrity? How will the government come forward and explain itself to the public when they have this as a benchmark? Amicus is their benchmark for a new way of funding, a new financial arrangement, the Minister of Health said.

Well it's interesting. We have to lose our integrity to have something new. I don't think so. I think people in Saskatchewan can understand new, moving forward, something different, something that works better, but they certainly don't want to see our integrity gone, and they certainly don't want to see their money wasted or their money compromised. We now as a province have a liability for this facility without any tendering and with all kinds of tentacles that reach into the cronyism and basically what looks like corruption.

So I think the people of Saskatchewan don't have a lot of faith in putting together a commission or a commissioner that will protect your rights. I think we have to get back to the basics and say that this government needs to re-establish a trust within the Saskatchewan people. And they don't have it. The people in Saskatchewan that I visited over the summer, they think the government has abandoned them. And that's just on health issues.

They haven't even heard of the Amicus deal when I talked to them. Why are you out there raising money in your 10 communities or 13 communities, 10 that I actually visited? Why are you out raising money when you don't have to? There's a new financial arrangement in town and the minister said so. How come you don't have it? What's the integrity in

that? Why does one organization get the deal offered to them and not the other 13? What's so different? So people are going to ask that question. And the more they find out . . .

I know it's interesting that the member from Lloydminster thought that I was out scaring people silly during the summer. But basically people were getting scared silly by what I was telling them that was out there from the Sask Party, that they didn't know. And I think they were more angry than they were scared. They did not like to hear that there's things that are happening that they don't know and that aren't fair.

And in fact, they were saying that rural Saskatchewan is paying twice for health care. They have to pay for their own doctors and their nurse practitioners. They have to pay for it themselves out of the municipal tax base where they also pay into the regular General Revenue Fund that funds the general health care system. So they have to pay twice. They have to pay that, and then they have to dig into their municipal funds to pay.

So I don't think people are quite certain about this assertion from the Sask Party that there's going to be more accountability and more transparency. No. It's a big secret. The Amicus deal is a big secret. Thirteen communities don't know about it. And if we start telling them, then we get accused of scaring them silly.

Well that's sort of like whistle-blowing, isn't it, Mr. Deputy Speaker? We pointed out something and you get nothing but vilified and accused of scaring people silly. That's the same sort of thing. If people need to be assured that they will get the truth and they will get up front . . . And if you're going to talk about accountability and transparency, then you'd better deliver it and not just print it in a document and think that you can live on that. Printed word isn't going to do you any good if your actions don't.

And it's funny with essential services. Many people were designated as essential services, many more than were actually appearing on a shift daily. So the things that the government has done in the public and to people working in public services has not engendered a great deal of confidence in the decisions or the integrity of the decisions that are made.

I think the essential services legislation has damaged the public service and damaged public employees, in particular those in health, in ways we don't even know yet. The damage that's been done into collective bargaining will take years to undo. There is such an atmosphere in bargaining and in workplaces that it's going to take a long time to undo that. And that's what . . . When I speak to the issue of trust, I don't think the public servants and the public service do trust this government to have their best interests at heart. I've seen nothing in the actions of this government that would let me believe that they would like to see things that are wrong actually exposed. I think if they see something wrong that's exposed, they want to smack the person who's exposed it. I don't think there's any indication that this will protect you or that there is any intent to protect you. And I think that's the part that the people of Saskatchewan will clearly say.

And when we look at what do we want to see from this, we do want to see people protected. If there's something in your

workplace that you know of that's wrong, either it's against the law, against policy, against your person, you should have the right to say and speak up without repercussions, without the thought of losing your job or being punished in any way. There should be no reprisals. And yet I don't think we have that trust or that confidence that this will do this.

And I know that many of my colleagues have quite a passionate interest in this Bill and really do want to speak about it, and I think that the speeches that I have read in *Hansard* show a great deal of interest from all of us. And I think when we talk to the public about what does this mean to you, I think that's the message we're going to be getting. It doesn't mean that I will be safe especially if you put the commissioner into the Ombudsman's office which has been mentioned.

And if that's so, right now we're looking at decisions or recommendations made by the Ombudsman; no one has to do any of them. There's no teeth in it. So the Ombudsman can review things, make recommendations, and the minister just gets to say no, we're not going to do it for whatever reason. And we've seen that with health issues many, many, many times. So I think that if this is going to be in the Ombudsman's office or be part of the Ombudsman's job, then there has to be teeth so that the recommendations from the Ombudsman are actually followed by the minister and followed by the government.

So I'm thinking that there's going to be lots more, lots more discussion on this and a lot of more people from our side, from the opposition, who want to speak to this and talk about what it means to the public and to public servants. And I don't think that anybody, at this point, has any assurance that the government has their best interest at heart or that this will in fact protect them if they bring forward something that they find is lacking or significantly wrong in their workplace.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that in the interest of giving other colleagues the chance to talk to this and other Bills, I will now adjourn debate.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Eastview has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 147, *The Public Interest Disclosure Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 149

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Krawetz that **Bill No. 149** — *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2010* be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It certainly gives me a great deal of pleasure to have the opportunity to enter into this debate, the debate on Bill 149, *An Act to Amend*

The Income Tax Act, 2000.

Mr. Speaker, in general I want to start out by saying — it's no surprise to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker — I'm not an accountant and therefore probably not an expert on this particular file. But I've had the opportunity to do some reading on it, and I do find it of some interest. Basically what this particular Bill will set up is the ability for the government to implement a five-year tax holiday for mining corporations that are making an investment of at least \$125 million and will maintain at least a workforce of 75 full-time employees.

Mr. Speaker, at first glance one would say well this is probably a good move in principle. I think you would say the opposition likely would support it. It's a very broad and blanket statement to make, Mr. Speaker. One has to be very careful of what the details are around such initiatives and around such deals.

One would hope, one would hope that a corporation that is setting up an operation in this province and making a significant investment of 125 million or more would also be looking at setting up a significant office, if not the head office, certainly a subsidiary office in our great province here, that it would not only employ the workers in, first of all, in the development of the mine but later stages after the mine is developed and operating. It would include the employees working in the mine doing the extraction of the minerals but would also include a good contingency of head office or subsidiary office staff that would be available to continue to do the work here in the province. So, Mr. Speaker, I suppose it's fair to say that in principle it's a broad statement to make, and in principle this would be supported I think by most people.

But the devil is in the details, as the saying goes. And this is where we have to be quite careful about the details of a deal that would be put together that would allow the tax-free holiday to take place. If it is the initiative it takes to attract the investment, that would be great as long as it's not re-interpreted some point in time into the future.

We always have to be careful about that, Mr. Speaker, is that one's commitment can be open to different interpretations. For example a pledge of full-time jobs or new investment might mean different things to different people. And this is why it is so very important that when a government enters into that type of an arrangement that it be detailed out. It would be detailed out in writing so that both parties or all parties involved, including the people of this great province, understand what the commitment really is, what the commitment is from the government, but also what the commitment is from the corporation that is making the investment and in return going to benefit from the implementation of a tax-free holiday as well as the investment, but the commitment to the number of full-time workers. And do the . . . You know, for example, would 75 full-time workers, would that be isolated strictly to the mine itself, to where the mineral is being extracted? Would that mean 75 or more full-time workers on a consistent basis? Or would that also include any office staff that might be there to support the operation?

Those are the questions, Mr. Speaker, that would have to be ironed out in the details of an agreement. That I think is important. I think those are the important things that the people

of Saskatchewan should be made aware of.

We would not want to see a situation where the government ends up very similar to its experience in the potash industry here, most recently, in that allowing a corporation to make pledges and commitments to the people of this great province without doing so in writing and without doing so in a way that would tie them to that commitment and would allow them to revisit, in the future, revisit that commitment and to change the level of that commitment.

It, Mr. Speaker, would be not fair to the people of Saskatchewan who are putting the money on the line, putting the tax money on the line of a tax-free holiday of five years in return for an investment of 125 million or more . . . and having commitments made but having not a clear understanding of what those commitments are or the responsibilities that go along with those commitments to ensure that those commitments are upheld and those responsibilities are fulfilled.

Those would be the interesting things, Mr. Speaker. As the saying goes, the devil is in the details. It's one thing to make the broad statement, but it's another thing to make sure that you have the mechanisms in place to ensure that those commitments are kept and are honoured and are fulfilled by both parties — both the government as well as the mining company making the investments.

It's interesting, Mr. Speaker, that we haven't yet seen, fleshed out in this Bill, any suggestions of what that mechanism would be that would . . . how far the government would go with a company making that commitment to ensure that there is a transparent process here, that the company would be fully aware of, when they're making their commitment, of what it means, what that commitment actually means in real dollars and in real sense and real activity and what it means to the government to be able to stand up to the people of Saskatchewan and say here's the commitment we have from the mining company in return for the tax-free holiday that they're going to enjoy and the investment they're going to make. When in return for that . . . we also have a commitment for 75 full-time jobs more. We also have a commitment of other activities within our society and within our economy that would be something that we would be able to stand up to Saskatchewan people and present it to them in a straightforward way that we would be all very, I think, very happy with and very proud of.

[16:00]

Mr. Speaker, some of the questions that we have to answer, that need to be answered in relationship to this particular Bill, is quite simply put. Who benefits? Who benefits from this Bill? If this Bill was passed and enacted into law, who benefits? Who is going to be the winners, and who is going to be the losers? Are there going to be winners, and are there going to be losers? And if this is the case, then what do we need to do to make sure that the people of Saskatchewan win and that nobody loses, that we all could benefit in a productive way, whether it would be the mining company investing or whether it would be the personnel working for that mining company.

Those are the things that this Bill is short of. It's short of those

kind of details. It's short of giving us the answers, I guess you would say, as to what are the effects, what are the effects of this Bill if it's passed. Who wins? Who loses? What's the benefit of the winners, and what would be the downside to the losers? Those are the things that are being missed, Mr. Speaker. Questions that are not being answered, Mr. Speaker, is for example is, what's the impact? What's the impact upon the people of Saskatchewan if this Act was to be passed and implemented? Who would benefit from it? But more importantly, would there be losers? Would the people of Saskatchewan be those who'd be losing in the long run? Those are the questions that need to be answered.

And yet this particular Bill, Mr. Speaker, from my perusal of it, doesn't seem to have that information in it. Certainly it doesn't seem to give us the opportunity — us in the opposition — the opportunity to go through this Bill and to be able to answer those kinds of questions. Because I think that's what's really important here, Mr. Speaker, is the ability to answer the questions that Saskatchewan people have on this particular Bill as to what is the impact. What is the impact to the economy? What is the impact to the job force, the workforce? And most importantly, Mr. Speaker, what's the impact to the Saskatchewan treasury? Does it have an impact and what would that impact be?

One would assume it would have an impact if there's a tax-free holiday for five years. That means it's five years the people of Saskatchewan will not enjoy a tax revenue from that particular operation. This is not necessarily a bad thing, Mr. Speaker, if over the long run it could be shown that it is going to have a positive effect for the Saskatchewan economy and for this great province of ours, but that has to be demonstrated, Mr. Speaker. It has to be shown fairly clearly and fairly simply.

And yet, Mr. Speaker, in this legislation we just simply don't see that.

Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that we haven't been able to identify anywhere in here any suggestions, even in the broadest of sense, of what that impact might be on Saskatchewan people and on Saskatchewan's treasury. And it's unfortunate because one would have to assume that that is a very, very big part of being able to provide Saskatchewan people the ongoing services that we, I think we all elected people here, would like to see Saskatchewan people enjoy, but on an ongoing basis.

To me it's the role of government; it's the role of elected people to work at developing a society and an economy in this great province of ours that will allow the services to be available to those people in this great province who need them, in a timely fashion. And I'm thinking, Mr. Speaker, the ability of government to continue to finance health care, for example, in a way that is suitable and meets the needs of Saskatchewan people.

And health care is just one of the many services, but I think it's such an important service. And I believe you would agree with me that — I'm sure all of my colleagues would — it's probably the issue that is the most important issue to Saskatchewan people. When you ask them what the issues are, and they all have different issues — whether it be highways or whether it would be agriculture or whether it'd be, you know, the flooding

or the environment — but health care will always be right up there amongst the top half a dozen or top maybe even three or four issues in Saskatchewan people's minds.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, it's because for those of us who are presently and throughout most of our life enjoying good health, we consider ourselves quite fortunate. And we like to have comfort in the knowledge that, if required, if the medical situation requires that we need to draw on those services, we know that those services are there in our time of need.

As importantly, Mr. Speaker, I think you can apply the same to maybe our family members who haven't had the good fortune to enjoy as much good health as some of us, and have had the need in the past to draw on our medical services and to know that they receive the services that they needed in a timely fashion, when they needed it. And that's very important.

But I believe it's our role in government here, I believe it's our role to continue to provide those services and to provide our good folks of this great province the comfort and the knowledge that those services, those health care services are there in the event we need them or in the event one of our family members may need the health care services — that they're there.

And that has to be a responsibility not only of ours today, but for those who will come after us, whether they be in this legislature, developing a system, an economy that will be able to continue to afford to be able to provide those services to Saskatchewan people, to provide services such as adequate transportation mechanisms, infrastructure for our highway systems, whether it be highways or grid roads or whatever it may be, a transportation system that will meet the needs of Saskatchewan people.

It's just so important that we have the ability to continue to finance this, Mr. Speaker. We don't want to see misguided promises made that certainly inhibit the ability of government to be able to fund such programs as this. Certainly don't want to see a situation where a government enters into an agreement for a tax-free holiday and doesn't have a clear understanding of what they can expect to get in return for that granting of a tax-free holiday.

And that is why it's so important, Mr. Speaker, that we have the ability to extract from any deal which would be supported by this Bill the ability to understand what the commitments are by the corporations that are making it and what time frame in which that commitment will be kept. And not just an open-ended commitment that at some point in time in the future we will do X, Y, or Z, but we need to know that would happen within a reasonable time frame, so to be able to support the people of Saskatchewan in a way which I believe that they are entitled to.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, the question that would have to be asked of this Bill is, who is eligible for the refund? If there's going to be a refund as a result of a tax-free holiday being granted, then what are the conditions around that? What are the conditions would qualify a corporation for that refund? What is it that they would have to do? What is it that they would have to . . . What commitments would they have to make? But more

importantly, what commitments would they have to make and honour before they could qualify for that refund so that there's some mechanism of give-and-take here, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, I mentioned a little earlier about the need to be able to, in a meaningful way, finance our health care and our health care services here. And I think we also have to be in a position to react in times of emergency and react in times of need. Most recently we've seen this happen with this, most recently this year, in 2010. We've seen the budget that came down in the springtime. It slashed some \$100 million out of the agricultural budget in a year that — and at that time of course nobody knew this was going to happen — but in a year that we've experienced probably the wettest year on record. Wettest year on record which, as a result of that, caused certainly a lot of pressure on our agricultural producers.

As I understand it, about half the seeded acres only in Saskatchewan got seeded. The rest was too wet to be seeded. Therefore that acreage isn't going to be producing any revenue for our farmers. So there's a need, a real need for a meaningful support program for our agricultural producers.

Now the government did announce a \$12 an acre I think was their share, a \$30 an acre altogether with the funding from the feds, from the federal government, to offset the unseeded acres. But, Mr. Speaker, \$30 an acre falls far short of what is needed to be a meaningful program to reflect the true costs of that land standing idle.

I had the opportunity this summer to visit a number of farmers across this great province of ours. And there was a kind of a general theme when I was talking to farmers particularly about the program, the \$30 an acre. There was those who were saying, well you know, certainly it was welcomed; \$30 an acre was welcomed, but it wasn't enough. It didn't represent anywhere near enough. They were suggesting that \$30 an acre didn't cover much more than the cost of chemical and the cost of applying that chemical to the unseeded acres in order to control the weeds. It certainly left them short of the revenue that was normally generated off that property to support their farming operations and to be able to continue their ability to farm into the future.

So I think, Mr. Speaker, we don't want to find ourselves in a situation where the government, because of its granting of tax-free holidays and its giving away of money it didn't have, to find itself at some point in time in the future not being able to provide funding and financial support for programs that are very, very important, particularly those who come up, those programs that are of an emergency nature such as the wet year and the negative effect that has had on our agricultural producers and their ability to only seed half the acres.

I think the same can be said for unusual flooding in this great province of ours and those people who were impacted by floods that normally, you know, that wouldn't be the case. But this was certainly a very unusual year. And we certainly have a lot of those cases where an emergency nature certainly causes a need for the government to step forward and to take a leadership role in providing support for those individuals out there who find themselves very negatively impacted.

So, Mr. Speaker, there is certainly a lot on this particular Bill that needs to be looked into. And certainly there is a need for the opposition to have the time to further flesh out the shortcomings of this Bill by talking to the stakeholders and those who are directly affected by this Bill or may be directly affected by this Bill. So to do that, of course the opposition will need some time to contact the stakeholders and have the opportunity to sit down and discuss the various aspects of this Bill with them and to get input from them as to what the impact may be on their operation, may be on — as they see it — on the province as a whole and in general.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, we will need a little further time to look at the various aspects of this Bill, and as well as giving my colleagues the opportunity to express their concerns on this particular Bill. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I'll move adjournment of debate.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Regina Northeast has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 149, *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2010*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 150

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Krawetz that **Bill No. 150 — *The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Amendment Act, 2010*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to speak to Bill No. 150, the superannuation amendment Act. And this Bill does a couple of things, one of which causes significant question and even concern to us, not because it may not . . . Some of the provisions might in fact work out well, but some of it sets a dangerous precedent. And the provision I'm speaking of is the provision to withhold some information, to not publicly disclose all of the pension that goes out.

And it's interesting, Mr. Speaker, because as members will be well aware, I've a significant history in this legislature. And I know, and I know that many of the members opposite have a fairly significant history in this place as well. And I heard members of the now government calling for full public disclosure of everything, of everything when they were in opposition and the New Democrats were in government.

[16:15]

The Sask Party wanted contracts all disclosed. They wanted salaries fully disclosed, pensions fully disclosed. After all, the argument goes, it's public money. It's taxpayers' money. And the member from Cannington is smiling. He was probably the biggest proponent of that. And I recall many eloquent speeches from that member, eloquent speeches speaking to the need for full public disclosure of everything.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I've said it in this legislature before, what a difference a day will make, especially if that's election day for a Sask Party government. And I say, shame. It doesn't have to be that way. It shouldn't ought to be that way, Mr. Speaker. Parties and members should get elected for their good proposals and for what they believe in. But things shouldn't just flip because it happens to be an election day, and you go from opposition to government. You should be able to have the courage of your convictions and make the good ideas happen, particularly when you're in government.

Mr. Speaker, the concern with this . . . I have a new twist on my concern that I've not seen elsewhere. One person asked me earlier whether it was accurate, whether it's true that the Sask Party cabinet was going to increase salary or benefits, thereby increasing their pension and not having to report it. It's an interesting question. That wasn't the new question that I had.

The question I have is, we've got to be careful what it is we allow to happen because the argument I'm going to make is that with this proposal, double-dipping can continue unabated. Double-dipping is a situation where someone working in a position retires and then gets hired back to do essentially the same job, often the very same job, and they receive pension from that job and at the same time collect a salary from that job.

But here's the twist, Mr. Speaker. What if a government ran massive deficits for years in a row? Sounds a bit familiar, doesn't it? What if governments ran massive deficits and then woke up and realized, whoa, we've got a problem. We've got a problem — they might say, Mr. Speaker — a problem. How do we fix the problem? Well it's easy. We can cause a number of civil servants to superannuate, to retire, and they can retire from their . . . Let's use an example of a \$60,000 a year job. They can superannuate from a \$60,000 a year job, and we'll hire them back for — let's say — \$36,000 a year to do essentially the same job, Mr. Speaker.

But because they're now collecting their superannuation — whatever that has amounted to, built up over the years — plus the salary of \$36,000, the person who's both superannuated and working might in fact in a short term be financially better off. But the government is significantly better off because in our system here, since the late '70s, pension here accumulates in a money purchase plan, not a defined benefit but a money purchase. So it's fully funded. It's fully funded.

The superannuate, the worker pays their share. The government pays their share. And it goes into the pot, and it collects and grows or shrinks as has happened a couple of times in the last 20 years. I've got to confess, as someone who watches their pension plan, Mr. Speaker, I like it when it grows as opposed to the years of contraction. But the reality is it'll grow or shrink. But usually it'll grow, the pension.

So we have a situation as I've just described, Mr. Speaker, where you might have a government in a severe financial problem, having run a billion or more dollar deficits for successive years in a row, a government that has balanced budget legislation — say, that we introduced when we were in government — forcing a government to balance the budget in the four-year term. You might have a government say, holy smokes, how can we? How can we achieve a balance? And of

course governments of all stripes want to achieve what they need to achieve with the minimum of complaint from the public or the minimum of complaint from public service.

So I've just outlined a scenario where this Bill . . . I hope I didn't give ideas, Mr. Speaker, to the government because it would be a shame, it would be a shame if this superannuation plan were utilized for what I'm saying it might be utilized if, if we allow the non-disclosure to take place. And you know, Mr. Speaker, there's a reason why I have some concern about potential non-disclosure going on.

And it's not because I care particularly what Mr. Jones or Ms. Smith might be getting in their superannuation. On a personal level, none of my business, quite frankly. But we do need to see if there are changes going on that are significant. You need to have that in a public planning policy way. And you need to make sure that the government isn't forcing people to superannuate so they can lower their salary, saving the frontal costs in the budget for the government, saving that budget item expenditure at the expense of working people.

Now of course I haven't entered into the fray of what a job is worth, and that's an entirely different discussion. There is pay plans that are in place. Government would want as, frankly, so would the opposition want to make sure, as far as we can, that any tax expenditure for salary is getting the equal value, if I can describe it that way, not to be confused with equal pay for work of equal value. But the point is, if you're paying someone \$60,000, you should be getting 60,000 or more dollars worth of value back from them.

And this is an important thing that employers everywhere . . . whether it be government or non-government, whether it's NGOs [non-governmental organization] or private sector or co-operatives or whatever the situation is. We have to make sure that we're getting reasonable value for the pay that we're doing.

And I'm concerned that, in the superannuation Bill 150, the superannuation proposals, that there can be coercion on workers, and it's a fear. I worry any time we allow the Sask Party government off the hook respecting reporting, Mr. Speaker. I worry that if we enshrine the ability to not report, as is being proposed in this Bill 150, that situations like the Amicus situation, a \$27 million untendered contract, that those situations simply are allowed to go on.

Mr. Speaker, it is very disconcerting to me to know that under a freedom of information request, there was some 6 to 700 pages of information on that very same \$27 million untendered contract to Amicus.

There was more black in those pages than the ice storm that covered Quebec and eastern Ontario in 1998. There was more blackout in that freedom of information request than was caused by the ice storm in 1998 in eastern Canada. And I remember it well. Power lines and major transmission lines were down. And the blackout lasted for weeks in many cases. It may have even been months, but certainly weeks. People were without power. People were blacked out. This Amicus deal is seemingly a permanent blackout. And of course the job of the opposition is to make sure that that blackout is lifted and that

the light of day is shed on this \$27 million untendered contract.

[16:30]

Mr. Speaker, the superannuation provision similarly is . . . Only in this case, the superannuation, Bill 150, legitimizes the non-reporting. And that's the concern that I have and that we in the opposition have, is that it legitimizes the ability of the Sask Party government to not report at their leisure. And we of course have always had the view that the more you report the less likely you are to get into any serious trouble. Open and honest communication is the best way to operate anything. It's certainly the case with the government. It's certainly the case with any business. It's the case with any relationships that I've ever had. You want to be as open and as honest and as transparent as you possibly can be. And then you're not likely to get into trouble.

If you can go home and say, mom, this is what happened . . . for those who are fortunate enough to still have their mother. Or in my case, if I can go home and say, honey, this is the situation and this is what happened, and as open and honest as I can, it tends to lead to better relationship.

And if I can just, on that little side note, if I can just keep pushing that for a little while longer, you know, next month my wife and I will be celebrating our 35th wedding anniversary. I'm very much looking forward to that as long as Lorna doesn't get smart and chase the member for Athabasca or something like that. She might decide she wants to take up with a hockey player. I say this with a smile, Mr. Speaker, because if that's the way it is, I know nothing of it. But anyway I'm looking forward to next month.

Mr. Speaker, the superannuation Bill allows the non-reporting of expenditures that we've always argued are public expenditures. We need to have as much transparent reporting as we possibly can. We don't need to look very far to see a government that ducks and rolls and hides from reporting. We look at last year's \$2.2 billion error on the potash revenue, you know, where instead of collecting 2 billion they wound up writing a cheque back for 200 million to the potash companies. You know that transparency isn't an integral part of the government members opposite.

Mr. Speaker, I was recently down at Big Beaver, portal of Big Beaver, and they were a little bit upset with their government, both provincially and federally because the situation there is the American federal government is spending 7 or \$8 million upgrading the portal at that border crossing, and the Harper government in Ottawa is closing the Canadian side, closing it. So we have this rather silly situation where an upgrade is warranted on the American side, and a closure is warranted on this side.

And the good people of Big Beaver and area were pointing out the benefits of commerce and the benefits of their ability to visit their relatives handily because over the years they've married, both sides of the border, you know, you have . . . It's not unusual to have — I'll describe it as — mixed marriages, one being a Canadian and one being an American but families certainly living on both sides. And they think of themselves as one community. But the reporting hasn't happened here. It's just one more example of a government not wanting to report things.

Mr. Speaker, the other thing that Bill 150 does, the superannuation plan . . . And this actually sounds like it has some promise although we have some question around it. But it's to clarify how spousal survivor benefits are to be calculated particularly as it relates to when a person, employee, has been married more than once because survivor benefits are . . . You know, you want to get it right. You don't get a whole lot of opportunities to disburse the payment to one spouse when in fact the former spouse might be entitled to something or vice versa. You want to get it right. You want to make sure that any spousal benefits are properly taken care of. And I think it's pretty safe to say that most of us would want that to be the situation because we would want to have made whatever legal provisions or moral or ethical provisions we felt we should during our lifetime. And this should be fairly transparent, what the spousal survivor benefits are and how they'd be calculated. It shouldn't, Mr. Speaker, change, you know, for me versus someone else. It should be again fairly straightforward.

So, Mr. Speaker, we've got some real concerns, particularly around the non-reporting, the non-public disclosure under this Act. We have some real concerns that we have a Sask Party government that is not always . . . in fact is often, all too often not willing to disclose information. And now we have a proposal by the same Sask Party government to initiate, legitimize the non-public disclosure of pension assets.

And I've tried to point out in my speech several areas where I'm concerned about it, where it can be a negative, both for working people . . . It can be a negative for pensioners, and in the long run I argue it can be a negative for government because the government should want to be open, accountable, honest, you know, the sorts of things that the Sask Party campaigned on prior to the last election. A government should want to be all of those things and more.

So, Mr. Speaker, knowing that we have some more questions on the Act to amend *The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Act*, Bill No. 150, and knowing we need a little more time to talk to a few more people, maybe do a little bit of further research, at this point I move to adjourn this Bill.

The Speaker: — The member from Regina Coronation Park has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 150. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 153

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 153** — *The Provincial Court Amendment Act, 2010* be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to get

up again to speak to this Bill. The other day I had just got started when we had to adjourn for the day, so I'm very happy to have the opportunity to wade into the debate on Bill No. 153, *The Provincial Court Amendment Act*, once again.

So there are a few changes that are being proposed by this Bill. And actually there are some of these changes that seem to be quite logical and worthy of support and have been requested by bodies that are directly impacted by the Bill currently in force.

However there are a couple of changes that the opposition will need to examine a bit more closely. We need to seek some more information from government and what its intentions with this Bill are and from individuals and organizations outside of government on their perspectives as well. One of my colleagues — actually the former minister of Justice and the member from Lakeview — pointed out that, particularly when the executive body of government is making changes around the Provincial Court or any of the courts for that matter, we need to be especially vigilant when enacting changes to make sure that there are no unintended consequences and that the intentions of the Bill are very clear too. So the opposition will be doing its due diligence to make sure that we fully understand this Bill and any of its intended and unintended consequences.

So what does this Bill set out to do? Well the Minister of Justice says it will allow Provincial Court judges from other provinces to be appointed as temporary judges in Saskatchewan when required to deal with a file where all Saskatchewan Provincial Court judges are in conflict or appear to be in conflict. So this is something that's currently . . . Other jurisdictions actually already allow this, and we support them in their work. So this actually seems to be a fairly logical change.

This Bill will set out to reduce the waiting period for disability benefits for judges from one year to three months. It will require the Judicial Council hearing committee which deals with complaints regarding the conduct or capacity of a judge to disclose the report following an investigation with certain exceptions allowed.

This Bill, Bill No. 153 also clarifies how the Law Society of Saskatchewan appoints a replacement representative to the Judicial Council if the president of the Law Society is unable to attend. And it amends *The Small Claims Act* to allow justices of the peace to hear small claims matters. So that's what this Bill looks like it sets out to do, Mr. Speaker.

So when looking at changes to law and the process, particularly the opposition's process of accessing these changes, you need to ask yourself what is the problem you're addressing and who will benefit from these changes, Mr. Speaker. So in reviewing the minister's second reading comments, he does indicate that some of these changes were requested by groups outside of government to assist them in the work that they do. So for example, with respect to lowering the waiting period for disability benefits for judges from one year to three months, the Provincial Court compensation commission recommended this change. This simply puts judges in the same position as other provincial government employees as it pertains to disability benefits. So this is totally logical and is a fairly easy point to support, Mr. Speaker.

One of the other changes comes from the Law Society of Saskatchewan in order to help maintain consistent representation on the Judicial Council. The Law Society had been concerned that the existing appointment process to the Judicial Council would lead to annual changes in representation. So the Law Society was asking for this change, and it seems to make sense. Continuity on a decision-making body can be a very beneficial thing, Mr. Speaker.

So there are, though, a couple parts of this legislation that are interesting, to say the least, coming from this particular government with its less than stellar track record on issues of both transparency and consultation. For example in the minister's second reading comments, he discusses the more transparent way complaints against Provincial Court judges will now be resolved upon the passing of this piece of legislation, Bill No. 153.

Currently complaints against Provincial Court judges may be resolved either through an informal review by the Judicial Council or the Judicial Council may recommend that a formal hearing may be constituted. Currently the less formal process is not open to the public, and the results are not made public when it wraps up. So if there is a hearing, it will be public unless the committee orders otherwise and the committee provides a report to the Judicial Council, minister, defendant, and complainants. Although this process is public, the report is not, unless the report recommends and the Judicial Council agrees to issue an order that the judge be removed or retired from office.

So this is the case, Mr. Speaker. The report and order are filed with the legislature and only then become accessible by the public. With these changes, this is moving in the direction of other . . . The proposed changes move us in the direction of other provinces of a much more transparent process that requires the release of the report in a broader range of circumstances. The report, in order of the Judicial Council, will be made public in all circumstances except where its release would disclose personal health information, the identity of the complainant in circumstances of sexual harassment or assault, or in other cases where it's contrary to the public interest.

So this seems like a fairly reasonable . . . This seems like a good move or a move in the right direction and a direction that other jurisdictions have already taken. So by making this order public in most cases, it offers the Judicial Council an opportunity to publicly renounce inappropriate behaviour by a judge, to clear the name of a judge found not to have acted improperly, and also to enhance public confidence in the disciplinary process under the Act.

So accountability and transparency are good. Increased transparency is a very good thing, Mr. Speaker. So in the minister's own words, I'd like to quote him: "Integrity and transparency are fundamental to public confidence in the court and the administration of justice in this province." I couldn't agree more. I couldn't agree more and more wholeheartedly with the Minister of Justice about the need for transparency.

But I would also extend his quote to say that integrity and transparency are also fundamental to public confidence in governance, not just in the court system but in governance, Mr.

Speaker. This is where there's a healthy dose of irony in the minister's comments. It is this government that's bringing forward a Bill mandating that other organizations remain transparent, something at which this government has failed abysmally.

When it comes to transparency and integrity, this is the government that recently blacked out 900 pages of a freedom of information request pertaining to the Amicus deal, a new way of doing things, as the government likes to say. This new way of doing things, or this new road as we heard in the Throne Speech, is all about not tendering projects that involve public money and about passing on contracts to your political supporters.

Mr. Speaker, this new road on which this government has set out seems to be taking us back to the days of the 1980s where the government of the day racked up huge amounts of debt that hamstring future governments for years and years to come. And just a note, we have to remember this is where our Premier learned his governing style and his management skills. It was at this time of fiscal mismanagement in the 1980s, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I too agree with transparency and believe citizens expect this of their legislators and of their government. After all it is their money, and they deserve to know how it's being spent and that the process to spend that money is clear, fair, and transparent, that we know how it works, that across the board we know how government is going to spend money and how organizations will be treated. So I do still think it's ironic that this government is holding others to a higher standard than it's willing to meet itself.

Although we've heard from the minister how some of these amendments have come forward, why these changes are being proposed, and how they will impact people, there are a couple parts of this legislation that will definitely have to be more carefully reviewed. The minister has given no indication as to where some of these legislative changes have come from. We did hear where a couple of them came from, but there's a couple key pieces that the minister hasn't given any indication where his guidance or direction has come from on this.

So call me a bit of a cynic, but in my short time in this Legislative Chamber . . . I've only been here about a year, Mr. Speaker, and I've seen this government fail to consult on too many occasions to count. A lack of consultation seems to be the rule rather than the exception.

They failed to consult when they brought in *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*. They failed to consult with anyone who knew anything about SCN [Saskatchewan Communications Network] or the film industry in this province when they privatized SCN. They failed to consult when they ended the domestic violence program in Saskatoon, a program that was working incredibly well for the people who had the opportunity to use it, Mr. Speaker. This list of lack of consultation goes on and on and on.

So I have a few concerns that some of these changes that this government is proposing with respect to Bill 153 . . . particularly the changes around small claims court. And what will happen now is justices of the peace will be able to hear

cases in small claims court as well as Provincial Court judges. So my concern about this . . . and it may be a valid change, but my concern comes from wondering if this government is choosing to do this to save money.

Is this to deal with their own fiscal mismanagement, Mr. Speaker? This government spent the \$2.3 billion they inherited from the NDP in 2007, and once this money was gone, they've racked up deficits two years in a row, and they've projected debt to increase by 55 per cent or more than \$4 billion by 2014, Mr. Speaker. So I'm sure you can understand how the opposition could be concerned that they may be motivated to make changes simply to try to find a little bit of money here and there because they don't seem to have a whole lot of money left, Mr. Speaker.

So for me, meaningful consultation is absolutely critical to ensure legislation works and does what it needs to do for all the people impacted by it.

[16:45]

So these changes may be beneficial. They may be necessary, but the opposition will need to connect with individuals and organizations to ensure these changes will not have negative consequences or unintended consequences, consequences that haven't been thought about yet.

So again a key rule to think about when you look at a piece of legislation is, who requested the changes and what are these changes? What is the problem, the issue, that these proposed changes are meant to address? So the opposition will be taking some time and, as I said, connecting with individuals and groups who know something about these areas, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that the whole of the Bill does what it needs to do for the people of Saskatchewan.

So I know that I have colleagues who are also interested in discussing this Bill, so with that, I would like to adjourn debate.

The Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Riversdale has moved adjournment of debate on Bill 153. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 154

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 154 — *The Provincial Court Consequential Amendment Act, 2010/Loi de 2010 portant modification corrélative à la loi intitulée *The Provincial Court Amendment Act, 2010**** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Bill 154, *The Provincial Court Consequential Amendment Act*. My comments flow very much out of what I've just spoken to in Bill 153.

Again I think the big piece that we will be examining and discussing with people is this government's move to, with respect to small claims court, having justices of the peace be able to hear small claims court as well as Provincial Court justices. Again I think some of the concerns are around . . . this may or may not be a valid decision, but we need more time to discuss this with people.

And I just actually would like to refer to some comments that one of my colleagues, again the former minister of Justice and the member from Lakeview, pointed out around this. So my colleague from Lakeview, a quote:

And one of the points made is that small claims cases obviously would be handled not by a Provincial Court judge in all cases, but by a Justice of the Peace. And this is a change. It's like contracting out work, I suppose, to another group of workers. It is important that the minister tell us if this is a request that is actually coming from the Provincial Court judges, the chief judge and their group, or if this is something that is being done as an administrative financial solution to the situation.

And that situation would be this government's fiscal mismanagement, Mr. Speaker. So again, my comments for Bill 154 are very much along the line of my comments for 153. So with that, I know that I'll have colleagues who want to speak to 154 as well. So with that, I adjourn debate.

The Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Riversdale has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 154. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 155

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Duncan that **Bill No. 155 — *The Natural Resources Amendment Act, 2010*** — be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Furber: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to enter the debate on Bill 155, *The Natural Resources Amendment Act, 2010*. I'm pleased for a couple of reasons. One, most of us in Saskatchewan have had the great opportunity to enjoy the outdoors, whether it be through fishing or hunting or simply enjoying some of the amazing scenery canoeing. But, you know, there's thousands of different ways to enjoy the outdoors in Saskatchewan.

And so with the history that we've got of fishing and trapping and hunting, and with the amount of tourism dollars that flow into Saskatchewan through these industries or through the tourism industry, it's exceedingly important that we look very carefully at legislation that comes in that affects the tourism industry indirectly, and some of the activities of tourism more directly.

I have myself on many occasions been able to enjoy an opportunity to fish in northern Saskatchewan, whether it's at Jim's Camp at Jan Lake or Jim's Camp at Nistowiak Falls or whether it's at different camps, Jan Lake, outside of Missinipe, north of La Ronge, I had great opportunity in my life to do these things. I've also been able to enjoy doing some hunting in the South, whether it's goose or deer or what have you, with my relatives, my grandparents, and uncles. And so it's through some personal experience that I can speak on some of these issues.

And so we have here a Bill before us that at first blush appears to be somewhat innocuous because it has implications on the Fish and Wildlife Development Fund and the role that's played by the advisory council to that fund.

Now it's interesting to note a few things with respect to this Bill. One that's very interesting is, if you remember back to the spring where the Sask Party government passed legislation to remove up to three and a half million acres or so of wildlife habitat protection land, if you remember back to that time, they removed land from control and the ability of government to scrutinize what happens on those lands. And what we're looking at here is unbelievably ironic because in the minister's speech on November 15th of 2010, he says this, and I quote:

The Fish and Wildlife Development Fund provides the money necessary to secure habitat to support a diversity of fish and wildlife species. To date the fund has acquired, through purchase or donation, approximately 212,000 acres of land for wildlife habitat purposes, with many acres under joint title with various partners.

Mr. Speaker, we're looking at legislation right now that provides funding to a Fish and Wildlife Development Fund, that provides dollars to that fund, that will purchase back some land to be used for wildlife habitat purposes. We just spent hours and hours in this Assembly this spring ensuring that the government would transfer out up to three and a half million acres in *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*. This fall they come here with a Bill that's to provide funds to a group who wants to purchase land back. It's unbelievable to me that we would have that dichotomy here.

And I'm not sure if they understand what the implications of this are. But they defended that Bill this spring vehemently, a Bill that they said in the minister's second reading speech that they consulted with people. They named specific groups that they said that they'd consulted with. It was at that time Ducks Unlimited, the Nature Conservancy, the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation, and the FSIN [Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations].

Now the minister in this case, where we're putting away money or allocating money on behalf of the taxpayers to buy back land that seemingly the government brought in legislation to get rid of this spring, and they're saying in this case that they've consulted with these groups again . . . And so we should look back to the minister's second reading speech on *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act* and find out whether or not it was true that she'd consulted with these folks.

And I gave a lengthy speech in the spring, delineating for the

Assembly and for the people of Saskatchewan that almost to a group — that was mentioned in the minister's second reading speech — that where she said she'd consulted, almost to a group, they denied that they had been consulted.

And so when you have impartial bodies that represent nature lovers and wildlife habitat protected lands, people like the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation, the Nature Conservancy, and the FSIN, when they come back and say that it is absolutely false, that we were never consulted on this Bill, and it makes the minister's second reading speech, you have to ask yourself when they bring in a Bill again six months later that does exactly the opposite of what they brought in six months earlier in the spring and say that they consulted, you have to wonder if that's true.

And so the job as a credible opposition, the work that we do as Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, we take very seriously. And so we're going to again, as we did with *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*, ensure that these groups have been consulted. And we'll find out whether they have an opinion on the legislation because, whether it was directly or indirectly, the comments attributed to those groups in the spring were misrepresented. And it's unfortunate that without consulting these major stakeholders in a Bill that you would try to use these same folks to provide credibility for your actions. And so we're going to ensure once again that that hasn't happened in this case.

And we've had the same issue with other Bills and other actions of this government, certainly Bills 5 and 6, where there was a complete and total lack of consultation and in fact a United Nations body ruled in an international judicial process that what the Sask Party government has done in the case of Bills 5 and 6, what they've done in those cases was essentially illegal and should be stopped and changed. And it was because of a lack of consultation.

And so this comes up time and time again, unfortunately, with this government. My colleague from Saskatoon Riversdale pointed out very adroitly that when it came to the Saskatchewan Communications Network, the government had claimed to have consulted people with respect to the closure of SCN. And we find out very directly just after that that it's not true, that they weren't consulted, and in fact they hadn't been called for the period that the government had been elected. So they didn't know and they didn't care. So that's unfortunate.

Now again it's important, if you want to have credibility in bringing forward legislation, that you tell the truth about what you're doing and what you're trying to do, what the motivation is. What's the impetus for the legislation to begin with? Because when you don't, you lose credibility over time. And so it's interesting to note that on many other occasions this government has lost some credibility in that case.

And so again we're going to have to check with all of the affected groups, with each of them, and also look deeply at what the motivation for bringing forward a Bill like this might be. Because we have a case in Saskatchewan today where the government in power has no idea how to manage the province's finances. And so the implications for that range anywhere from bed closures to signing deals that are not good for the people of

Saskatchewan to try to hide money from the provincial treasury.

And so we have to certainly look in this case if it's an attempt by this government to take money off the books so that they don't have to count it in their budgetary process in the same way that they're doing it with Amicus in Saskatoon, if they just guaranteed the loan and guarantee that they'll pay a premium for the beds in there over a number of years. That's what might happen in Saskatchewan.

The Speaker: — Order. Being now 5 p.m., the Assembly will recess until this evening at 7 p.m.

[The Assembly recessed until 19:00.]

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