



FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)

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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

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

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

**Clerk:** — I wish to inform members that Mr. Speaker is not present to open today's sitting.

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly and our guests, some guests that have joined us as a result of an announcement that was made this morning here in the Legislative Assembly Building.

Mr. Speaker, we'll begin with Miranda Biletski who's seated on the floor of the Assembly today. Miranda was born in Regina. She's an outstanding rugby player on the Canadian Wheelchair Rugby team and a Paralympic hopeful for 2012. She has proven herself time and time again by meeting challenges that we can only hope that we could meet, each of us in this Assembly, with as much courage and effort and grace as she has met.

This year Miranda placed fifth at the World Championships in Richmond, BC [British Columbia], second at the Canada Cup in Montreal, the Four Nations Cup in Sydney, Australia, and the American Zonals in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

In between training and competitions, she's squeezing in some business courses at SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology] as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And it's a pleasure to have her in her Assembly today.

Joining Miranda today is another athlete of note from our province. Seated in your gallery is Saskatchewan-born gold medallist from the Vancouver Olympics, Lucas Makowsky. Mr. Speaker, Lucas was also born and raised here in Regina. He was on skates by the age of 6 years old. He's 23 years old now and has an Olympic gold medal, as we are all very aware in terms of his efforts and the efforts of the team pursuit, Canadian team from the Vancouver Olympics.

Mr. Speaker, Lucas and Miranda are joined by some friends that are here today. They're also joined by officials with Sask Sport. We have Audra Young that's here, the volunteer president; Rob Kennedy who's the manager. And then also in terms of the high performance development, well Rob does the high performance development for Sask Sport. And Michelle Dezell is also here. She's the program coordinator for the accessibility program.

Mr. Speaker, very quickly I want to thank everyone who's joined us today. They helped us launch a sports participation initiative to support our athletes, carded, and developmental athletes, carded, to help support those who have disabilities that want to get involved to a greater extent in sport and recreation, and also to help at-risk youth through groups like Take the Lead and KidSport.

Mr. Speaker, we ask all members of the Assembly to join with us in welcoming Miranda and Lucas and all those who've gathered to mark this important day in the support for amateur sport and athletes right across this province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. On behalf of the official opposition, it gives me great pleasure to welcome . . . We've got Miranda and Lucas, Audra, Rob, and Michelle here to their Legislative Assembly. I know the athletes, Miranda and Lucas, we live vicariously through you as Saskatchewan residents. And we couldn't be more proud of you when you are on the world stage and show what it is to be a Saskatchewanian. So thank you very much, and on behalf of the official opposition, welcome.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

**Hon. Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly today a number of livestock producers from northeastern Saskatchewan who've had a very trying year, to say the least, out there with the flooding that's gone on right across the province.

I had the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to meet with Mark van Haastert and Dennis Brown, representatives of the group here. And we had a very good meeting, Mr. Speaker, and some very good recommendations and suggestions of how we may be able to alter some of the programming that we've come out with or maybe programming into the future to help deal with the situation that they're in.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to welcome them here today to their legislature.

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

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to join with the Minister of Agriculture in welcoming a number of livestock producers' families who are here today. As the minister indicates, a very trying year in the northeast part of the province, but in many areas around the province, where beef producers are struggling to keep their cattle herd together. We want to say that we understand and want to do what we can here in the Legislative Assembly to try to protect families and also to protect the very important industry, the cattle production in this province. So I welcome you here today.

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

**Mr. Trew:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour today to introduce to you and through you to all members of the legislature someone that obviously needs little introduction that's seated behind the bar, is a former farmer and a former MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly], former Deputy

Speaker of this very legislature, former member from Indian Head — pardon me, Last Mountain-Touchwood; a Freudian slip there — a very good friend of mine that I'm always delighted when I can bump into Dale and Georgina Flavel. Georgina is not here today, but Dale Flavel is seated behind the bar. I invite all colleagues to join me in welcoming Dale to the Assembly.

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

**Mr. Hart:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'd like to join with the member opposite in welcoming Dale Flavel to the legislature. We had a chance to visit very briefly last week at the CPA [Commonwealth Parliamentary Association] dinner. It's always a pleasure to exchange comments and catch up on the goings-on in each of our lives. And I would ask all members to join with me in welcoming Dale to his legislature.

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

**Mr. Harper:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the House my granddaughter, Emma Bradley, who is sitting up in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. Emma, whenever she travels out, she always takes support staff with her. So today she brought her grandmother — my wife, Carol — to offer that support.

And I notice, Mr. Speaker, that the members are all straining to get a good glimpse at Emma, but I can assure all the members that she is the prettiest and the smartest 5-year-old they'll ever meet. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to offer Emma and Carol a warm welcome.

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

**The Deputy 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, Mr. Speaker, is on Highway 35, which runs through the community of Pelican Narrows, which is a gravel road which is presenting both a safety hazard as well as a health hazard. And, Mr. Speaker, the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the Government of Saskatchewan to pave 7 kilometres of Highway 35 through the community of Pelican Narrows as committed to on August 24th, 2007.

And in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the good folks from Pelican Narrows, Saskatchewan. I so submit.

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

**Ms. Junor:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm presenting a petition today on behalf of residents who want to bring to our attention that the Saskatchewan Seniors Association has approximately 180 senior centres throughout the province with the vast majority of them located in rural Saskatchewan; and that these centres provide much-needed recreation and social activities as well as important health clinics and workshops which contribute to an enhanced quality of life for many for many of the seniors who use them; and that due to the skyrocketing costs of utilities, insurance, etc., approximately one-quarter of these centres will close within the next few months. The closure of these centres will lead to the deteriorating mental and physical health of seniors, which will lead to an additional stress on long-term care facilities and hospitals.

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan to cause the Government of Saskatchewan to provide the much-needed funding to assist seniors' recreation centres to remain open and active within their communities.

And I present, there are 60 signatures from communities like Allan, Grandora, Big River, and Warman. I so present.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy 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 we know in Saskatchewan the income gap between the rich and the poor continues to grow, and now one in five children in Saskatchewan live in deepening poverty. I'd like to read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to act as quickly as possible to develop an effective and sustainable poverty elimination strategy for the benefit of all Saskatchewan citizens.

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

And Mr. Deputy Speaker, the people signing this petition come from the city of Saskatoon. I do so present. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Massey Place.

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand today to present a petition calling on the provincial government to expand hospice and palliative care here in the 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 care 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, the individuals who signed this petition are from the city of Regina and Saskatoon. I so present.

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

**Ms. Morin:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to present yet another petition from the residents of Furdale who are seeking a permanent solution to their situation and not just some off-setting of dates, Mr. Speaker. A 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.

These Furdale residents, in dealing in good faith with SaskWater for over 30 years, have paid large amounts for their domestic systems and in-home treatment equipment as well as for livestock and irrigation lines. The alternative water supply that's been 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, Mr. Speaker:

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 North Battleford, Furdale, Saskatoon, and Dundurn. I so present.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise once again 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 reference the two consecutive deficit budgets, the billions of dollars of debt growth under this government — \$4.2 billion, Mr. Speaker, 44 per cent over just the . . . 55 per cent over just the next four years, Mr. Speaker, all at a time we're at record

highs in revenues. And of course this kind of mismanagement comes at a cost to Saskatchewan people, communities, and businesses as it relates to our power bills, our health care, our education, and cuts to agriculture, 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 petitioners here today and these petitions are signed by concerned citizens of Carduff, Carlyle, and Lampman. I so submit.

[13:45]

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Estevan.

#### National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, today marks a solemn occasion. On this day 21 years ago, 14 women were murdered on the campus of Montreal's École Polytechnique. This was an act of terrorism and an extreme form of violence against women. This event was absolutely horrifying to the nation due to the fact that Canadians pride themselves on being a peaceful nation as well as a country that recognizes gender equality.

Mr. Speaker, this day gives us an opportunity for Canadians to reflect on the phenomenon of violence against women in our society. But first and foremost, Mr. Speaker, our thoughts should be with the families and friends of the victims whose sudden and shocking death rendered a profound loss for all Canadians. Today and together we can say no to violence and collectively empower women with the strength and courage to change their lives. I sincerely hope that those still carrying the burden of this day find the hope and strength to conquer their grief.

On this day, I ask all members of this Assembly to join me in taking a moment to think about Canadian women who have been affected by violence, especially those taken from their loved ones way too early that day in Montreal. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

**Ms. Morin:** — Mr. Speaker, today I stand in my place to remember a very tragic day in Canadian history — December 6th, the day on which we remember the 14 young women whose lives were cut short during a massacre at École

Polytechnique. These young women, Mr. Speaker, are the daughters of all Canadians. Their lives were tragically cut short by an act of violence by a man, Marc Lépine, who was motivated by the hatred of women.

Mr. Speaker, a murderer tried to silence these young women, but they will never be forgotten. In reading out their names each year, we deny Lépine and all the misogynists their victory, and we pay tribute to women everywhere who carry on the struggle for an end to violence against women and full equality for all.

They are, Mr. Speaker: Geneviève Bergeron, Hélène Colgan, Nathalie Croteau, Barbara Daigneault, Anne-Marie Edward, Maud Haviernick, Maryse Laganière, Maryse Leclair, Anne-Marie Lemay, Sonia Pelletier, Michèle Richard, Annie St-Arneault, Annie Turcotte, and Barbara Klucznik-Widajewicz.

It is in naming these young women, Mr. Speaker, that we remember and carry on the struggle for all for an end to violence and for a society in which all people are truly equal. It is fitting that we do this, Mr. Speaker, not only in this case, the season of the White Ribbon campaign, but in each and every day throughout the year. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Cannington.

#### **International Day of Persons with Disabilities**

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On December the 3rd, people throughout the world took time to recognize the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. This day aims to promote a better understanding of disability issues with a focus on the rights of persons with disabilities and the inclusion of persons with disabilities in every aspect of political, social, economic, and cultural life of their communities.

Canadians living with disabilities have gone on to do many remarkable things. Terry Fox's Miracle of Hope has raised tens of millions of dollars for cancer research. And to this day we are still benefiting from the remarkable breakthroughs in the field of cancer research these contributions helped finance. Terry truly was a catalyst to spur on the amount of cancer research being conducted today.

Canada's Rick Hansen has made remarkable contributions to those living with spinal cord injuries. His success as an advocate for spinal cord research led him to working with a Jerusalem-based university as they expand an international registry of data on spinal cord injuries and treatments. The agreement between the Vancouver-based Rick Hansen Institute and the Institute for Medical Research Israel-Canada at Hebrew University in Jerusalem is a shining example of international co-operation.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members of this Assembly to join me in recognizing the truly remarkable accomplishments of all peoples with disabilities. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

#### **Mamawetan Churchill River Health Authority Conducts Facilities Assessment**

**Mr. Vermette:** — Mr. Speaker, communities of Cumberland constituency are provided health services by Mamawetan Churchill River Regional Health Authority. The board of the regional health authority determined that in order to be considered for capital financing from the Ministry of Health, they need to build a business case for any further capital projects that they would need.

Mr. Speaker, in the summer of 2009 the regional health authority commissioned the services of Croft Planning & Designing to do a review of the current health facilities in the region and to do a needs assessment based on a projection of the anticipated changes in demographics and population growth. Mr. Speaker, that work has been completed, and the Croft report on the facilities and infrastructure has been provided to the Ministry of Health and is available for review by the public on the RHA [regional health authority] website.

Mr. Speaker, the needs of the RHA are great. But now that the board has the evidence they need to support their request for increased funding for the region, the RHA is in a better position to request the necessary capital support to upgrade and maintain their current facilities but also to address the future needs of the aging and growing population.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating the board and staff of Mamawetan Churchill River Regional Health Authority on completing this study and doing this good work.

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

#### **International Volunteer Day**

**Ms. Wilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Since 1985, December 5th has been designated as International Volunteer Day by the United Nations. The day was declared to thank all volunteers for their efforts and to increase the public's awareness on volunteers' contributions to society.

Our government values the commitment of the many volunteers of our province along with the millions who generously give their time worldwide. Their tireless work and priceless contributions in collaboration with not-for-profit organizations support the well-being of individuals, families, and communities and help create a stronger global community.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, according to the most recent survey taken from the Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 12 million Canadians or almost half the population of our country volunteer their time to charitable and not-for-profit organizations. Their contributions totalled almost 2 billion hours or the equivalent of 1.1 million full-time jobs in a year.

I would like this Assembly to applaud all volunteers provincially, nationally, and internationally who devote their talents, skills, and resources to helping others in communities across the globe. Those who choose to volunteer make a valuable contribution to our society and enable others to live

more productive and fulfilling lives. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

### India Night 2010

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, along with the Leader of the Opposition New Democrats, who made an address and politicians from all levels of government, it was my pleasure to attend India Night 2010. The event was packed with over 500 people in attendance to share in an evening of dance, music, speeches, and a fashion show for which my wife Stephanie and I were models in traditional Indian attire, Mr. Speaker.

The guest speaker, journalist Murray Oliver, was engaging and thought-provoking. We were honoured by the presence of Consul General of India, Mr. Ashok Das. India Canada Association showcases India culture and cuisine at this event while raising money for the community. It has raised more than \$350,000 over the years, all going back into the community. This year's dinner alone raised \$28,000 for Ehrlo Community Services. India Night is a special event, one that assists our community.

ICA [India Canada Association] Saskatchewan has a proud history of leadership and, I am certain, a bright future of enriching our province, the lives of our citizens, and our important relations with India. I ask all members of this Assembly to join with me to thank and to recognize the India Canada Association of Saskatchewan, its leadership, and members, but specifically to graciously thank India Night Chair, Ms. Renu Kapoor, the dedicated organizing committee, and the countless volunteers. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Biggar.

### Biggar Team Wins Cross-Country Championships

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Biggar Blazing Saints cross-country team ended their season on Saturday, October 16th, bringing home their fourth consecutive 2A provincial team championship at the SHSAA [Saskatchewan High Schools Athletic Association] cross-country championship at Canada Games Athletic Complex at Douglas Park in Regina.

This is the first time a 2A team has won four consecutive team titles. Two graduating members of this year's team, Katja Meszaros and Brandon Carruthers, have been members of all four of these team championships. The team included 19 members from both BCS 2000 [Biggar Central School] and St. Gabriel's schools. The coaching staff of seven and a handful of parents and supporters, and old faces were there to cheer on the team and individual athletes.

It was a great way to end the season, and thanks must be given to the coaches, Mr. and Mrs. Carruthers, Mrs. Newton, Mrs. Hollman, Mrs. Shutz, Mr. Wright, and Mr. Garshinski, for the commitment, enthusiasm, and support they shared with all their athletes. Also to the many parent volunteers as extra drivers,

officials of Biggar's two meets, and the support that they provided to the entire Blazing Saints cross-country team of 60-plus members. Thanks.

A final thank you needs to go to the administration of both BCS 2000 and St. Gabriel for supporting this season and all the challenges that a team of this size adds to the school day. Congratulations on another successful season.

### QUESTION PERIOD

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

### Support for Livestock Producers

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, my question's to the Premier and it deals with the number of livestock producer issue that they have come here to the Legislative Assembly today to ask members of the legislature around the issue of the three or four years of very bad financial situation they find themselves in, in large part due to BSE [bovine spongiform encephalopathy], the Canadian dollar, the drought, and now this year traditional areas that produce large crops and very good cattle are flooded out.

What these producers are calling for is \$150 a head for each breeding stock, for each cow that they have on their farm or ranch, and \$75 a head for the yearlings so they can keep their breeding stock in place and can go on farming so when things turn around they're in good shape and their family can make a living.

My question to the Premier is: has a request been made of the federal government for this payment of \$150 a head for breeding stock and \$75 for yearling animals? And if so, can he table the documentation that he has sent to Ottawa requesting this funding?

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

**Hon. Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I said in introductions, I had the opportunity to meet with some representatives of the group that's here today, Mark van Haastert and Dennis Brown, and I thought we had a very good meeting. They had some recommendations of how we could improve the program that we come out with. Have we asked the federal minister to do an AgriRecovery assessment? We certainly have.

We've been ongoing for the last couple of months, Mr. Speaker, whether through myself or through staff, have been in contact continually with the federal minister. And to date we don't know exactly where the federal government is going. One of the reasons that we brought out the livestock support program, the Sask feed and forage program, Mr. Speaker, was because we felt producers couldn't wait. They needed to know what we were going to do provincially. And at this date, as I said, we're still waiting hopefully that the federal government will come to the table with some sort of assistance also.

The Sask feed and forage program of course, Mr. Speaker, is

for feed and livestock transportation, and also \$30 an acre to reseed damaged hay and forage pasture and coverage like that. And some of the recommendations that we got from the group today I think can make improvements to that program and we'll certainly take a good look at that.

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

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to make it clear to the minister, I wasn't asking about AgStability because these producers know that AgStability doesn't work. That's a fact. Every farmer in the province knows that AgStability doesn't work. And the minister's comment in *The Western Producer* recently where he said, and I quote, "This might be a good time to see just how well AgStability is going to work. If it doesn't work this year, it never will."

Well, Mr. Minister, these agricultural producers, these livestock producers know that AgStability doesn't work. We don't need another review of that program, as you suggested in your previous answer. What we need and what the producers are asking for is \$150 per head of breeding stock and \$75 for the yearlings to see the farmers and beef producers through the winter.

Have you made a request to the federal government for this payment of \$150 a head for breeding stock and \$75 for the yearling animals? Have you made that request? And if you have, will you table the documentation so that the farmers and ranchers, the beef producers know that you're sincere in going to Ottawa on their behalf?

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

**Hon. Mr. Bjornerud:** — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I find it somewhat amazing and hypocritical of the Leader of the Opposition. He was one of the ones, his government, that helped design the program. They designed the AgriStability program and now he says, well it doesn't work.

Mr. Speaker, yes, we will be watching to see if AgriStability works this year because we've had a trying year right across the province. But, Mr. Speaker, let me remind the Leader of the Opposition there was a drought in the Southwest for four years under his government. And nobody even went out there and they did absolutely nothing. So for him to come to the table today and say we need \$150 per head, I find it very hypocritical, Mr. Speaker, of the Leader of the Opposition.

On the AgriRecovery file, yes, we have asked the federal minister. And the way the process works is you ask him to do a reassessment and see if there's something for Saskatchewan in that program. To date we haven't received anything from the federal government and are waiting.

[14:00]

That's why we did the livestock program, the feed and forage program, Mr. Speaker, because we couldn't wait on the federal government. Mr. Speaker, we're doing our share, including the \$40 per head that we did last year for every livestock producer

in this province, Mr. Speaker, something that the NDP [New Democratic Party] government neglected to do in all . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Time has expired. I recognize the Leader of the Official Opposition.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, the minister indicates that I'm bringing the request for \$150 a head. Well I want to make it clear to the minister that it's the people in the gallery, the families in the gallery who are asking for the \$150 a head. And you can laugh and make fun of that if you like. But I'll tell you this: we need and the farmers in this family need \$150 a head for breeding stock so that the many sales that are going on . . . If you look in *The Western Producer*, the paper is full of dispersal sales. And we are going to see a 10 or 20 per cent reduction in the cattle herd if we don't get this kind of a payment from Ottawa and from our provincial government.

Again the minister has said that he has made the request. Will he table the request that he has made to the federal government, to the Prime Minister of this country, to give support for the beef producers in this province?

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

**Hon. Mr. Bjornerud:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition knows full well . . . In estimates the other night I explained to him how we've paid out over half a billion dollars already, Mr. Speaker, with the excess moisture program in which some of the producers in the gallery today could take advantage of.

And he talks about AgriStability. I'm sure some of the producers in the gallery today have had the opportunity to work through the AgriStability program in the past and have received payments out of it. Will we be watching to see if that program is responsive to the needs of producers? We certainly have, Mr. Speaker, and we will be. We've brought that also to the attention of the federal government that program changes need to be made in that respect, but remembering it takes seven out of 10 provinces to agree to those changes, and they don't happen quick, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, finally to the minister. I've asked three times now if he would table the documentation that he has sent to Ottawa requesting the \$150 a head for the livestock producers. Now it's not that I don't believe him, but there are many people in the gallery and across the province that are beginning to wonder when he says he's going to let AgStability deal with their problem. The people in the gallery and the farmers in the province know that program doesn't work. What would work is a payment from Ottawa and the province of \$150 an acre.

The minister signed AgStability. He's the minister who signed, so let's get that clear. And let's not deceive the public by saying that the NDP signed it. That minister signed that program. That's the truth. But that's not the question. The question is, will the minister table the request he has made to Ottawa for



\$150 a head for the beef producers in this province?

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

**Hon. Mr. Bjornerud:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I guess the Leader of the Opposition and I can argue who designed the program, and I guess . . . [inaudible] . . . But the Leader of the Opposition and the NDP were the one that put that program in place, and that's the one we're stuck with today until we can get changes made.

Mr. Speaker, the one thing I think that's been a positive in the whole industry . . .

[Interjections]

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Order. Order. I'm having trouble hearing the minister and I think the people here would like to hear the . . . They asked the question. I think you would like to hear the answer. I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

**Hon. Mr. Bjornerud:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, we fully understand because we've toured the area out there on a number of occasions with a number of the local MLAs right from probably June on, right through this whole summer, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we know the producers have had a very trying year out there, and it doesn't quit. They're still trying to haul bales and the ground is soft underneath the snow and the problem goes on. That's why we came out with what we did on the feed and forage program, on the reseeding program, which we had some suggestions today of how we may be able to improve these programs. And, Mr. Speaker, we'll work with producers to try and make improvements to the programs that we've put in place, which we've done for the last three years to try and help producers such as that right across this province.

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

### Contract Negotiation and Supply of Physicians

**Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Doctor vacancies have increased by almost 40 per cent in three years under the Sask Party. Doctors have been without a contract for 19 months and resident physicians and interns have been without a contract for two years. Last week when questioned about his government's failure to manage health care and failure to protect Saskatchewan families by providing doctors with a contract, the Premier said, and I quote, "We'll have a settlement soon."

Mr. Deputy Speaker, to the minister and the Premier: is a contract in place today with doctors, interns, and resident physicians?

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, as the Premier mentioned last week and I will also reiterate today, that the negotiations are going on, that we think that negotiations are

getting close to a final agreement. We certainly hope that that's the case, Mr. Speaker, not only through . . . for the SMA [Saskatchewan Medical Association], for physicians, but also through the residents, Mr. Speaker — that an agreement can be struck that is good for residents, physicians, the government, but most importantly, the patients of this province.

What I will say though, Mr. Speaker, is that in the past three years we've seen the number of doctors practising in this province go up by 6 per cent in rural Saskatchewan, 8 per cent in urban Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, whether it's in Hudson Bay, whether it's in Nipawin, whether it's in Leader, whether it's in Redvers, Mr. Speaker, we've seen physicians move to those communities. We'll continue to see physicians move to Saskatchewan because it is the place to live right now.

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

**Ms. Junor:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, everyone hopes we can stop the hemorrhaging of doctors, but this minister can actually fix it. According to a Canadian Institute of Health Information, CIHI report released last Thursday, Saskatchewan has the lowest rate of doctors per 100,000 population. In response to the report, the president of the Saskatchewan Medical Association said, and I quote, "Those statistics point to how important it is for a new fee contract to be put in place in the province before more doctors decide to leave."

Mr. Deputy Speaker, to the minister: a CIHI report is telling him that we have the lowest rate of doctors per population of all provinces. His own website is showing doctor vacancies have risen almost 40 per cent in the last three years. Residents and doctors and interns are telling him that they're leaving if they don't get a contract. When is the minister going to listen, get a contract in place for doctors, and start protecting Saskatchewan people and don't just rely on hope?

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, when we came to power in 2007, we certainly knew there was a shortage in many of the human resources, whether it was the registered nurses or with the physicians throughout the province. We've gone a long ways to address some of those problems with nurses. We're in the process of addressing those problems with physicians, whether it's a physician recruitment agency, Mr. Speaker, whether it's a new assessment process. Mr. Speaker, there are a number of steps that we've taken to ensure that we have the proper complement of physicians. Because certainly the member opposite identified a problem. We are shorter than the national average, and I would say a lot of that stems from their previous government, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we're working closely with the physicians to get a contract that is good for them, good for the Saskatchewan people. But I would note, Mr. Speaker, just recently as of today, an Angus Reid poll came out. And I know she wasn't quoting from that, but it says, "Health care delivery praised in Saskatchewan," Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when it comes to satisfaction of people in this province for their health care, it's the highest in Canada.

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

**Ms. Junor:** — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Angus Reid poll gave us 50 per cent. When I went to school, 50 per cent is D minus. Is that what the minister wants to accept, is D minus?

All across the province we heard stories this summer about emergency services reduction, lab closures, X-ray service reductions, long-term care bed closures, and reductions in ambulance services. And I could list 55 communities where I heard those stories, from one end of the province to the other, top to bottom. Many rural families are being forced to travel out of their communities to see a doctor. Rural communities are spending their resources competing against each other to recruit doctors.

According to CIHI, Saskatchewan lost more doctors to interprovincial migration than it gained in 2009. That means 23 doctors moved here and 46 moved out. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the minister has mismanaged the doctor shortage. And the SMA doesn't talk about the last 16 years. They talk about the last two years. They have not got a contract, and this minister has failed them miserably. When is he going to do something?

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, as I said, the negotiations are going on right now. We hope that we can get to an agreement relatively soon. I will say that the relationship between our government and the SMA is as strong as it ever has been. We both realize it is a process to go through, and that's certainly the process we're going to.

But, Mr. Speaker, the Health critic did mention the issue about the latest poll at 50 per cent. Fifty per cent is not satisfactory to this government. We're going to continue to work and increase the satisfaction of Saskatchewan people with the health care system. I will say though that 50 per cent is the highest mark in Canada. It is quite a bit higher than the 17 per cent approval rating for their leader.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Centre.

### Children in Care

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Last week the Provincial Auditor criticized the Sask Party government for failing to protect its children. The auditor said the Minister of Social Services didn't even know how many children are in the government's care, who they are, and where they live. In a scrum last Thursday, the minister was asked whether the auditor was right or wrong. She said, and I quote, "I'm going to have to get a little bit clearer on that one."

To the minister: she's had four days to get clearer information on how her government is failing to protect children. What has she learned?

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

**Hon. Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Speaker, the auditor's report was very concerning to everybody on this side of the House. Our government is very concerned when we have a foster care system that's been in trouble for 25 years, and we have to . . . We can't fix it overnight.

But we are starting to work on it. And when the Provincial Auditor did his report, he didn't take into account the fact that we have a new database that was put into place at the beginning of February, so at the end of March not all the findings are in place. So we're very hopeful that there will be some further work. We've actually reorganized the ministry as well, so we have a better chance to make sure that we know some of these facts. We have 144 new residential spaces for children.

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

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Centre.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's been three years. It's been three years. Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the auditor didn't only criticize the Sask Party government for not knowing how many children are in its care, let alone who they or where they are. The auditor also said that in 40 per cent, 47 per cent of the cases he sampled, there was inadequate contact with children. But last week the minister absolutely denied this, that this could be in any way related to staffing levels. Instead she blamed the children and the foster parents for not keeping their appointments.

To the minister: why is she blaming the children and the foster parents rather than focusing on improving the system so that the children are actually protected?

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

**Hon. Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is nobody to blame when we have children in care. There's work to be done, and I had a number of contacts over the weekend from people who agreed that there's more work that has to be done.

In fact I had an email from one of the First Nations who talked about the fact that they believe that there is . . . the Provincial Auditor doesn't have all the necessary information. They talked about compliancy and the fact that when some of the workers have a chance to go out and visit with some of the families, if they aren't there, they don't get a chance that there was actually a contact.

Mr. Speaker, there is more work to be done, and that's why I'm very pleased that in a very short time we're going to have the child welfare review report out. It will be brought forward to not just the members and the public but to the foster families, and we'll have a chance to review the work that is going on.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, clearly we can't simply

trust the Sask Party government will do the right thing when it comes to protecting children in our province, and that's why the opposition thinks that a step in the right direction would be to establish a special committee of the Legislative Assembly which is focused on the protection of children in care.

This committee could review the upcoming Pringle report, hold public hearings, and make recommendations to the government. I've provided the minister with an advance copy of this motion.

So to the minister: will the Sask Party government agree to pass this motion and establish a special committee so that we can take urgent steps to better protect children in our care?

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

**Hon. Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Speaker, the report that was asked for by this government last year did exactly that. We have had meetings with over 1,200 separate individuals and groups. They brought forward recommendations that we are taking very seriously. In fact I've had the opportunity to talk to the First Nations and the Métis leaders. They're very interested in working with us. There has been a report and there is work being done. What we have to do is answer some of these recommendations and that is the work that's going to be done in a short time.

We don't have to have a motion from the members opposite to talk about it because the Children's Advocate, in the year 2000, identified a serious gap and a major disconnect in the way child welfare was being delivered. And do you know what happened? Nothing was done. We are working on it and in the next short time we'll be bringing forward recommendations and answers to that report.

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

[14:15]

#### **Arrangements for a Long-Term Care Facility**

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Mr. Speaker, we see a pattern developing with the Minister of Health. First he claimed that a deal to buy surgeries from BC was something that was only touched upon briefly by the Premier, when an FOI [freedom of information] request yielded hundreds of pages of information between the two provinces.

Last spring after the minister said he consulted the Privacy Commissioner about new health information regulations, the commissioner said that wasn't true, and this led to the first ruling in 25 years of a prima facie case of breach of privilege against a minister. Now the minister says that his officials told him that there was no loan guarantee with Amicus when internal emails clearly show they believe something different.

This is a question to the Premier. Given the minister seems to lack credibility on this issue, will the government agree to release all 1,800 pages of the blacked-out material regarding Amicus?

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, the issue around the long-term care facility and the number of beds that we have in the Saskatoon Health Region is concerning, absolutely. We looked at it just after we came to government and realized how many seniors were living in acute care centres. It just didn't happen over the last couple of years under our government. It had been going on for a very long time under the previous government where seniors were living in acute care centres. Absolutely inappropriate.

So, Mr. Speaker, we've moved forward on a new funding arrangement with the Catholic Health Ministry for Samaritan Place, Mr. Speaker, that will see 100 new long-term care beds into the system, the first new long-term care beds on top of a proper complement that we had before, Mr. Speaker.

But when you look at whether it's a loan guarantee, again Paul Ellis from the Catholic Health Ministry goes on and says that the fact that this would be a loan guarantee is false, Mr. Speaker, that it is Amicus that has taken out the loan, Mr. Speaker. But what is important is, after hearing last week that that member opposite would put a stop to 100 new long-term care beds, Mr. Speaker, every senior in Saskatoon should be concerned.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Nutana.

**Ms. Atkinson:** — A couple of points, Mr. Speaker. We need long-term care beds, but we think that it should be given to or it should be open to everybody, and the contracts should be tendered.

Now the government insists there is nothing to see here, but they're very selective about the information they share. They provide bits and pieces of information here and there when they get backed into a corner, but they censor hundreds of pages that would allow people to judge for themselves.

The government says this is a good deal, but the Sask Party refuses to admit that the deal came from the Sask Party minister and the Premier. So to the minister: will he agree to release today all of the information the government censored from the response to my FOI request? Will he allow Saskatchewan citizens to make judgment themselves?

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — I find it really quite fascinating, Mr. Speaker, that the member opposite just stood in her place and says, we want these long-term care beds. They want these long-term care beds, Mr. Speaker, but their record speaks to the exact opposite. In fact when that member from Nutana and the member from Saskatoon Eastview were the minister and associate minister, they closed 50 beds, reconsidered another 40. They closed 90 beds, Mr. Speaker, and said it was going to make for better care delivery in that area.

Mr. Speaker, not only would they put the brakes . . . I think she said, we would stop this in its tracks now. She said that last week, Mr. Speaker. Not only would they do that, but I'm sure

they'd close a whole bunch more long-term care beds, Mr. Speaker, throughout the province, like they did 52 hospitals.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Nutana.

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Mr. Speaker, what the minister fails to say is that they have closed 88 long-term care beds in this year alone — 88.

Now the minister can hide behind technicalities all he wants. But debt is debt, whatever the definition. Taxpayers are on the hook to pay off the Amicus mortgage if Amicus doesn't want to run this facility any more. And they've entered into an agreement that allows Amicus to go to the bank and get it 100 per cent financed.

Mr. Speaker, documents make it clear that this deal originated in this building. The email from April 14th from the health region CEO [chief executive officer] states, and I quote, "Many details of this agreement were essentially agreed to by government before the region became involved in the discussion." And a legal memo from the region states, and I quote, "Jim Rhode [Chair of the board, appointed by the Sask Party] spoke with the Premier. This is a deal." So to the Premier: if he's so sure this is such a good deal, and if the government directed this from the very beginning, why have they gone to such lengths to distance themselves from this deal?

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, we certainly knew shortly after we came to government that there was a shortage of long-term care beds, especially in the immediate area in Saskatoon. That's why we had so many people living in acute care centres.

It didn't take long for the Saskatoon Health Region immediately to identify this as a need. We knew it was a need, Mr. Speaker. We did a Patient First Review that talks about looking at a different funding model. So we took that information along with the request and the need from the Saskatoon Health Region, Mr. Speaker. And between Saskatoon Health Region, the Catholic Health Ministry, and the Ministry of Health, we've come up with the funding model for Samaritan Place that will see 100 new long-term care beds in Saskatchewan, in Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker, getting people out of acute care centres into the appropriate living facilities, Mr. Speaker.

We're proud of the deal, Mr. Speaker. They'd put the brakes on it.

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

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — With leave to introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Proceed.

## INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my great pleasure that I'd ask all members to welcome to this Legislative Assembly a good friend of mine, a good friend of this government, a good friend I'm sure of all members in the legislature, Chief Guy Lonechild, chief of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians, Indian Nations . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, you bet.

Guy is a passionate leader for First Nations people. He's a person who wants to make sure that this province is a better place for everyone. It has indeed been a pleasure to work with him on areas in education, in economic development, in gaming. Him and his vice-chiefs had an opportunity to appear before the First Nations legislative assembly. And I'm very glad that he is here to witness our proceedings, and I have a chance to meet with him later. So all members, please help me in welcoming Chief Guy Lonechild to his Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. McCall:** — With leave to introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member's asked leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to join in the introduction of Chief Guy Lonechild. It's good to see the chief here in the Legislative Assembly, certainly someone who's not the oldest of legislators in this province, of leadership. He brings a youth and a vigour but also experience to the job and, as the minister has said, a deep passion to improve the quality of life for his people. And certainly on behalf of the official opposition, I want to join with the minister in welcoming Chief Guy Lonechild to his Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. Harper:** — To ask leave to introduce guests.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

**Mr. Harper:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, hon. members. I just want to take a few moments to introduce some personal friends of mine who are part of the delegation that was down here to meet with the Minister of Agriculture: Andy Bury from Danbury, Kirby Mirva from Danbury, Lorne Ball from Danbury. I had a difficult time recognizing Lorne because he's grown a beard since the last time I saw him. I must admit, Lorne, it is an improvement. Also I'd like to introduce Lionel Pearson. Lionel's from the north prairie or Preeceville,

Saskatchewan.

Now there may be others, but I'm fighting the lights and my eyes are getting old, so I'm not sure. So I don't want to misname somebody. But I'd like to welcome my friends to this legislature.

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

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carry on with your point of order.

### POINT OF ORDER

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Mr. Speaker, during question period the Leader of the Opposition made reference to the Minister of Agriculture “deceiving the public,” which is clearly unparliamentary and against the rules of the Assembly. We'd ask that the Leader of the Opposition retract and apologize for that statement.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, to respond to the point of order. Mr. Speaker, during the heated debate of questions and answers going back and forth, the minister called the Leader of the Opposition hypocritical. In response to that there are, as you know, very heated debates and exchanges in this Assembly as people are very passionate about issues that are important to the people of this province, Mr. Speaker. And so, Mr. Speaker, I would ask that you review the entire proceedings and exchange, Mr. Speaker, as you look at your ruling.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — As the debate carried on, it was very hard for me to hear at times with some of the talking that was going on. I would review it, but I would also give the member an opportunity now, if he feels that he did say something inappropriate, if he would wish to remark on it, or I will review it and that.

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Tourism.

#### Sport Participation Initiative

**Hon. Mr. Hutchinson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, along with the months leading up to them, were an exciting time for everyone in our country.

The Olympic torch travelled through many Saskatchewan communities on its way to Vancouver, and when the flame finally arrived in Vancouver, it inspired all Canadians. It also helped usher in a new generation of Canadian Olympians, Mr. Speaker, like Lucas Makowsky, who was introduced in the gallery earlier today. The Government of Saskatchewan and Sask Sport announced the sport participation initiative earlier today, Mr. Speaker. And Lucas of course was a big part of getting it all started.

The first component of this three-part initiative is the Saskatchewan program for athletic excellence. The program, funded through the sport section of the Saskatchewan Lotteries Trust Fund for Sport, Culture and Recreation, will invest \$350,000 annually to provide carded athletes with funding of up to \$6,000 per year.

Now there are about 35 Saskatchewan athletes who are carded at the senior level and 25 athletes who hold a developmental level card who are now eligible for this funding, Mr. Speaker. The funds will help them with training and living costs, training camps or competitions, and sport-specific equipment. Mr. Speaker, this puts Saskatchewan on a par with the highest level of support anywhere in Canada.

The second part of this sport participation initiative is the accessibility program. Sask Sport Inc. is investing \$250,000 per year into this new program. It's going to help reduce the barriers to participation in sport faced by athletes with disabilities. It will allow easier access to special equipment, coaching, and programs, and it will help to encourage more people with a disability to get involved with sport and live an active and healthy lifestyle.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the Government of Saskatchewan transferred the remainder of the Saskatchewan 2010 Olympic and Paralympic pavilion budget, amounting to \$232,000, to the Saskatchewan 2010 Legacy Fund, which resides with Sask Sport Inc. This contribution will further support Sask Sport programs for all youth with a special focus on disadvantaged, at-risk youth. Mr. Speaker, this new funding will help programs such as KidSport, Creative Kids, and Take the Lead. About 500 additional disadvantaged youth will benefit from this funding as they become involved in sport, culture, and recreation activities.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud to say that we are now on a new road in Saskatchewan. And together with our partners at Sask Sport, we're creating opportunities for everyone to get involved and to excel, helping to put Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan's athletes in the lead. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And thank you to the minister for sending over a copy of his statement a little bit earlier. I appreciate that.

I've just had a brief opportunity to review the government's new sport participation initiative, and at face value it seems like a positive initiative. But as we all know, the devil is often in the details, especially with this government.

The first component of the program is to provide carded athletes with funding of up to \$6,000 per year. The carding system provides federal funding to elite athletes to ensure those identified with international potential are afforded the necessary opportunities in order to achieve international success. So not only does it take hard work, determination, and skill to become an elite athlete, but it also takes money.

In order to achieve, athletes often need to eat, sleep, and breathe their respective sports and do not have an opportunity to earn

income through employment. Attending training camps, travelling to competitions, and investing in the best technologies and equipment is enough to break the bank for many. I have no doubt this money will be appreciated and put to good use to help develop our elite athletes here for the world stage.

[14:30]

So with respect to the second aspect or the second part of this initiative, the accessibility program, the minister thus far has provided very few details. So clearly reducing barriers to sport participation for athletes with disabilities is really an important and a laudable goal, but I want to learn a little bit more about this program before I can fully comment.

So the third part of the initiative, the \$232,000 being transferred to the legacy fund, for me this is actually where I think . . . I am a firm believer that the grassroots level is where this commitment needs to be. So we've got \$350,000 going to the elite athletes thus far and \$232,000 which is going to be targeted towards the youth. And again in my opinion, the grassroots level, investing in our youth is actually where you develop elite athletes. You provide all kids with the opportunity to have access to sport and to have have access to the opportunity to play. And from there, that is really where you begin to develop elite athletes by providing all children with the opportunity to participate.

So I think an investment in our youth, it goes on to lay this foundation for young people doing us proud on the national and international stage, but it's also about providing opportunity to set the stage for a lifetime of healthy activity. So it's not just about elite sport. So I just would question that \$232,000 is a nice chunk of change, but could more money have been supported?

I know there's many children in my constituency and in constituencies throughout Saskatchewan who don't have opportunity — whether it's registration fees, equipment fees, transportation to sporting and other, well, cultural activities as well. There's many not for profits doing very good work, but I'd like to see this government also look at some policy mechanisms to ensure all kids have opportunity to engage in sports. So with that, I will leave it at that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Thank you.

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

#### MOTION UNDER RULE 59

##### Protection of Children in Government Care

**Mr. Forbes:** — To seek leave under rule 59 to move a motion of urgent and pressing necessity in light of the findings of the Provincial Auditor late last week which showed that the government is currently failing to adequately protect children in its care.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wish to move a motion that will propose the establishment of a special all-party committee to examine this important issue. I have provided the government with an advance copy of this motion. I'll briefly read the text of that

motion now:

That this Assembly immediately establish a special all-party committee to review and report on the situation of children in care in Saskatchewan, including the consideration of the findings of the Provincial Auditor and the recommendations of the Pringle report; and that the committee have the power to sit during the intersessional period. And that the committee have the power to send for persons, papers, and records; to examine witnesses under oath; to receive representations from interested parties and individuals; to engage such advisors and assistance as are required for the purpose of the inquiry; and to hold meetings away from the seat of government in order that the fullest representations may be received without unduly inconveniencing those desired to be heard; and that the committee be instructed to submit its report to the Legislative Assembly on March 7th, 2011, the first day of the spring period of the fourth session of the twenty-sixth Legislative Assembly.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member for Saskatoon Centre has asked leave to introduce a motion. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — No.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Motion denied.

#### TABLING OF REPORTS

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Before orders of the day, I have two annual reports to table. In accordance with the provisions of section 14.1 of *The Provincial Auditor's Act*, I have the Provincial Auditor's annual report for the period ending March 31st, 2010.

And while I'm on my feet, I also have the annual report for the Saskatchewan Legislative Library for the period ending March 31st, 2010. I so table.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

#### ADJOURNED DEBATES

#### SECOND READINGS

##### Bill No. 161

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 161** — *The Election Amendment Act, 2010* be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am glad to be able to rise today and make a few comments on Bill 161, *The Election Amendment Act*.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, a very important piece of legislation before us. Whenever we talk about rights to vote, whenever we talk about how that vote will be carried out, this affects the daily lives of all voters in our province and in fact the democracy, the state of democracy in our province. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is therefore very important. And coming up today to speak on it, to be the first Bill forward, I think we all realize the importance of this Bill.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are some, however, very, very concerning things about this Bill. It's concerning, Mr. Deputy Speaker. First of all, Mr. Deputy Speaker, before I would go in to make more comments, one of the things that to me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is so concerning about this is actually two things: is that it was the Minister of Justice in bringing forward this Bill was the same minister who was involved in the appointment of the, who is still involved in the appointment of the Chief Electoral Officer. And has, Mr. Deputy Speaker, messed up that issue. And we now are in somewhat of a holding position when it comes to that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I won't go over all the details of that issue, but I think everybody now understands the responsibility that the Minister of Justice played in this role, the member from Saskatoon Southeast.

And I'll be coming back to those points again, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But the second point for me is the minister in getting up, when he spoke on the Bill, the Minister of Justice speaking on the Bill said voters are already required to show approved ID [identification] in order to vote in federal elections. This is a standard that will be followed during the next general federal election.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, going on and saying that you are simply doing what somebody else is doing, I'm not certain because this minister deems to pick and choose. We had a blind voters Act last session. I brought that Bill forward to deal with blind voters and to improve voting. And this year in the by-elections we just held, the federal government was having procedures put forward that would allow blind voters to vote and help them to do so, so that they would not have to take somebody else with them into the voting booth. This is very important.

Now it's surprising because I guess on those two accounts where the members opposite with the Sask Party government, where that Justice Minister could have moved and done something proactive, done something really positive, they failed to do that. They failed to do that. And I guess it's becoming somewhat less than surprising, on hearing earlier on the things that the Health Minister was involved in and having to be noted by the Privacy Commissioner on that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is a very concerting and at times even disconcerting on this side, that members would so flaunt this Legislative Assembly and so flaunt the rules of this Assembly because that bodes not so well for democracy. And you would therefore see why we would be concerned about when it comes to times of voting, and voting and how important that would be in terms of elections . . . And here we have members who have engaged in these sort of practices now putting forward a Bill under *The Election Act*.

And I will get to those, some points about there. But in just in

some brief opening comments, Mr. Deputy Speaker, how important it is that the public, that we all here in the Legislative Assembly have confidence in the people putting forward these types of Acts, these types of changes, that we have to have absolute confidence that this will be done in an unbiased fashion, that it will be done so that people can have confidence in those decisions and as they are carried forward.

We have the minister coming out and talking about how he would . . . this would be to approve ID — ID identification, like the driver's licence that we have in our province. And the minister leaves it at that and then wants us, as I've been speaking about, wants everybody in this province to simply then take him at his word that this is not to cause any concerns with the electorate.

We are less than a year away from a provincial election, and that is a concern. That is a concern of what they will be doing here, how much work has gone into this. Or whether or not in fact, even when the minister gets something together, he'll go back and the Premier will overrule him as he did with the Chief Electoral Officer, which we went through in this very Legislative Assembly, or for that matter, and I mentioned the Health minister, before he got a deal with the chiropractors and then tore up the agreement.

So this is not by any means . . . We're getting used to that this is not a done deal. All these things that are being said, that the minister went on and on about how he was going to do everything in his power to make sure that people can vote, that's not . . . In fact we haven't seen any of that.

I would think that in terms of allowing for transparency, which we do see a lack of, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in this whole Amicus affair that we have before us — 1,800 pages of blacked-out documentation. If it is a good deal, I'm not certain. I think the public are saying that they should know about this. People out there are talking about it. And why would you want to black out anything when you come in and you say that it will be a transparent government?

So we have these issues that are very . . . Mr. Deputy Speaker, I find that I have to put these on the record to show there are concerns, and the concerns are rooted in a basic, Mr. Deputy Speaker, basic distrust that this government believes in transparency, a basic distrust that they will follow through even after they have given agreement. Because we have some, two very clear issues, one on the Chief Electoral Officer and the other one with the chiropractors, who had a deal and then saw that deal just torn up at the last minute. And they are somewhat, well I would say stronger than miffed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but let's leave it at that.

So that's the foundation on which we bring forward something as important as *The Election Amendment Act* and ask, simply say to trust us that we will do the right thing, that nobody will be disenfranchised as a result of this action, that everybody will have an opportunity to vote, that in fact in some way this will be better. But yet there's nothing, no background here as to the consultation process on this issue.

I noticed the other day when the Human Rights Code came up, there was a number of people in the gallery. I saw nobody —

and this impacts over quite a number of people in our province, everybody of voting age — and yet there was nobody here, and nor did we see documentation as to why we should have that. The closest thing we have is that somehow that the federal government is moving in this direction and this minister wants to do likewise. But even no comments regarding what that includes — no comments, no overviews, no reviews of how this has worked for those places that were there.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, so we here have to go over this. And as an opposition, our role is to question, question carefully what is happening here. So we would be doing the due diligence on this Bill. In any case, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we would be doing that. But as I laid out, there's some foundations here that make us even more wary than normal because of the actions particularly of that minister who also had himself on the SLGA [Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority] and had to remove himself and did not with the Conflict of Interest Commissioner.

So we have what are not inconsequential things, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We all have to go forward and put forth what we are involved in because people want to know that we will come here and deal with these issues in a nonbiased manner. And here we have somebody that's being called on, and in terms of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner saying that he has to withdraw from that file because he was in conflict. Now that is, you know, you can pass these things over. You can pass all of this and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, say that this is nothing. But this is serious business when people have to intervene.

In terms of the Privacy Commissioner and the Minister of Health, very straightforward. Very disappointing that whole affair as well, that you would say that you spoke to someone and you never did. I couldn't believe it, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And the same with the member bringing that back, the Chief Electoral Officer from the Board of Internal Economy bringing that over, and then saying . . . And then having the Premier or was it the caucus . . . We're not sure because this is again behind closed doors.

[14:45]

So where's the transparency when people — when it comes to officers of this Legislative Assembly — they expect no less, no less, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we would deal with it in a nonbiased and an upright, straightforward manner. And I know that, I would say all members coming in here would be saying that they would deal with these issues in there.

And here we have, in a little less than three years, we have a Chief Electoral Officer, an officer of this Legislative Assembly . . . The whole process going off the rails. We have that member as well on the whole SLGA affair not being upfront to the Conflict of Interest Commissioner. Mr. Deputy Speaker, what is it that's going on here? What is it that's going on? It's piling up, yet every day we hear pounding of desks over there, and all is well and talk of all sorts of polls and stuff.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, they can be happy with that. Government can be happy with that. But I wouldn't rest on that because the truth will out on these issues, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And the people of Saskatchewan are not, I wouldn't be saying that the

people of Saskatchewan are going to accept this, Mr. Deputy Speaker. People of Saskatchewan will see through this. And when they do . . .

And every day we have more and more people in the galleries; today, the agricultural producers, the livestock producers who are saying they need a certain amount of money. And yet the Minister of Agriculture says, well no, it's the opposition that's calling for that. It's the opposition. It's only that NDP that are calling for that. Well I don't think that that was correct. I don't think that that minister was . . . I'm not sure where he got that information, and I'm not sure what he was trying to do to the House when he said those sorts of things. What was he doing that? On what basis did he say that?

We asked for a tabling of a document. Now he said he had that document. I've still to see it, and perhaps it's there already. But where is that document? And what would we call that? What would we call that? What would we call that kind of action if . . . Because we had a point of order from that side saying that there was some concern over things that were said. What was that? What was the issue there, and what were we really talking about? We're talking about the basis of trust, of trust.

And when it comes to something like *The Election Act*, we need that trust, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We need that whole trust. People in Saskatchewan need that trust so that they know, when we go forward on important piece of legislation like *The Election Amendment Act*, that it will be handled in a way that everyone can feel comfortable with and not have nagging doubts that in fact somebody might not be saying something, telling something like the SLGA story. Even getting the deal at the end, saying that this is what I'm going to do with the Act because . . . And then coming back and saying whoops.

Well you remember the chiropractor deal. We tore that up and there was no great outcry about that. That wasn't a big problem. We could do that. Or the Minister of Health and his little shenanigans over there with the Privacy Commissioner, that was okay. And so maybe we can just do that again. Let's go for three. Let's go for three in a row, or maybe four. Well I think it's more than three, pardon me, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I think there's more than three so that maybe we're up to 10 here of issues. And I can talk about those forever.

But I think you understand in these preliminary remarks the point I'm trying to make here. The point is for the people of Saskatchewan, they must have a trust in their, not only the officers of the Legislative Assembly, but as well as the elected MLAs because the elected MLAs have to promote that and have to show that they are above reproach, that we are above that. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and so therefore so that people can have, when something as fundamental to this place as the election amendment election Act, that this is what we will be concerned about.

So as I was saying, as the opposition, we have to do our due diligence on this Act. And we will be doing . . . [inaudible] . . . And I'll get to those comments in just a minute here. But I wanted to make that clear. I wanted to make clear to all people in this province that some of the things that we are struggling with here, when it comes to dealing with an Act like this, and the things that we have to move forward on.



Again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I hear the member from Cannington talking about that. I think with the latest issue around Amicus, I think perhaps they should be looking at that, and they should also be looking at that health care is number one out there in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So again these comments that I am making just to give people a flavour of what we have to deal with here, and so that they should be ever watchful in terms when it comes to changing something like *The Election Amendment Act* as to who exactly is changing this. And all the things that we should be watching because we don't even know, even after the Bill would be put here, that maybe it could be torn up and say, well we're not going to go ahead with that because we have examples of that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this would be happening. And those people will remember that forever. They'll remember that one forever about how they negotiated in good faith and then were told that they don't have a deal.

Now as I mentioned, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the right to vote impacts on peoples' daily live. Because whatever you might think, we live, whatever some members or however some members treat that, we are fortunate to live in this province. We're fortunate to live in Canada because of the right to vote, because of the right to vote, and because of democracy. And we should speak out whenever we can when that is threatened, Mr. Deputy Speaker, like with the Chief Electoral Officer, and the shameful situation that exists around that situation, and how that occurred.

So everyone should know that story in the province. Everybody should know and understand that story because the Chief Electoral Officer will no doubt have to be dealing with these issues in here. And what has that done? What has that done to that office, and how will they deal with this and the work that needs to be done around this? And how will they look at this Bill, understanding that that present person doing that sits in limbo and never knowing when that'll change. When that'll change, and the person will not be there.

How do you plan for implementation of a Bill like this? How do you plan for implementation and all the things that this Bill might bring forward, let alone whether it will even be brought forward, but all the things that it might bring forward? And the person there not knowing whether tomorrow they will be there to deal with this Bill. What do you instruct all the people working around *The Election Act*, and how will they function? What things will they do around here to make sure that we have a democratic election in Saskatchewan, as I said, make sure that we . . . so that we can be proud of being in Saskatchewan here because we don't want this record tarnished, tarnished that we have here.

But I am not encouraged by the actions of the Justice minister and that, that we should now just be saying, well we'll just rubber stamp this for you again and away you go. Because we know that you don't have, you know, any problems with the conflict of interest. We don't have, you know, we don't have any problems with putting in an important officer of this Legislative Assembly. I would say all the officers are important, Mr. Speaker, and we know all the officers are important because when else would we get a report as we do on foster

care if we didn't have those people.

Well what if there was that kind of messing around with any of the officers on a continual basis? This pattern that we've started is very disturbing. It's very disturbing for not only us here, but it's disturbing for people outside of the Legislative Assembly who would look at this and say, what is it that we have started here? And why can we not, particularly with officers of this Assembly, get it right?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, so we have almost taken on a dual role here, a dual role here for the opposition. Not only do we have to go and comb through this Bill and try and make out what it is that the changes that are doing. But as well now, we have to be very wary of how these members are going to move this through, and will they actually do what they're saying they will do, what they will do at the end of the day.

So we shouldn't have to be doing that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but now we're into that. Just a few short years and we are now piling up a stack of documentation about actions of this member which lend us then to think what will they be saying, and what can we read into that, and what will they actually do, even if they speak of that they have spoken to people or that they will allow this, that this will be an Act that will allow people to vote. I guess the issue was there was nothing here as well about who was contacted or what were the problems, a clear statement on here were the issues that impacted our elections to date. Just simply that we will have a Bill and that there will be photo ID because we think that other people are doing this.

And again, as I mentioned before, there was *The Blind Voters Act*. It was one chance the Minister of Justice had, had an opportunity to do something forward looking. And that was to assist, as the federal government did and are looking at doing, to do that. But we see nothing about that here, nothing about to give a very specific issue . . . It wouldn't have taken very much for that minister to do that. But in fact, no, he turned the other way and then put in photo ID, which we never heard anybody come here.

At least we had somebody here in terms of representing blind voters in this province, somebody who the minister spoke very highly of. So I was very disappointed that he didn't take and move forward on that because it wouldn't have taken much for Saskatchewan to take that step and move ahead.

Because again under . . . We're changing some of the human rights. So he's obviously addressed his mind or directed his thinking to the Human Rights Code. But it was not something that was on the radar screen. So we wonder why he didn't do that when he could've perhaps then moved forward on that whole issue. But no, he decided not to. Perhaps he would just sit around and smile like the Cheshire cat over there. But, I mean, why not do something positive and move on something like that?

Instead he brings forward a Bill where he talks about, in his press release, it's just about ID, photo ID, and at that point in time has everybody in the long-term care homes talking about how is that going to work? How is that going to work? We haven't had, some of us, a licence here for a while, and now we're going to do that. So why, even if he says he's going to

take care of it now, why did he not even say at that time to not cause that sort of consternation, for people to think that, you know, it's just photo ID, and he's not going to look at it.

But he's asking a lot of people to just sort of trust me. Trust me and, you know, I'll get this thing through. You know, maybe we could . . . I wouldn't go that far, but maybe if we could do that in terms of saying, in terms of saying at that if he even got a deal, we're not certain that he would move it forward and in fact that the rest of the caucus would then support it. Or the Premier might just say, well we should have a talk about this because this isn't really where we want to go, and what should we be doing here? What should we be doing here?

Again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, these comments in terms of *The Election Amendment Act* are important, and I think if we're a democratic society, these are important. And this is not just for those of us who still have the photo ID and who go about our business. And the cost of the photo ID, is there an added cost that will be there?

Every day we hear now, we hear that things are not so well, even though those members would like to say that they are. We're hearing more people at food banks, more homelessness. And who are those? Those are people all on fixed incomes.

And now with the photo ID, is there a cost? Well just trust us, just trust us on that one, trust us like you did on the . . . The Minister of Health said, trust me. I talked to him and to the Privacy Commissioner. He said trust me with the Conflict of Interest Commissioner, the SLGA. Just trust us on the electoral officer, we'll get that one through too. I'm sure the internal board of economy said, just trust us and we'll get this thing through.

And now comes *The Election Act* again. And he just said, just trust us, just trust us and don't worry; there'll be no rising cost. Just trust us. The photo ID will be anything you can pick out of your cupboard there and just bring it along and do that. If it is that easy, Mr. Deputy Speaker, why are they changing this? Why would you be changing this if it's to make it easier? And then you can say, well, we can just use anything. We can use anything out of there. Just grab a photo off of your 25th wedding anniversary and bring it along. We'll use that. That's good enough too and, you know, just trust us on this. And who knows what it is that people will have.

[15:00]

And again as I said, we've got an electoral officer sitting there. We don't have one. And where are we at on that? Who is going to deal with this Act when it comes to this? Who is this going to . . . What is this promoting? And who is going to monitor this if the Chief Electoral Officer is not in place to start the thinking about how this is going to work, to start the regulation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you don't walk out one day from here and pass a Bill and then . . . There are people that need to be trained. We're going to have interpretations out in the field during the election, the upcoming election, and people will have to be there to answer these questions. And who is that going to be? Where is the training? And when will the training start on this to have this done? Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is a woefully

inadequate way of proceeding on a Bill as important as this.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've talked about people in long-term care. We can talk about students. We can talk about people who . . . students who are transient. We can talk about actually people who are transient, people in apartments who move quite often. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the rental increases that people have had to live with has caused many people, many people on fixed incomes . . . We have met with many people on fixed incomes to try and deal with this issue, to try and deal because they could not afford the rents. And they had to move to another place. Some people have moved twice.

They moved during the initial time when apartments were bought up, and we know about that issue, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They moved people in apartments because they're being changed to condos. That seems to have passed now. But now they've gone into other apartments. The rents went up and those people . . . with meeting with people and they were having to move again, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Now for those fortunate to be homeowners or to be farmers or whatever to spend your entire life in one place, maybe that's a foreign kind of concept. Maybe it's a foreign concept to be having to move like that. But here were seniors who got evicted because they couldn't pay for condominiums. They moved into rental units, and then the rents went up, and they had to leave again. People who in the years when they should be visiting with their families, doing a little bit of travelling, Mr. Deputy Speaker, whatever it is that people would want to do, they are jumping and now having to move. And now we have that they might need more ID than normal, and this is what they need to try and deal with this issue. So this is an important issue.

Now we also had another, *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*. People talked about consultation. We want to talk about consultation. Well we heard all about the consultation and what happened there in terms of people coming back and the various groups coming and saying, we didn't get consulted with. So now again we're told, well all you have to do is trust us, and we're consulting with all these groups who need the . . . We won't tell you who they are. The minister has not said who that they might be doing this consultation with. Who are they doing the consultation with?

But we know what happened to the former minister of Environment and the consultation she did. That was quite clear in this House day after day, when every day somebody would come in and would say, well you didn't consult with us. And then next day another group would come and say, you didn't consult with us, when the minister stood here and said here that she did this, that she did . . . that she consulted.

So you know, we look over . . . We're attempting to deal with the new Environment minister or the Minister of Environment. But again this just seems to be a little rampant. I think it is. Rampant is the right word to use, Mr. Deputy Speaker, over there in terms of all the things, where people's trust has been broken. And people feel that, on that side, they seem to be able to say anything that they want, anything that they want.

Minister of Health saying that there is no loan guarantees. And then, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I read in the paper that perhaps the

government could be on the hook for this if this deal goes south, as they put it. The government could be on the hook for this. And that's an interesting, developing story that's coming in.

And people out in rural Saskatchewan particularly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are very interested in the story of how this long-term care facility is coming forward. And they have to do bake sales. And they have the workers raise money. They have to come around, and everybody has to contribute monthly. The RMs [rural municipality] have to come up with extra tax dollars to build a seniors' long-term care facility in their area. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is somewhat of a concern for everybody who has to deal with this.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is a very, very important thing that they're doing, that is being asked of us to pass. Again as I said, we have to look at this. I know there's a number of other people who will be wanting to speak on this. We have had other issues come up in terms . . . There's the whole issue in court under the funds from the Progressive Conservative Party that are being held, where the Deputy Premier and the Premier said that they asked be struck off of that, not having to attend court.

Well now we find that they're having to appear in court and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this all leads to trust in bringing forward this Act, *The Election Amendment Act*, where they wanted their names struck. They weren't going to be any part of that Progressive Conservative fund that's in court, and they went to court on that. And they actually went to court on that, and the judge looked at that and said, no, well I think you have to be here. You have to be here. And that's an order from a judge, so they're now going to have to appear.

Now all of this in terms of part of the democratic right, this goes to the heart of *The Election Act* and the democratic right of people to vote and the democratic right of parties to exist. A democratic right because I know that the members over there would . . . Every time they hear that the Progressive Conservatives are there, that sends shivers through them or sends, as my colleague here says, sends fear through them because they understand what that means. They understand what that means.

All those little columns in the *National Post* and stuff on their stand on potash, that's causing them a little grief, and these things are starting to mount. They're starting to mount because people are seeing that they've lost their way and are losing it badly on a number of fronts.

Now again here, they talk about that this will not disenfranchise, this will not disenfranchise voters. But all, to me, the statements or anything I've heard in terms of who they have contacted, who they will be talking to are very unclear, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as to what it is that is going on here.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm wondering what more surprises lie within *The Election Amendment Act*. What more we will have to do? There seems to be something that most of these . . . The minister tells us that he's looked at these things. But I wonder how important this really is to him. I wonder how important this is or how important it'll be.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are issues of mobility. There are

whole other issues that they could have dealt with. They could have dealt with the issues around, as I mentioned, the blind voters. There are many disenfranchised people; they could have looked at making their way easier to vote. That's what I would say that that minister should have done. They could have made it easier to vote. Instead he has made this harder, more difficult for certain groups in our society to actually vote and participate in the democratic process, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

There are many other discussions we could have had. People, instead of being on the cutting edge of moving forward using the technology that we have that's in existence today, we don't see any of that in this Bill. Instead what we have is photo ID. And our question is, why did they not look at some of these other things? Why did they not look at improving accessibility? Why did they not look at some of the other concerns people have raised during elections when with the . . . and talk to the returning officers in the field about the issues that have come up around this Act?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, those are the things I think they should have done. Those are the things they should have done. But instead people are left with questions surrounding the number of issues that I have spoken on.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know that there are . . . We have to do the due diligence on this Act. There are more colleagues that would like to speak on this, and so with that I would be adjourning debate.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Saskatoon Fairview has moved to adjourn debate on Bill 161, *The Election Amendment Act, 2010*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

#### Bill No. 162

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Hickie that **Bill No. 162 — *The Local Government Election Amendment Act, 2010*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Harper:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to enter into the debate on this particular Bill, the Bill No. 162, *An Act to amend The Local Government Election Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts*. Mr. Speaker, it is truly a pleasure to do so on behalf of the good folks of Regina Northeast.

Mr. Speaker, this is of course I think a very, very important Bill and one that needs to, we need to pay a fair amount of attention to as what it does, Mr. Speaker. It's really calling for changes that will require voters, when they want to exercise their right to select their representative, they will have to have a ID, a photo ID in order to be able to participate in the election.

Now, Mr. Speaker, for those of us who just take this as commonplace because we're fortunate enough to, you know, have a driver's licence and to drive vehicles and be able to participate in that way, and we have a photo ID with our driver's licence and we just take that as, you know, a commonplace, everyday occurrence. But what we fail to recognize in this particular, and I think this fails to recognize here, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that that's not a privilege that everybody in this great province enjoys.

We have those people, Mr. Speaker, who find themselves within the . . . without, I should say, the financial ability to be able to afford a vehicle or to use a vehicle and therefore perhaps don't even have a driver's licence and really have no need for one. And so that's one of the group of people, Mr. Speaker, who certainly wouldn't have as a automatic a photo ID.

And, Mr. Speaker, there's others of course with our society. I can think of some cases that are very close to home for me, within my immediate family, of those people who have, getting up there in age and have really enjoyed a full and productive life and continue to, but find themselves uncertain and perhaps not confident any more in their abilities to operate a motor vehicle and therefore no longer have a motor vehicle and therefore no longer need or find the need to have a driver's licence and therefore don't automatically have a voter ID.

So, Mr. Speaker, we also find within this particular legislation, it is not I think doing what should be the role of any government of any political stripe, and that is to further the cause of democracy. We are very, very fortunate, Mr. Speaker, to live in a province and in a country that holds near and dear to our heart the principles of democracy and the right of people to participate and to select their representative and their representation.

And, Mr. Speaker, that is a right that we take for granted, I think, in this country. We've enjoyed it so much. We take for granted, many, many of us, and that we don't realize the sacrifices that are made by individuals around the world in other countries who haven't had the same experience as us, who haven't enjoyed the ability to live in a democracy, and to do so in a way that would enhance their life and enhance the life of their families and their community.

Mr. Speaker, there are many people today who lay down their life in an attempt to be able to establish democracy in their country. And democracy is a very fragile thing. If we don't nurture it, we don't support it, and we don't continually work at it, we can very easily lose it.

And we've seen that in other jurisdictions around the world, where democracy perhaps was taken a little bit too much for granted and changes were allowed to happen that kept restricting the ability of the individual to have input into the selection of their representation. And as those opportunities slipped away, they were replaced with guidelines that restricted the individual's ability to participate at election time to a point where democracy was lost.

When we look back through history, we see many, many examples of that, where history tells us where democracy was lost because we didn't protect it, that we didn't work at

ensuring that it grew and it became stronger. In fact history will show us that many of those people in power at the time worked at lowering the expectations of the general public as to what their rights were in a democratic system, lowering that expectation so that they can slowly strip away those rights, slowly erode those rights so that they no longer had the strength to elect their representation, their representative on a local level or representation on a more general or national level.

[15:15]

So, Mr. Speaker, I believe it's a role of government should be looking at ways and means on an ongoing basis, and I don't think that you can just can make change and say, there, it's done; we'll protect democracy forever and a day. That is not the case. I believe that we need to look at a continuous re-examination of democracy, but with the purpose of identifying ways and means that we can strengthen, strengthen our democracy. And the only way you can strengthen democracy is having a greater number of people participating at election time.

We have seen in the past where numbers of people who participating have slid. And, Mr. Speaker, we should be looking at why that is. Why is it that less people are participating? Is there certain groups, certain age groups of people who aren't participating? And we should be working at educating them and encouraging them to take part in our democratic system because that is what makes it strong.

Now I've had the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to knock on a lot of doors during both the election process and in between elections. I have run into people, of which I'm sure we all have, who have said at election time, oh well no, I'm not going to vote; I'm not going to take part. And many of them have shared with me the fact that they haven't on a regular basis. They just sort of don't participate.

Mr. Speaker, I've taken the time to encourage them to vote. I'm not saying just to vote for me. Of course I would appreciate that, but I encourage them to look into what the positions were of the various political parties that were offering their services and for them to look at which . . . and to make their own decision as to which political party they thought had a platform that best represented them, best represented what they wanted to see done in this great province of ours, and then to support that party.

If that was my party, I would really, really appreciate their support. But it could also be of some other political stripe. And I encourage that because I believe fundamentally, Mr. Speaker, we all benefit from a stronger, from a strong society that is governed by a democratic process. And in order to do that, Mr. Speaker, we have to have participation. We have to have people who are willing to take part in elections.

I often tell people that it's not only a right that they have. It's not only a right that they have to go to the polls and select their representation, whether that representation be in the local government or provincial government or our national government. They should participate in all levels of the democratic process because that's what makes our democracy strong. That is what makes our democracy work.

And I believe a role of any government of any political stripe should be to look at ways and means that we can continuously enhance our democratic process, continually encourage people to participate and to raise the level of participation, whether it's through education or whatever it may take to encourage people to understand that it is so important. It is so important to maintain a democratic system through participation. Without that, we'll lose it.

Now there are other forms of government I guess, Mr. Speaker, in this world. And I think it was, I think it might have been Winston Churchill who once said that democracy may not be the best form of representation but it certainly beats whatever is in second place. And it certainly does. I think there's flaws within our democratic system and those flaws should be identified and worked at improving, improving those flaws because the greatest flaw is to have people not participate. That really weakens the system.

When you elect a government but based on a narrow band of people who actually participated, then you're electing a government based on a narrow band of opinion. And that is wrong. That will lead to the loss of democracy. That will lead to the erosion of our democratic rights.

And what we need to do, Mr. Speaker, is look at broadening the base of people who participate, the people who come out at election time and who express their opinion as to their wishes for representation. And you do that through the ballot box. And time and time again that has been proven to be, you know, the right way, the right thing to do.

And, Mr. Speaker, we need to . . . When I say we, I mean the government. The government of any political stripe should be looking at ways and means of strengthening the democratic process, making this necessary change, bringing those changes into the forum here, our legislature which is the forum of democracy, the opportunity for us to discuss the matters. To bring those changes here so we, the opposition, can have input. The government can have their input into it. And we can develop programs and policies here that will enhance democracy.

And, Mr. Speaker, we certainly raised the question around the photo ID proposals here as to whether it really meets that measuring stick. Does this suggestion really meet that measuring stick of improving democracy? Does it really meet the measuring stick of encouraging people to participate at election time? All evidence, Mr. Speaker, is no, it doesn't. No, it doesn't.

And why? Well I've kind of gone through some of those reasons already, Mr. Speaker. Because there are those people out there who are of voting age who simply don't have readily a photo ID because they simply don't require one. I require one because I have a driver's licence that requires me to have a photo ID with it. But there are many people out there who don't have a driver's licence for various reasons, and they wouldn't automatically have a photo ID. And without that photo ID, according to the suggested changes here of the government, it would restrict their ability to participate at election time. And that, Mr. Speaker, certainly, certainly is not something we want to do.

We also . . . As I said a little earlier about some close relatives of mine who have enjoyed a very, very productive life in this country, in this province and have reached the age where they don't any longer feel comfortable in operating a motor vehicle, so they're not doing it. And as a result of it now, Mr. Speaker, they don't require their driver's licence that they've had for many years. They no longer require that driver's licence. And it would be one of the things that if you don't require it, why would you spend the money on it? If you don't spend the money on a driver's licence, you don't have the photo ID. At election time, they wouldn't be able to vote because they haven't got a photo ID to be able to prove who they are.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, we find it interesting that these changes would I think really cause people not to have the right to exercise their free and democratic rights to vote, to express their opinion, their wishes as to selection of representation whether it be on the local level or whether it be on a provincial-wide level or even a national level.

But this pertains primarily to local government and to the provincial government. And I would hate to see those people being denied their democratic right because, as I said earlier, our democracy, the strength of our democracy is built on encouraging people to participate, not to sit at home.

And, Mr. Speaker, there's a, you know, a list that goes on and on, I suppose you'd say, of people that this government has failed in its term of government of three and a half years or so. This government has failed seniors in this province and seniors who are of course coping, Mr. Speaker, with the rising cost of living, in particular rising rents. And we see that on an ongoing basis where rents are galloping, I guess you would say, up while the income of seniors are fixed, and they are finding it more and more difficult to be able to maintain a reasonable, reasonable shelter, Mr. Speaker.

So in some cases where we've seen the increase in rental rates, we've seen the increase in utility rates, I know that there are some seniors in this great province of ours who, after spending their life here, after working very hard and building this great province of ours through their dedication and in some cases through their sacrifices, we enjoy a very, very prosperous province today.

But not the same can be said for our seniors who find themselves paying high rent, increased utility costs, and doing so on a fixed income, doing so on a fixed income. And, Mr. Speaker, in some cases some of the seniors that I have had the opportunity to talk to in my constituency have expressed to me concern over where do they get the money to continue to make the rent increases, to continue to make the utility increases. Their only place that they can cut is from their food budget.

And, Mr. Speaker, that would be a shame to find seniors who have spent their life in this great province of ours, working very hard in this province, building this great province that we've inherited, and we don't have the ability to ensure that those seniors are able to live, retire, and to live with a reasonable income and a reasonable lifestyle. That, Mr. Speaker, is just one more betrayal, I guess you would say, of the good folks by this government.

Now we see, Mr. Speaker, that many people who no longer have — perhaps never did have — a driver's licence, and there are some of those. Fact is, a couple in my constituency that I know that . . . Well I've known them for a number of years now. And all during that period of time they've never had a driver's licence and they've never had need for one because they don't own a vehicle. They use public transit and they are well served by public transit. And they're certainly satisfied with it.

And, Mr. Speaker, these good folks simply don't have a driver's licence, and thusly they don't have the automatic photo ID that you and I perhaps would automatically think of when asked about a photo ID. We'd pull out our driver's licence because that serves the purpose. That's not the case here, Mr. Speaker. These good folks don't have it, and they have no need for it. They have no need for it because they don't have a vehicle. They don't plan to have a vehicle and they are quite satisfied using public transportation. And they, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, would expend X number of dollars for no reason at all other than to have a photo ID.

Now if they don't have that and an election is called and one of the requirements when they show up at the polls is to be able to produce a photo ID and they don't have one, well, Mr. Speaker, they may not vote. The concern I would have is some of these folks, you know, would either simply not go to vote because they say, I don't have a photo ID. I need one, so I'm just not going to bother going. Or they may. They may go to the polls, and then when asked by the deputy returning officer to provide their identity, to provide a photo ID so that they can verify who they are, they can't produce one. They feel awkward and embarrassed and simply leave the polls, not voting. And therefore, Mr. Speaker, once again we lessen participation. We lessen our ability to maintain a strong, democratic system because we haven't got people participating.

So I believe, Mr. Speaker, this certainly . . . Act isn't headed in the right direction. It is probably headed in the wrong direction and is certainly not, not doing what I think the role of any government of any political stripe should be. And that is, first and foremost, it should be to encourage democracy, should be to encourage the strengthening of our democratic system.

And like I said, Mr. Speaker, I've had the opportunity on a number of occasions to talk to folks on the doorstep. I also here, not too long ago, had the opportunity to address a group of folks who were graduating or in process I guess you would say, near graduation from the Adult Learning Centre. And there I had the opportunity to address them and, you know, I had my little spiel.

But whenever I meet with groups like that, Mr. Speaker, I certainly take the time to introduce myself and give them a bit of my background and perhaps some of my philosophy, where I stand personally. But I always like to open the floor up to questions and answers. Because I believe that that's the opportunity for the individuals out there to ask the question that they may have on their mind. And I had that opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to do that to a group of about 15 young adults and it was very, very informative and interesting.

But one of the questions was put to me by a young lady there

who shared with me the fact that she had never . . . And I don't want to date her, but I'm going to guess at her age at about somewhere between 25 and 30 years of age. And she shared with me and the class gathered there that she had never voted. She had never voted at any election — either in the municipal election, provincial election, or federal election. She just didn't vote. She just didn't think it was important. It was of no interest to her.

So we had a real nice discussion on that with the group gathered there as to the importance of democracy and the importance of people participating in democracy. And I encouraged everybody there that when the next election rolls around — whether it be a municipal election or a provincial election or a federal election — that they each take the responsibility to attempt to meet the candidates, if possible. But failing that . . . And meeting the candidates, I don't mean just meeting them and shaking their hand and going. I mean to have the opportunity to talk to them about the issues that may concern them.

[15:30]

Failing that, or on top of that perhaps, they should seek out information from each political party that's offering them their representation, to get their pamphlets, to get the information. With that would come contact numbers. From that, if questions arose, you could phone the contact numbers, ask the various political parties where they stood on the various issues — the issues that affect you, the issues that were near and dear to your heart. And that way you could glean the information as to the position of political parties on various issues.

I think we all have certain areas of our economy and certain areas of our society that we hold near and dear to us and we would like to see either certainly safeguarded, if not only safeguarded, but improved. And in order to do that you need to know what position various political parties have on that particular issue.

So to do that you want to contact a representative of that political party, put forward your questions, get the answers, get all the information you can, so that the day before the election you can sit down and glean through all of this and then to make a decision — an informed decision, a decision that is based on the information you've been able to gather from the various political parties. And make that decision based on that information, and then go to the polls and support the party and the individual representing that party that holds what you think is the ideas or the positions that best reflect that you have or that you want to see.

So we certainly made that point, Mr. Speaker, over and over again with the good folks there that they had a responsibility. They had a responsibility to democracy. They had a responsibility to the city. They had a responsibility to the province. They had a responsibility to this country to participate in democracy at election time. They had a responsibility to do so in an informed way by gathering the information from the various political parties and the representatives, and use that information as the basis of the decision making in their process of deciding who or what political party they were going to support at election time.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that is so very, very, important. And like I made a point out of it that they didn't have to vote for me. They didn't have to vote for my political party. They may not all live in my constituency. But I did want them to vote for a political party. I did want them to take part in the democratic process because that is what makes our system work. Participating in a democratic system is what makes that system work. That's what brought all of us here. That's what brought all of us here with a responsibility to represent the good folks that brought us here.

And we need, in order to do that, we need . . . We have a responsibility as elected members to stay in touch with our constituents, to hear from our constituents, and to bring those concerns that are brought to our attention by our constituents, to bring those concerns forward, either through a caucus process or into the Legislative Assembly here. But we need to be able to bring forward those concerns on a regular basis.

But in order to do that, folks have to participate. The folks out there have to participate. And we don't want just a narrow band because if a narrow band of people making representation, to me would be making a narrow representation. It would be only the representation in their area of concern and they would only be bringing forward their thoughts and their concerns on those particular issues.

What we need to have is a much broader, a much broader band of representation. You need to have people from all walks of life, people who have various different experiences and people who have various different issues, and bringing those concerns forward to us, us the MLAs, so that we can then in turn use our opportunity in this great forum here to discuss those issues, to make that representation, and make that decision making on Bills such as the one before us, Bill 162, *The Election Amendment Act*.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, democracy is a very fragile thing. Democracy is something that needs to be supported. It should be enhanced whenever the opportunity arises. It should be enhanced and it needs to be strengthened so that we have . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . and nurtured, as my good friend and seatmate here mentions in my ear here. It needs to be nurtured. And yes, it needs to be nurtured. It needs to be supported. It needs to be nurtured in order to grow.

We need to have a democracy that will not only serve us today. We need to have a democracy that is well-placed and a good, solid foundation for the future so that future generations will be able to benefit from a strong democratic process. Because that's what really makes it work.

It's the opportunity to share ideas. It's the opportunity to disagree, and that's what this forum is all about. It's the opportunity also for advice. Nobody has it all right. This government over here doesn't have it all right. There are Bills that will come forward that this government has . . . perhaps on the right track, but maybe they haven't gone far enough. And that's what the good folks out there that . . . When we, the opposition, go out and talk to stakeholders and those people who are on the front line who may be affected by some of these changes, when we ask them about these proposed changes, they may say, you know, it's headed in the right direction but it doesn't go far enough. And it's our job to bring this back to the

government and point that out to them, that, you know, that they need to go further. On this particular aspect of the Bill or that particular aspect of a Bill, they need to go further.

Or in some cases, Mr. Speaker, perhaps they're going too far. Perhaps the good folks out there, when we've gone out in the general public and talked to them about the proposed changes to the particular Act, they will identify the fact that this government is going too far, going too far in this particular direction. And as a result of that, it's not going to achieve what is the measuring stick, and that measuring stick should be an improvement and a net benefit to Saskatchewan people. They see this not as an improvement and not as a benefit. In fact they believe that certain changes may be anything but an improvement.

So, Mr. Speaker, that is why it is so important that we have a democratic system that is supported, as my good friend says, nurtured so it grows, so it can be a strong system, so it could best reflect the wants and the needs of Saskatchewan people in particular. Because after all, Mr. Speaker, I think it's fair to say that Saskatchewan people are certainly wonderful people. No matter where you go in the world, you meet good people, but I don't think you'll find anybody better than Saskatchewan people. And they certainly deserve to have the best. But in order to have the best, you have to have a strong democratic system. And a strong democratic system can only be achieved by greater participation.

So, Mr. Speaker, when we look at suggestions from the government of changes to the electoral process here and to cause a requirement of people to produce photo IDs, we need to look at how does this affect the people of Saskatchewan. Is this something that everybody would just automatically have and have no problem to produce? Well no, it's not the case. That's not the case at all.

What it does show us and what it does show the good folks out there — and many of them have brought this to my attention and to our attention when we've been out speaking to various groups here — is that this does not encourage people to participate in the democratic system. In fact this is one of the things where they believe the government has gone off track, the government has gone too far, and that this in turn really be anything but an encouragement to people to participate.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I had it brought to my attention of a case where a couple simply, you know, as far they could recall, they simply don't have a photo ID because they don't have a driver's licence. They don't have a need for a driver's licence. They don't have a car and they don't use a car. They use public transportation. And therefore they don't have what you and I would automatically think of a photo ID or a driver's licence. They don't have that.

So they themselves would be reluctant, reluctant to go and vote because (a) if they don't have a photo ID, they believe that they may be denied the right to vote. If they were to go to a polling place with the number of people around and they were singled out as the only people in that room that didn't have the right to vote because they didn't have a photo ID, they would feel quite embarrassed about it. But so to save any potential chance of being embarrassed, they simply wouldn't go vote. That, Mr.

Speaker, it does not, does not encourage democracy. In fact, Mr. Speaker, what it does do, it probably goes the opposite direction.

So, Mr. Speaker, there are a number of issues and a number of concerns around this particular Bill and the effects it has on Saskatchewan people. And, Mr. Speaker, there is certain yardsticks, I suppose, that I think a government should use when they measure the changes that they want to make to a particular program, or in this case to a Bill, when they bring it forward to the legislature here for our consideration.

Some of the information that they should provide — and I have yet to see this government provide it, particularly in this Bill — is, who asked for these changes? My question to the government is, who asked for these changes? Who asked that the photo ID be certainly a very important part, if not the big part, of the right of a person to participate in the democratic process, their right to vote, their right to select their own, their representative that they want to represent them, whether it be in the legislature or whether it be in the city or whether it be federally? To do so, to do so with the freedom to do just exactly that is be able to go to the polls and vote for the individual or the political party that they wish to have represent them, rather than being concerned about their need to have a photo ID in order to get into the polls. Who asked for this, who asked for these changes is a question that certainly I think we need to use as one of the measuring sticks.

Another question I would have of the government is, how was it determined that these changes were needed? Who said that these changes were needed? Who suggested that by making these changes, it would increase participation in our electoral process? Who was it? Where did it come from? Was it individuals or was it groups? Who provided this information? Who made this request? Who suggested that with these changes, it would benefit Saskatchewan people, it would benefit the electoral process, it would benefit the process of maintaining democracy here because we would have more people participating, Mr. Speaker?

Again through all the information that's been provided to us, the opposition, and Mr. Speaker, our opportunity to talk to people across this great province who are I guess you'd say stakeholders in this, that's one of the questions that they put to me is, and to us is, how is it determined that these were going to be what was needed, that these were the right changes? How would that be done?

Mr. Speaker, another question I suppose that pops to mind is, what consultations were carried out by this government? Before these changes were recommended to the Legislative Assembly, the government has a responsibility to talk to the stakeholders across this great province of ours to determine that these are the changes that are necessary. They need to do that by talking to individuals, to groups, to whomever would have input into this, Mr. Speaker.

And I ask, I ask what consultations were carried out by this government. Who did they talk to? When did they talk to them? When did they communicate with them, whether they talked to them, Mr. Speaker, or was it a questionnaire? Was it some form of communication? Was that done? What was the form of

communication? Who was it communicated to? Those are the questions, Mr. Speaker, that remain unanswered here.

And the government is saying, well you know, we . . . Trust me. Trust me. Accept these proposals. Trust me. You know, these are what it will take to improve democracy. Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm leery. I'm very, very leery about the government suggesting that these changes will improve democracy. I'm leery about that because I don't see how it can encourage greater participation in our democratic process.

Mr. Speaker, next question I would have of the government is, what was the reaction from those who were consulted with, from those who were consulted with if the government actually did do some consulting out there? They haven't told us who they consulted with. But if they actually did do the consulting, then what was the reaction from those people who they talked to?

Did they all stand up and applaud these changes as being the right changes, or did they say, Mr. Speaker, that perhaps the government was on the wrong track and that these changes would not further the cause of democracy? In fact what these changes would do is perhaps lessen the number of people who would participate in the election process at election time.

If that's the case, Mr. Speaker, then why doesn't this government come clean with that? Why didn't they produce that information in saying, this is who we talked to, this is what they said, and this is why we're making these recommendations? And if we see a situation where the government is making recommendations to changes to the Act that is different from what they heard through their consultation process, then one would have to wonder, what's the motive of this government?

[15:45]

Mr. Speaker, I think any time a government changes anything, whether it be an Act or whether it be in regulations, there is a couple of yardsticks that a government should use, and I say a government of any political stripe should use. And one of the yardsticks is, how will these changes affect Saskatchewan people? How will these changes affect Saskatchewan people? Will it improve Saskatchewan people, their ability to participate in elections? Will these particular changes improve the numbers of people who show up at polls on election day? Will it improve the ability for people in this great province to become informed of the positions of various candidates and political parties on various issues? Will it? That's my question, Mr. Speaker.

And another yardstick I believe is important to be used, Mr. Speaker, is the yardstick of, how will these changes improve the welfare and the lives of Saskatchewan people? How will somebody who is living in Preeceville or Kindersley or Carlyle, how will their life be improved as a result of these changes? How will the lives of their families be improved as a result of these changes?

Mr. Speaker, if the government hasn't got the ability to answer those questions, then I believe that they have failed in their consultation process. I believe that they have, in that regards, they have failed the people of Saskatchewan.



And in these changes, Mr. Speaker, I see as not being beneficial at all to the people of this great province. I don't see any of these changes, anywhere, a suggestion that it's going to improve the number of people that's going to turn out on election day. I don't see any of that. I don't see any suggestion that these people, that they're going to improve the number of voters, improve the number of people who turn out to cast their ballot in favour of the representation that they wish.

I see nothing in this, Mr. Speaker, that's going to cause the people of Saskatchewan to be better informed, cause the people of this great province to be informed as to what the policies and the positions of the various political candidates and the various political parties that offer themselves to representation.

I see nothing in this, Mr. Speaker, that's going to enhance our democratic system. I see nothing in this that's going to nurture and grow our system to make it stronger, to make it a solid foundation for the future so that future generations who inherit this great province of ours do so with a strong democratic system in place that they can rely on, and that they too have the responsibility to improve. And I don't see any of that in any of this, Mr. Speaker.

So there is certainly need, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of need for further consultation with the good folks of Saskatchewan. We need to go out and talk to those people who are truly interested in maintaining a democratic system and maintaining a strong system so that we can enjoy the benefits of it today, tomorrow, and well into the future.

So with that in mind, Mr. Speaker, we'll need a little more time to consider various suggested changes to this Act. In order to do that, we'll need the time to consult with the people across this great province. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I'll move adjournment of debate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bradshaw):** — The member from Regina Northeast has moved adjournment on Bill No. 162, *The Local Government Election Amendment Act*. Is the Assembly ready to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bradshaw):** — Carried.

### Bill No. 159

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Norris that **Bill No. 159** — *The University of Regina Amendment Act, 2010* be now read a second time.]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bradshaw):** — I recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

**Ms. Morin:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's my pleasure to be able to rise to speak to this Bill No. 159, *An Act to amend The University of Regina Act*. This Bill is to make a number of changes, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the strategic plan outline as the university has already advertised throughout the community and elsewhere.

Mr. Speaker, the University of Regina has an amazing reputation all across the country and outside of the borders of Canada as well. And the strategic plan that was adopted is called *māwawohkamātowin*, and it transcends into *Our Work, Our People, Our Communities*. It's the strategic plan for 2009 to 2014.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this strategic plan came about as the work under the University of Regina and the current president of the University of Regina, Vianne Timmons. She had announced in 2008 that a new strategic plan was needed to succeed the *Building on Progress*, the plan for 2004-2009.

In October 2008, the university's board of governors adopted terms of reference for a strategic planning process. At that time a facilitation team was formed and prepared to gather information and input from stakeholders. Consultations were launched in January of 2009, and more than 100 meetings were held with faculty, staff, students, alumni, retirees, administrators, government officials, professional organizations, and educational partners.

Now, Mr. Speaker, one can see that there was a great deal of consultation that went into the development of the strategic plan that the University of Regina is now proceeding under and would be a great example for the Sask Party government to follow, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, given that the reputation that the Sask Party government has with respect to consultations is not one that what I would call as admirable or as being cherished, Mr. Speaker.

We see on many occasions the Sask Party government proceeding with what it decides it wants to do without taking on those consultations, or worse yet, Mr. Speaker, saying that there has been consultations that have taken place, and when those stakeholders are contacted, one finds out that those consultations in fact did not take place. And a prime example of that, Mr. Speaker, of course would be *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*.

One saw under the discussions around *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act* . . . And better yet, Mr. Speaker, the former minister of Environment at that time, her comments were that there were, I believe, six or seven stakeholders that she mentioned by name upon the second reading of that particular Act.

And, Mr. Speaker, given that I'm the critic for the Environment, and was at that time as well, when contacting those stakeholders I found out something quite different — that one of the seven, Mr. Speaker, actually felt that they were consulted and that the minister was proceeding with recommendations that they felt that they would support. But that the other six stakeholders that the minister mentioned by name (a) felt that they weren't consulted; (b) certainly were not in favour with the Bill that was brought forward by the Sask Party at that time; and (c) were quite insulted when they found out that the minister actually named those organizations in her second reading remarks, when they did not concur with what the minister had said about having consulted with those organizations with respect to that Bill.

So it's quite a different scenario with the University of Regina.

They went to great lengths to make sure that the various stakeholders and a wide range of stakeholders were consulted with respect to putting together the new strategic plan that is currently in operation.

The information gathered in these consultations, as well as more than 40 written submissions and over 1,100 responses to a series of online surveys, fed the creation of the strategic plan. Now these planning consultations revealed a deep, widespread commitment to the future success of the University of Regina. They also revealed a call for greater engagement and openness to change, a realization that the University of Regina's size is an asset, and a conviction that sustainability in the broadest sense needed to be a major emphasis of the university. And as a result, the revised vision values and mission statements are also part of the strategic plan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the strategic plan, *mâmahokamâtowin*: Our Work, Our People, Our Communities, will hopefully position the University of Regina at the centre of this changing Saskatchewan. And it will be rooted in responding to the needs and aspirations of the students, the people in Saskatchewan and the communities, and reaching into the world around us, Mr. Speaker.

So one can see that there has been a great deal of thought that's gone into the strategic plan, not just in terms of the insular needs of the university institution itself, but the needs of the ever-evolving change of students that are attending the university, the changes in the communities that the university is feeding, the changes in the employment situation across Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, that the university is obviously going to be catering to and also assisting in terms of the courses that it offers at this institution.

And, Mr. Speaker, you know, it goes beyond that, and I'm really proud to be able to see first-hand the work that the University of Regina is doing in terms of reaching out into the community. One can see through either the involvement of the students and the various faculties in terms of how they're reaching in the community and providing assistance to the community.

There was a project for instance, Mr. Speaker, that I attended the official grand opening of not too long ago, about a month ago in the north end of University of Regina with respect to innovative technologies in terms of being more cost efficient in terms of heating businesses and such, Mr. Speaker. And the University of Regina had an intricate role to play with that.

And we can also see through other technologies that the University of Regina is expanding on — whether it's hydrogen technology, Mr. Speaker; whether it's sustainable energy on other fronts, Mr. Speaker; whether it's to deal with issues of water safety and quality, Mr. Speaker — the University of Regina is proving itself time and time again on each one of those fronts and on many others of course that they're delving into at this point, Mr. Speaker.

It truly is a centre of excellence. And I am ever so pleased every time I receive an opportunity and an invitation to attend any of those sessions that they are providing as information sessions or any of their update sessions in terms of marking a specific

occasion, Mr. Speaker. Every time one attends — or every time I attend, I should say — any of these occasions at the University of Regina, it provides a true, refreshing, educational update for myself, Mr. Speaker, and assists me obviously with my portfolio, which is the Environment critic portfolio, not to mention just in many other ways.

There's also technology, well actually research that's being done in terms of how balance is affected in seniors, Mr. Speaker, and how that affects their general health and their life in terms of preventing falls and other particular issues that are specific to aging, Mr. Speaker. There is just so much good work that's being done at the University of Regina that unfortunately most people don't even realize the amount of good work that is being done through the research.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's not just research. When one looks at for instance the athletic organizations, the athletic teams through the University of Regina, one can see the amount of community work that's happening through those particular teams and the members of those teams, Mr. Speaker.

And that comes from leadership. And, Mr. Speaker, I have to say I have the utmost respect, the absolute utmost respect for Dr. Vianne Timmons and the team that she is currently working with. I'm always amazed by the new and innovative things that they are able to come up with respect to bringing about improvements for the University of Regina. And, Mr. Speaker, that vitality, that energy, and that enthusiasm for the institution and for the students and for the community and for the services that the University of Regina provides to the community, it trickles down, Mr. Speaker. It trickles down to the administration. It trickles down to the various professors that are teaching various courses, associate professors, the various research assistants, and the students, Mr. Speaker.

I have to say that over the years we've seen that enthusiasm and that pride that has been ever growing in the University of Regina right from, you know, my experiences when I attended the University of Regina through to the various presidents along the way, Dr. Lloyd Barber and others. And we see how that pride and enthusiasm in this institution has grown over the many years, Mr. Speaker. And one can see that, as I said, through the athletic organizations as well.

I have a 13-year-old daughter, Mr. Speaker, by the name of Morgan Morin, obviously, who is very enthusiastic about volleyball for instance, Mr. Speaker. She's currently playing with the Regina Volleyball Club in the under 14 category, Mr. Speaker, and is very proud to be part of the Voltage team that is representing the Regina Volleyball Club for the under 14 girls. And they play throughout the province.

[16:00]

Now this Regina Volleyball Club has an affiliation with the University of Regina women's Cougars volleyball program, Mr. Speaker. And it's absolutely amazing at how intricate that affiliation is, whether it's in terms of providing some assistance with coaching on occasion, Mr. Speaker, or whether it's actually getting coaches from the University of Regina programs into the Regina Volleyball Club program, Mr. Speaker, or whether it's mentoring, Mr. Speaker. And that's

such a huge, huge component of what's important for our youth and our province, Mr. Speaker, is mentorship.

When those youth, when a 13-year-old like my daughter can envision herself attending the University of Regina — and I know Dr. Peter MacKinnon is going to challenge me on this — but, you know, when she can envision herself attending the University of Regina, and not just attending the institution, but she's darn set on playing for the University of Regina women's volleyball team. That's a pretty phenomenal thing at the age of 13, when that's her goal at this point in life already, Mr. Speaker.

Now Dr. Peter MacKinnon, when he found out about this, of course challenged her on that and said, you know, the University of Saskatchewan has a women's volleyball program as well and proceeded to tell her about all the wonderful things at the University of Saskatchewan. So luckily enough my daughter has a wonderful choice in this province, Mr. Speaker. There are two very reputable organizations — institutions, I should say — educational institutions, being the University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan.

So needless to say, she'll have that choice, Mr. Speaker. And she has other choices outside the province as well. But it's a very advantageous thing for the children in this province, the students in this province to know that we have two very reputable educational institutions that they can choose to attend.

So, Mr. Speaker, the University of Regina women's volleyball program, as I said, provides great mentorship to young girls like mine. They invite them to attend the games at the University of Regina of course and really interact well with these young players and these young students so that they understand that this isn't something that is distant in the future or it's unreachable or, you know, that these players are larger than life. Because quite frankly at the age of 13, the University of Regina women's volleyball team looks like they are larger than life, Mr. Speaker. My daughter has big eyes when she goes and watches their games and is quite in awe.

So it's nice when they interact with these young people and let them understand that, you know, at one point in time they were 13 as well, and they had the same reaction when they were watching these games. And here they are, they're now representing the institution of the University of Regina.

So the work that these students and these administrators are doing in terms of reaching into the community and making sure that there is a strong bond between the educational institution, being the University of Regina, and the community and the surrounding community is vital, Mr. Speaker. And Dr. Vianne Timmons and the University of Regina board of governors and the administration have fostered that, Mr. Speaker. And this strategic plan speaks to that, Mr. Speaker. I'm very impressed with the strategic plan, and I'm really impressed with the . . . One can see the fruition of the work that has been done.

And the University of Regina, Mr. Speaker, is very open to change. And whether that change is in curricula or in the way that members of the university community interact with one another and with the communities around the university, Mr. Speaker, the university, I've noticed, is very fluid. They're very

flexible. They're very able to work with the changes that are occurring in the province and the changes that are needed within the institution to be able to accommodate the changes.

And of course I already spoke to the fact that the University of Regina's size is an incredible asset, Mr. Speaker. It's an incredible asset. Despite the fact the University of Regina . . . I mean, though the University of Regina is large enough to offer comprehensive array of programs, it yet remains compact enough to be nimble and responsive to change, Mr. Speaker. And that's very important in a society that's changing very quickly, and that's what we have today, Mr. Speaker. We have, through technology and through communication and through the advances in both, Mr. Speaker, this is a very ever-evolving world. It's changing very rapidly. It's changing very quickly. The employment situation is changing very rapidly and quickly, Mr. Speaker.

And the fact that the University of Regina recognizes that, and is nimble enough to make those changes as quickly and as efficiently and as professionally as they can with the quality that is needed is truly an asset, Mr. Speaker. And one can see how that's coming to the advantage of the university, Mr. Speaker. The enrolment is up, Mr. Speaker, and that speaks highly to the good name that the University of Regina has developed for itself.

There's one more thing I want to point out under the strategic plan, Mr. Speaker. And that is under the category, Our Work. Because as you will recall, the strategic plan is divided up into three, three prongs I guess I would call it. It's Our Work, Our People, and Our Communities.

So when one looks under one of the prongs being Our Work, one of them is, "Make the university a leader in environmental responsibility. Put sustainability at the core of our teaching, research, and campus life." Now, Mr. Speaker, obviously this is something that is of great interest to me because of the critic portfolio that I currently represent.

And, Mr. Speaker, that's exactly what I'm seeing from the University of Regina. Whether it's having erected a windmill on top of one of the buildings so that students can see first-hand the benefits of what that can provide and the research data that is derived from that project, Mr. Speaker, or whether it's developing the other technologies at the University of Regina. Mr. Speaker, whether it's, you know, carbon capture and sequestration, Mr. Speaker, there are so many different technologies and processes, Mr. Speaker, that are being researched with respect to protecting the environment and bettering the environment. Because quite frankly, obviously we know that we are one of the largest emitters of greenhouse gas emissions in the country, Mr. Speaker. We are second only to Alberta.

And this is something that I'm glad to see that the University of Regina is taking on, especially in light of the fact, Mr. Speaker, that we are not seeing any movement from the Sask Party government on this particular file, Mr. Speaker. It's as though they've fallen asleep on the file, Mr. Speaker, or whether there's absolute complacency on this file, Mr. Speaker, or perhaps it's just that they have no belief in greenhouse gas emissions and therefore change in climate, climate change. We

have obviously many, many quotes from members across the way as to their skepticism about climate change, Mr. Speaker, which is quite astonishing, quite astonishing given the research that's available, the data that's available.

And if they're not into research and data, Mr. Speaker, there's some pretty, pretty, you know, simple things that they can do. They can go and see for instance how the ocean, level of the ocean is affecting the rice fields, Mr. Speaker. They can go and see that first-hand. Or if they don't want to travel that far, they can go just next door to Alberta land for instance, Mr. Speaker, and go to the area where the glaciers exist and see how much recession has happened on those glaciers, Mr. Speaker.

Now I have unfortunately not been able to travel to the rice fields to see how the ocean levels have affected the water level in the rice fields. But I have been to the glaciers, Mr. Speaker, and I have seen that recession. And as a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bradshaw):** — Would the member . . . Would the Government House Leader please state his point of order.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While the member opposite may have a speech to deliver about the environment, I'm not sure how that reflects on the University of Regina, Mr. Speaker. I would request that the member be directed to speak to the Bill, not to some other favourite topic she may have.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bradshaw):** — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much. To respond to the point of order, Mr. Speaker, the University of Regina is an institution that has a very broad foundation, including a area of environmental sustainability, Mr. Speaker. And the member is talking about the university and the aspects of the university, including its centre for environmental sustainability, Mr. Speaker. And in talking about environmental sustainability, which is one of the key areas of the university, Mr. Speaker, referring to the university, Mr. Speaker, and its programs is all part of the university's mandate. It's part of the university's programs, Mr. Speaker, and it's about delivering the program of the university.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the legislation is dealing with changes at the university, Mr. Speaker . . .

[Interjections]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bradshaw):** — Order. I have listened to both arguments on each side and I have to . . . And I was listening very carefully to the member from Regina Walsh Acres. She was taking quite a bit of extra latitude, I have to admit, on going on to part on the glacier end. I would ask the member to please, please keep on referring to the actual Bill that she is speaking on, Bill 159, *The University of Regina Amendment Act*. Thank you.

**Ms. Morin:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in reference to Bill No. 159 and looking at the University of Regina strategic plan called *mâdawohkamâtowin: Our Work, Our People, Our Communities*, I'm just going to repeat because I'm afraid that some of the members opposite didn't understand the reference that I was referring to.

So what I was referring to, Mr. Speaker, is the strategic plan of the University of Regina under the Our Work prong, Mr. Speaker. And that was, and I'm going to repeat for unfortunately the people who, the members opposite who didn't hear that part of my speech and just heard about the fact that I was talking about the glaciers receding in Alberta, Mr. Speaker. So the part I was referring to under Our Work is, "Make the university a leader in environmental responsibility. Put sustainability at the core of our teaching, research, and campus life."

Now, Mr. Speaker, we have an institution here, the University of Regina, that takes that to heart, Mr. Speaker. They are not just using wordplay here, Mr. Speaker. They are not just saying that to make themselves sound good, Mr. Speaker. And that, quite frankly, differs dramatically from the Sask Party members opposite. Because we do hear a lot of that from the Sask Party government. We hear the same type of verbiage. We hear the same type of words, but we see no action. There is no action, Mr. Speaker.

So the University of Regina, with respect to Bill 159, is actually putting action to the words. They're actually putting action to the verbiage of doing something about climate change, about doing something about environmental sustainability . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bradshaw):** — What is the Government House Leader's point of order?

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Bill before the House deals with the governance of the University of Regina, Mr. Speaker, not about the programming delivered by the University of Regina. I would ask that you direct the member opposite to speak to this particular piece of legislation, not to some other subject that is not covered under this legislation, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bradshaw):** — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to respond to the point of order. Mr. Speaker, clearly the governance of a university has a great deal to do with its strategic directions, its plans, its programs, Mr. Speaker, about its future and the direction the university goes, Mr. Speaker. If the members opposite don't want to talk about the university, its programs, and its governance, Mr. Speaker, maybe they shouldn't be putting forward legislation dealing with that very issue.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bradshaw):** — I have listened to both sides. And I have to, I have to say that we are to stick to the Bill, to Bill 159. And I would ask the member to please, to please stick to the Bill of 159, *The University of Regina*

*Amendment Act.*

**Ms. Morin:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with respect to Bill No. 159, *An Act to amend The University of Regina Act*, I'd like to talk about how the University of Regina is such an amazing institution and has this amazing strategic plan called *mâmahowkamâtowin: Our Work, Our People, Our Communities*. And through that, Mr. Speaker, and through that, Mr. Speaker, they have done some amazing work around environmental sustainability. One of the prongs under that strategic plan is, "Make the university a leader in environmental responsibility," and "Put sustainability at the core of our teaching, research, and campus life."

Now, Mr. Speaker, we can see from the Bill before us, Bill 159, that the University of Regina is looking to make some further improvements. Now this is exactly what we're looking at as an opposition. We always want to make sure that the amendments that are being made to any particular Bills are doing exactly what is the intention of happening, Mr. Speaker.

[16:15]

Now clearly there was, from the minister's comments, Dr. Vianne Timmons was consulted. And we have a quote from Dr. Vianne Timmons about the fact that she's looking forward to the changes that are happening under this Act. Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to hear that that's the case, and I'm glad to hear that they consulted with Dr. Vianne Timmons. And we're looking forward to seeing some of the other . . . the list of the other consultations that took place as well, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as I said, the University of Regina is taking on the role of leadership when it comes to environmental sustainability. They are taking on the role of leadership with actually putting practice past the words. In other words, they are not just putting empty rhetoric on paper. They're not just spewing empty rhetoric like the Sask Party government does, Mr. Speaker, but they're actually putting things into practice.

Whether it's putting a strategic plan in place to better the University of Regina going forward into the future — because this strategic plan is in place from 2009 to 2014 — or whether it is, for instance, environmental sustainability, Mr. Speaker, we can see how the University of Regina is putting into practice the notion of environmental sustainability. We can see how they're putting into practice the research capabilities that they are pursuing with respect to environmental sustainability, Mr. Speaker.

So I know that this is all a bit of a surprise to the members opposite and perhaps that's why they're not moving on this particular file with respect to climate change and environmental sustainability and moving forward on green technologies and promoting that, and making sure that people in Saskatchewan see the benefit of that, Mr. Speaker. Because it seems to be that my speech today about Bill 159 is a giant surprise to the members opposite. And perhaps that's why they're so vehemently opposing the fact that I'm speaking to this, Mr. Speaker, because they're learning through this speech today something that they're obviously failing to do, Mr. Speaker, and there's obviously some guilt and some regret there, Mr. Speaker.

So when one looks at the changes that are being made under Bill 159, you can see that the University of Regina — being an important partner in this viable community that we have, this vibrant society that we have as a province of Saskatchewan — that they're wanting to build a stronger Saskatchewan through higher education, research, and innovation. That's fantastic.

So, Mr. Speaker, we can see how that's being promoted through the strategic plan and through the changes that we're looking at here in terms of making improvements to the university, Mr. Speaker.

So it's always important to review legislation and make sure that it's updated and appropriate in terms of the changes that one wants to see accommodated. So, Mr. Speaker, apparently these changes are going to allow the university to improve its governance process and to become more efficient.

And clearly, Mr. Speaker, efficiency is something that we all strive, Mr. Speaker. Now even the Sask Party government was striving to achieve efficiency. That's why they had this efficiency secretariat. But unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, what happened to the efficiency secretariat? The efficiency secretariat no longer exists.

[Interjections]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bradshaw):** — A point of order from the Deputy House Leader.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Point of order, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite clearly is not speaking to Bill 159 which has to do with the governance of the University of Regina. And I would ask her to return to that Bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bradshaw):** — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Well clearly the member stated that the governance Bill was about creating efficiency. Then she went on to speak, to talk about the issue of efficiency in government, Mr. Speaker. There is direct relevance, Mr. Speaker, direct relevance, Mr. Speaker. And if the members, if the members opposite so want to participate in the debate, Mr. Speaker, they each will have their opportunity if they want to participate, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bradshaw):** — Okay. I've listened to both sides, and I would ask once again, would the member please stick . . . because mentioning the efficiency secretariat was not, was not really going on to Bill 159, *The University of Regina Amendment Act*.

**Ms. Morin:** — So, Mr. Speaker, you know, it's funny. The only time the Sask Party members . . .

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bradshaw):** — Refer to the motion.

**Ms. Morin:** — Well with reference to Bill No. 159, *An Act to amend the University of Regina Act*, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting that the members opposite, the Sask Party members in this legislature are only upset and only create points of order when they feel that they're threatened by what I'm saying, Mr.

Speaker. So we're talking about creating efficiencies under . . .

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bradshaw):** — Would the member from Regina Walsh Acres please, please go back on to Bill 159, *The University of Regina Amendment Act*.

**Ms. Morin:** — So, Mr. Speaker, as I said, with Bill 159 we're talking about allowing the university to improve its governance processes and become more efficient, which is exactly what I said when I was talking about an example of the efficiency secretariat that the Sask Party government had set up. Now what happened to that efficiency secretariat, Mr. Speaker? It's gone. It doesn't exist.

Well guess what? I think that the University of Regina is going to make sure that the changes that they're looking for under Bill 159 will provide the efficiencies that they're seeking, Mr. Speaker. I'm fairly certain of that. Quite different from the waste of taxpayer money, and not to mention resources and time, setting up an efficiency secretariat that now no longer exists because there are no efficiencies within the Sask Party government, Mr. Speaker.

So the other amendments include repealing the visitor section and enabling the university to adopt new processes for the election of the chancellor and senate representatives. And according to the minister, these amendments were initiated at the request of the University of Regina, and they were met with general support from stakeholders during the consultation process.

So as I said, Mr. Speaker, we're quite confident that these changes should be able to reach the efficiencies and improve the governance processes, Mr. Speaker. Why? Because it looks like there was consultation done on this by the University of Regina, Mr. Speaker, which is quite different from what we get from the Sask Party government any time the Sask Party government wants to bring something forward. It is rare that we see an efficiency process or that we see any due process with respect to consultations, Mr. Speaker. So it's a surprise that we haven't got anybody jumping out of their seats yet on that.

So, Mr. Speaker, the opposition is fully committed to student success and building world-class institutions right here in Saskatchewan, such as the University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan, as well as our other post-secondary institutions that we have in this province, Mr. Speaker. Our pride in educational opportunities for students in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, is very high. It's very high. And we're certainly interested in looking further at the requests that were made by the university.

So if we indeed through our consultative process, because the opposition does engage in a consultative process as well, Mr. Speaker, because we actually believe that that is the best way to achieve the best means of legislation, Mr. Speaker . . . that we will look at this through the consultations and from the stakeholders, and hopefully we'll find out that all of them are concurring with what's being presented.

But as I said, you know, I'm quite frankly skeptical of the government's track record, the Sask Party government's track record on consultations, Mr. Speaker, and quite frankly on

efficiency, Mr. Speaker. So we want to make sure we have time to check with key stakeholders, and including but not limited obviously to the administration, the faculties, the current student bodies, the alumni and others, to ensure that this legislation is going to in fact achieve what it is designed to achieve, what the chancellor, what the president of the University of Regina actually has in mind for the changes to Bill 159, the Act to amend *The University of Regina Act*, Mr. Speaker.

And on that I would like to adjourn debate, given that there are many other colleagues that would like to have some comments on this Bill as well.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bradshaw):** — The member from Regina Walsh Acres has moved adjournment of debate on Bill 159, *The University of Regina Amendment Act*. Is the Assembly ready to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bradshaw):** — Carried.

#### Bill No. 160

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 160 — *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code Amendment Act, 2010*** be now read a second time.]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bradshaw):** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to stand and enter into this debate on Bill No. 160, *An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code and to make consequential amendments to The Labour Standards Act*. We're very proud indeed of *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code* and all that it's meant to the people here in this province. It's one that's provided real leadership in Saskatchewan and in Canada as we value those human rights that mean so much to people, especially those who are vulnerable or marginalized and don't have access to the court system to fight for their rights. And so we're very pleased to be part of this discussion and this dialogue around this Act.

We do have some questions and of course it's been interesting to monitor the debate over the last week or so and I'm sure that it will increase as we move towards the committee stage. But I do want to make some comments and I know others will as well, because as I said we're all very, very proud of the Human Rights Code. It's served us well. But as with anything, you need to be vigilant. You need to be vigilant to make sure it's current and that people are getting access to it and that complaints or concerns are not being bogged down in undue red tape. This is something that we have become very much aware of in Saskatchewan and in Canada of course, that we don't want to have circumstances where people lose their rights because of unforeseen circumstances that could have been dealt with, that could have been dealt with.

But we want to make sure, and we often do this as opposition as we scrutinize the Bills, to make sure there are no unintended

consequences. Because we know in the best-laid plans . . . and we often talk about, the devil's in the detail. And we don't want to have a circumstance where something untoward, something unfortunate happens where somebody is denied their rights because of something that we could have foreseen. And we don't want to be favouring one group of people in society over another because they have more access to the legislature or more access to money that could provide for better lawyers, better lobbying, that type of thing.

So it is incumbent on us, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to take the time today to have a good discussion and over the next weeks ahead — I'm not sure what the plan is here — but to have a good, good discussion about this Bill.

Now I just want to review the government news release that came out November 29th, 2010, and I do want to quote it. And it talked about, and I quote, "Justice Minister Don Morgan today introduced amendments to *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code* that will make the complaint process more timely and flexible to meet the needs of Saskatchewan people."

So I'm totally onside with the timely . . . I think the timely part is very, very important. We all . . . [inaudible] . . . want to see things be taken care of in a timely manner. Nobody wants to see delay, delay, delay. That is something that quite often, when you have complaints brought to Human Rights Commission, that delays can be painful. They can be . . . People can lose sight of the original intention or what happened in the infraction and things can grow and fester. We don't want to see that. We want to see concerns being timely.

I have a concern about flexible because . . . And we'll talk more about this. It'll be a reoccurring theme in my comments. Because while we want to be flexible . . . And I think that in many ways if people can agree to be flexible and move concerns forward, complaints forward to timely resolution, then what could be wrong with that? What could be wrong with that? Well, but we want to make sure people are making a full and well-considered decision when they take these things forward. And so when I have a concern about flexibility because we also . . . One of the great things about the Human Rights Code is the fact that it's firm. We know what you can do and what you can't do. It's very, very well spelled out.

[16:30]

And we know that discrimination complaints may be based on race, colour, age, sex, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, religion, marital status, family status, place of origin, or ancestry. And we know the Human Rights Code covers discrimination in a variety of context including tenancy, employment, employment advertisements, publications, public services and facilities, purchase of property, and discrimination by unions and associations. So they're very firm about what they can do.

We know for example in workplace harassment, psychological harassment need not fall in that. So we've had to create legislation around workplace bullying because that doesn't necessarily fall into that. There may be some grey areas. But we don't want to see the Human Rights Code . . . And of course the word code itself means a very firm and very strict delineation of

what can and cannot happen. If we start to push into some grey, some of the grey areas — and we'll talk a little bit more about that — I have concerns about how flexible is good.

Obviously if we want to move things along in a forward manner and people are onside, then we're all for that. But if there is any sense of we're weakening the Code at all, I have some grave concerns about that. The Code itself cannot be weakened and the intentions of the Code cannot be weakened. And that is maybe one of the areas where we might see unintentional consequences. Nobody intended that, because I know we're all onside in making sure the Code remains as strong as it can be. But in flexibility comes that danger, comes that danger, so we need to be vigilant about that.

We want to make sure that . . . And the minister does go on and talks further about, and I quote, "One of our goals is to address inefficiency, complexity, and excessive delay in the complaints resolution, and modernizing the system will address these issues."

And actually it's Chief Commissioner Judge David Arnot who said that. I should correct myself, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but it was the Chief Commissioner who said that, not the minister.

So he talks about inefficiency, complexity, and excessive delay. You know some of these concerns when you bring forward legislation that deals with some of those types of issues about inefficiency or delay, sometimes it's just a resourcing issue. And no matter what you do, you can change the legislation. But if you're not resourcing the organization as well as it needs to be, you're not going to fix it by changing the legislation. Under-resourced organizations are simply under-resourced and so they need to be fully resourced. And I know there's a challenge when it comes to setting budgets, but clearly this is one that this government needs to pay attention to.

And so we'll be looking to make sure that it's fully resourced and there's not issues around the fact that, you know what, it could be doing a better job in terms of bringing these complaints forward if they were fully resourced. That has got to be met. And by changing the legislation just compounds the issue already and doesn't make it better; it compounds it because you're creating a new circumstance that may be confusing to people. Right now we know what the process is and we have some . . . and people know what to do. But if we change it and under-resource it, then we still have problems.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what I want to do is take a look at some of the comments that the minister made and I do want to, right off the bat, say that it was interesting. And I know my colleagues commented on the fact that he gave more detail in this thing and I do appreciate that. Sometimes ministers' speeches on second reading can be short and then creates more questions. And this minister here has, actually he gave us more details and that was helpful. It was helpful because clearly we all see the priority of what this Bill means to the people of Saskatchewan.

He goes on and he talks about how, and I quote — and this would be the quote in *Hansard*, page 6291 — I quote:

However the tribunal has not been seen by some as an

independent or arm's length from the commission. This may be because tribunal members do not have security of tenure, financial security, or administrative independence. Also there's been some confusion that the tribunal and the commission are the same body.

I think that's a very helpful statement because I do think that we do have to make sure that they are seen as independent; they're not seen as the same. And so will this new process that the minister is envisioning, will they be seen as the same body or as separate? How do we get around some of these issues? And of course if we're moving into the court system, they will be seen as somewhat different.

But it will be interesting to see how the appointments are made. How we make sure that there's no confusion about the fairness, the appropriateness, and as we get into some of the further remarks down the road here, we'll see that there may be actually some confusion because the Chief Commissioner's powers are enhanced and the relationship between the new process, the process of involving the courts could be compromised. And so we want to talk a little bit about that.

And so I do also want to drop a comment about the minister's comment, again on page 6291. And he talks about the Court of Queen's Bench and that they will in fact be . . . that in fact the intention of this is to amend the Code to transfer the powers and duties of the tribunal over to the Court of Queen's Bench and eliminate the tribunal. And he talks about the capacity, and I quote:

The Court of Queen's Bench has the capacity to handle the additional workload. If the last two years are any indication, there will be fewer than 10 human rights hearings a year. For example between April 2008 and March 2009, the tribunal conducted 11 inquiries. There was a substantial decrease the following year. Between April 2009 and March 2010, the Chief Commissioner forwarded just five complaints to the tribunal for inquiry. To date, since April 2010, just three complaints have been referred to the tribunal by the commission.

So as I said, there's a little bit of dissonance here. We have the Chief Commissioner talking about the excessive delay and the complaints resolution, but yet he's talking about that they've not had that many. So why is it you cannot have that many and why are there delays? Where is the bottleneck? And that's what I'm curious about. Why is there a bottleneck if the tribunals are not hearing that many complaints, if there's not that many human rights hearings? And this is what the minister's talking about, where is the bottleneck? If it's not going to be a big deal for the Court of Queen's Bench to take this on, then I'm not understanding the need here. I'm not understanding fully the need.

I do appreciate the minister's earlier comments about having that arm's-length, that independence be seen, but is there a better way of doing that? You know we are arguing and . . . Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know that there's other legislation before this House talking about justices of the peace and the small claims court and how it's busy. There seems to be different messages happening here. And so we need to get a better understanding, a more fuller grasp of this because transferring one thing to a

court and then transferring something out of the court system — and I know they may be in different levels and all of that — but I see that there's quite a reorganization of the judicial system here, and I'm wondering will people fully understand that. And so, if there's not that much of a workload, is there a better way to resource this?

But I think that there is some fundamental shifts that I think the government's trying to achieve. And I think that's important, in terms of being seen to be more effective and trying some different methods to make it more effective so people have a sense that the work is being done. So I do have to ask, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is there an anticipation that there will be more? Or has there been a feeling that many people have turned away from the Human Rights Commission because they felt they just weren't getting satisfaction, they couldn't get satisfaction because of some bottleneck that was happening? I'm not sure.

I do want to go on and talk about some of the comments. And this is the next page, 6292. And I quote the minister, and he goes on, and I quote:

The new section 48 will have the effect of freeing up resources currently used by the commission to process exemption [clause] applications to focus elsewhere to promote the objectives of the Code towards not requiring these measures in the future. It will also address many of the concerns . . . with respect to processing exemption applications.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is where I get back to my earlier comment about flexibility and making sure that the Code is firm on what it means to do, and it does what it says it's going to do and does what it says and says what it's going to do. Otherwise we get into some confusing things here. So if we're looking for more exemptions, that's a problem. That's a problem. So we have a situation where there seems to be fewer hearings. Are there going to be an increase of exemptions? I'm not sure. We need to have more detail around that, and I do have some concern about that.

Another area, and I know my colleague from Regina Lakeview, I'm going to review his comments because I always find his comments very insightful in terms of dealing with justice issues before us because he's very thoughtful. And he's had a lot of experience, has a lot of experience particularly with the Human Rights Code and very familiar with the office of the Chief Commissioner and its powers. And I quote:

The Bill will expand the Chief Commissioner's powers of dismissal. Currently the Chief Commissioner may dismiss a complaint where he or she is of the opinion that the best interests of the complainant will not be served by continuing, that the complaint is without merit or raises no significant issue of discrimination, that the substance of the complaint has been dealt with through another proceeding, that the complaint has been made in bad faith or that there is no reasonable likelihood that an investigation will reveal evidence of contravention.

So we see this expansion of powers of dismissal. We see some pretty fundamental changes of some of the rules. What can a complainant do here? We have that question, Mr. Deputy



Speaker. What is the appeal process here? Because if we're going to go to more of a mediation-style process, an alternate resolution process, there's more opportunity for exemptions.

What will be the appeal process for somebody to say, I disagree with the Commissioner; I have to find some other alternate route. And will that alternate route include such things as say, the media, going before the media? We've seen that many times, as that's a way to establish fact. And we would have, we would have some real concerns about that.

So, I have some real concerns about the powers of dismissal being expanded and what that will mean. I think that's a real concern. But my colleague from Regina Lakeview I think made some very solid points, some very solid points about his views on this. And I know that he will have probably much more to say in committee.

But he did talk about for example the limitation period in the Code being changed from two years to one year. And I understand that sometimes that can be seen as a hindrance, a way that people often feel is a problem if a few things go on too long. But I have some concerns about what that may mean because two years is not, not all that long. And one year can go by pretty darn quickly, and especially I know that if you have a circumstance where you may not have known that there was a process for you to avail yourself with, and you just didn't realize what had happened. And through conversation with friends that somebody says, you know you really should take that to the Human Rights Commission. Take it and do some follow-up with it. And all of a sudden you find yourself, you're six months, nine months into this. And you know, there may be personal circumstances that eat up six months of your life — you know, a serious illness, looking for work, that type of thing — and you just don't have the time to do the things that are necessary to launch a complaint.

[16:45]

And I know that there is a provision that allows the Chief Commissioner to extend the limitation period given the circumstances. But again we've just talked about the powers of the Commissioner. And is there an appeal process? I'm not sure. We need to be fully aware of what that process is if there are problems. Because if the Commissioner doesn't believe there's a good reason for the delay, then you're kind of up against the wall. And I know that it's our job to be thinking of these circumstances, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So it's very important that we be fully, fully aware of some of the unintended consequences. And so that one year, when you're doing such, I think, a pretty fundamental shift here, moving from a tribunal over to the Queen's Bench, that maybe this is something we should not . . . I'd like to see a transitional period with this because the one year could catch people off guard. I'm not sure. And I'm not sure . . . I know that they talk about where other provinces such as BC or Manitoba have the one year, well in fact they have a six-month limitation period. Alberta and some of the others — Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia — have a one-year period. And so I think that's something we need to be thinking about.

So we know that the Chief Commissioner, Judge Arnot, has

spoken about this and really believes there are some very positive things about it, and I would have to agree. He's talking about his desire for, and I quote, "A decision-making process which is informal and accessible to all, provides for review of decisions, and is handled by experts who reflect our diverse society."

And I think we would all agree with that because our society is becoming more diverse. And as we bring that knowledge and that experience to the table, we should value that. And it should be informal. We don't want to see things become so formal that people are intimidated by the process, especially newcomers and people who are not familiar with a European court system. This is an important process that people should feel comfortable and feel at ease to talk fully about some of the issues that they want to bring forward.

So now I know that my colleague from Regina Lakeview had some concerns, and he talked about, what are the motivations behind this? What are the motives? Because we always think about, why is it that the government brings forward legislation? Because when you do, there is a time where things are very fragile, very vulnerable for misinterpretation and, as I say, the unintended consequences.

So what are the motives? Who asked for this to come forward? And I understand that the commissioner talked about the excessive delays. And that is something that we totally, we totally agree with. We cannot see situations where it takes two to three years to bring a complaint to a hearing process. That's unacceptable. And the timeliness of this issue, of that, is critical that we do something about that.

But I do have to ask about the motives. And I know, for example . . . And this is going to create a lot of interest, and that's a good thing. That's a very good thing. We know that, for example, in *The StarPhoenix* last Friday, page A13 in the "Forum" section, a Ken Norman, a well-known lawyer in Saskatchewan — and I believe he teaches at the U of S [University of Saskatchewan]; in fact yet, "Following is the viewpoint of the writer, a law professor at the University of Saskatchewan" — he has a lot of questions about this.

And I won't necessarily go into all of this. But I know, when he talks about why, what is the motivation behind this, and he writes, and I quote:

So why the different and distant drummer for human rights complaints?

A report entitled *Workplace Dispute Resolution Project*, published Nov. 2 by the British Columbia Law Institute, notes — in response to the notion that the B.C. human rights tribunal ought to be scrapped in favour of an omnibus workplace tribunal — that such a drastic step ought to be undertaken only after the publication of a study paper and a full consultation process.

By the way, none of the last five full external reviews of human rights processes in Canada have seen any merit in abandoning (the) human rights tribunal systems in favour of high courts.

And I end the quote there.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, here's a law professor very familiar with the Human Rights Commission and the process of tribunals and the high court system saying . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Commissioner. Former commissioner.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Former commissioner. There you go, former commissioner. So he's very familiar with this. Very familiar with this. And asking some questions about, is this the right thing to be doing? And what is the motive? And he just has some questions I think deserve to be answered. And so I think that it's only fitting that we continue that discussion. And we know that's an important area for us to take a look at.

And we know . . . And I have to thank the people and I know people before us have talked about . . . In fact, we've had issues before the Human Rights Commissioner and we only have to think about the civil marriages and the obligation to uphold the law and perform their duty to provide civil marriages to all Saskatchewan citizens. We know that was a controversial issue that was before the Human Rights Commission.

How would an issue like that be dealt with in this scenario here? I think this will be something that, of course, somebody may say, well we have to have faith in the commissioner. And we do have an awful lot of respect. I absolutely have to say that Chief Judge David Arnot has served admirably.

But this is not about him personally. This is about his office. It's about the process. And will there be a way of dealing with this? And of course . . . Now it was ironic, as my colleague pointed out, that this government did refer it to the courts and because it didn't like the tribunal's ruling that it received. So here you go.

My colleague talks about the number of red flags that this legislation rises, sends up. And I think that's a fair way of putting it because we have to think about some of the other issues and we have to address those issues. And he talks about the limitations period.

He talks about the lawyers. What's the process of getting a lawyer? If a complainant has to find his own lawyer, will they have to pay for their lawyer? Now they have said that this will be a free process. It's very critical that this process is free. And that is a good thing because nobody should be having to pay for their access to their Human Rights Commission and the code because that's not been the case in the past. But the complication becomes now that if they want to appeal, there is no appeal process that's apparent. But I understand that right now the existing law allows people to appeal the decision by the Human Rights Commission.

So what is the appeal process? And I've referred to that and I will refer to it a few times because I think this is important. What is the appeal process if someone is not agreeing with the Human Rights Commission if they feel that their complaint has no merit? And then are people forced then to go out and hire their own lawyer, and what do we do in that kind of circumstance?

And so there is a contradiction here that I think that we need to make sure is addressed fully. Now my colleague goes on and he talks about mediation. And of course I tend to think that in most scenarios the best way to resolve disputes and complaints is through mediation if possible. But then I do have — and I think this is another red flag, and I've talked about this earlier — that we cannot in any way allow the code to become diminished because we're leaning more towards mediation and subtle interpretations of the code. We don't want to go down that road in the quest for speedy resolutions. We want to make sure the integrity of the code is kept and valued.

And so in the quest of resolutions, that can be an issue. And I know my colleague did talk about how sometimes when you have dispute resolutions mediation, they can be also blunt instruments. They're not the silver bullet or the magic bullet people often think they are. Sometimes tough decisions have to be made.

And so I think that it's important that we really consider what's before us. This is an important Bill and one that we will live with the consequences for many years if not decades, because this is, as I said, a sea change, and it's one that will take us down a road that's hard to come back out of. Because of course if you decide after three or four or five years it's simply not working, then some people have paid a price and those people in the circumstance who would often be those who are marginalized, those who cannot afford their own representation and so in the quest for efficiency, the quest for speedy resolution, that we need to make sure that we do, we absolutely do the right thing.

We cannot get hung up on the past. We cannot get hung up on saying, what we always did in the past was the right thing. I'm not saying that at all, Mr. Deputy Speaker. If there's a better way, if there's an innovative way, then let's take a look at it but, you know, when I read Professor Norman's comments about the last five external reviews not calling for a change, and thinking about where is the motivation, we have some concerns. And so, you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with that then I would like to move adjournment of the debate on Bill No. 160. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Saskatoon Centre has moved to adjourn debate on Bill 160, *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code Amendment Act, 2010*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Mr. Speaker, to facilitate the work of committees, I move that this House do now adjourn.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Government Deputy House Leader has moved a motion that this House stands adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried. This House now stands

adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow afternoon.

[The Assembly adjourned at 16:57.]

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