



FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

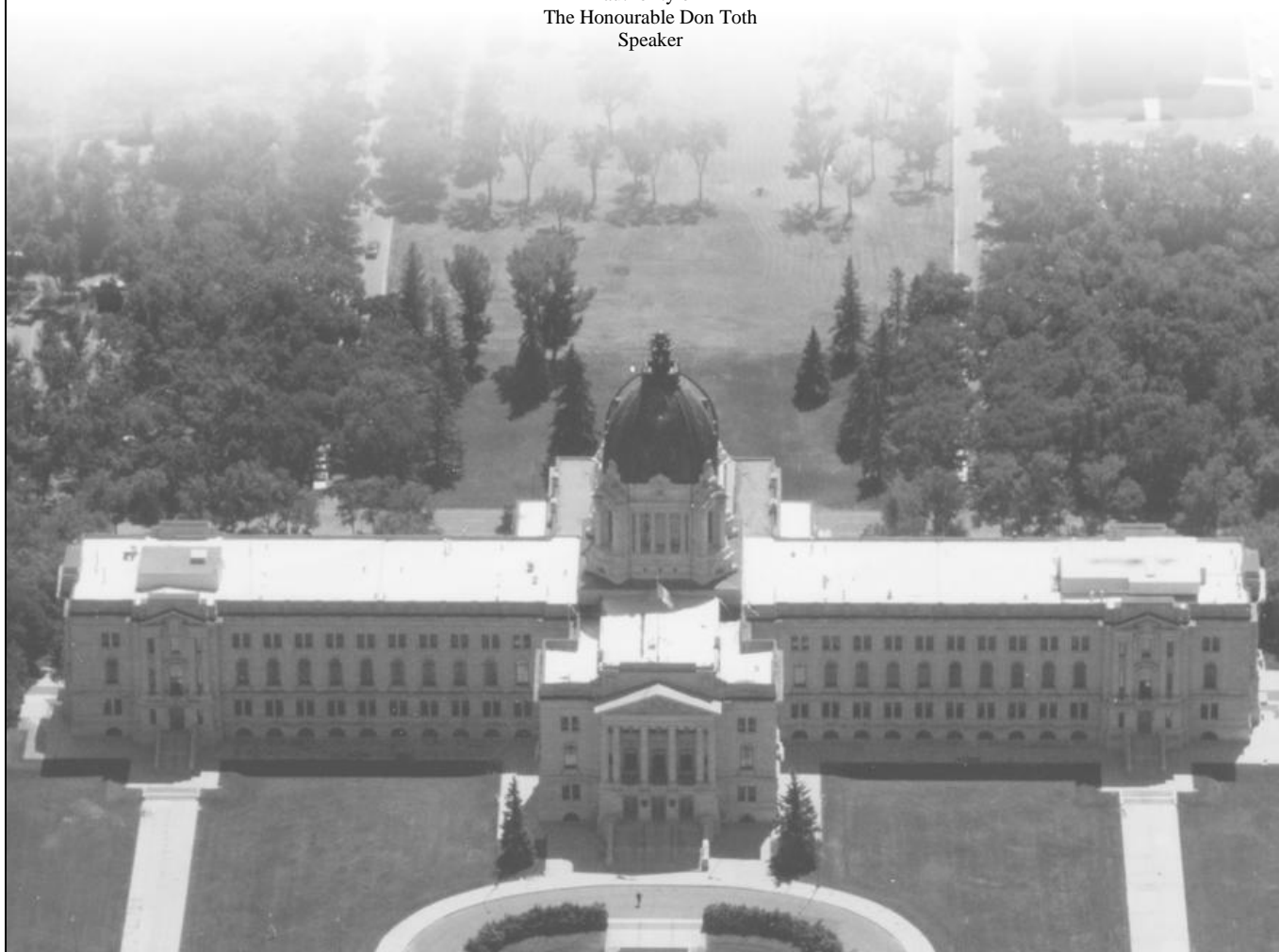
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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)

Published under the  
authority of  
The Honourable Don Toth  
Speaker



# MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
Allchurch, Denis	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Atkinson, Pat	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Belanger, Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Hon. Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Boyd, Hon. Bill	SP	Kindersley
Bradshaw, Fred	SP	Carrot River Valley
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Broten, 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
Gantefoer, 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
Ottenbreit, 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.]

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

**Hon. Mr. Bjornerud:** — Mr. Speaker, with leave to do an extended invitation.

**The Speaker:** — The Minister of Agriculture has asked for leave to do an extended invitation. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture. Leave's been granted.

**Hon. Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to introduce to you and through you to the Assembly, 12 of Saskatchewan's nearly 220 volunteer crop reporters. These 12 crop reporters are recognized today by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture for their commitment and service to our agriculture industry.

For 25, 30, and 35 years, these crop reporters have volunteered their personal time during the crop season. Every week for at least 30 weeks out of each of those years, these reporters have provided information about crop and forage development in their areas to the ministry to meet the weekly crop reporting deadlines. Mr. Speaker, this helps us provide a timely and accurate crop report to farmers, ranchers, and the general public.

Mr. Speaker, we recognize these individuals for their dedication to the crop reporting service. I would ask the crop reporters and their spouses to stand as I announce their names. Twenty-five year recipients are Ed Bolton, RM [rural municipality] of The Gap No. 39 and his wife, Linda; Ken Aldous, RM of Willowdale No. 153 and his wife, Lee; Einar and Barbara Thompson, both crop reporters in the RM of McKillop No. 220; Leslie Sarauer of the RM of St. Peter No. 369 and his wife, Deborah; Rosaire Ouellette, RM of Spiritwood No. 496 and his wife, Helen; David Bettschen of the RM of Elcapo No. 154 and his wife, Linda; Lyle Ehrman of the RM of Happyland No. 231 and his wife, Linda; Don Payak of the RM of Weyburn No. 67 and his wife, Charlotte; and Ron Daviduk of the RM of Excel No. 71 and his wife, Nancy.

Thirty-five-year recipients are Ron Oliver of the RM of Britannia No. 502 and his wife, Wanda; Mike Shawaga of the RM of Fish Creek No. 402 and his wife, Celphie.

There are some crop reporters and spouses who were not able to attend today, Mr. Speaker, and they are 25-year award recipients Ken Johnson of the RM of Prairiedale No. 321 and his wife, Lorrene; and three recipients of 35-year awards. And they are: Thessa Whitfield and her son Darwin Whitfield, both of the RM of Oakdale No. 320; and William Bindig of the RM

of Sasman No. 336 and his wife, Luba.

And I ask, Mr. Speaker, all members to join with me recognizing these crop reporters who have volunteered their time and effort to our agriculture industry and thank them.

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

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege and pleasure to join with the Minister of Agriculture who has arranged to have the crop reporters here today. I did spend a minute with them in the hall earlier. And I just want to welcome them here today but most of all to thank you for all of the work that you have done and will be doing in reporting on the crops in the province because it's very important work and used by many, many farmers and many institutions across the province. So thank you very much for your effort and also to that of your family.

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

**Mr. Stewart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, seated in your gallery, I wish to introduce through you to all members of this honourable Assembly Mr. Matt Morrison who is the chief executive officer of PNWER, Pacific NorthWest Economic Region. PNWER, which is a public-private partnership established in 1991 by statute, operates in the states of Alaska, Washington, Idaho, Montana, and Oregon, the Western Canadian provinces and territories of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, the Yukon, and Northwest Territories.

Matt's duties include coordinating all projects of PNWER, which include PNWER's Center for Regional Disaster Resilience and the Legislative Energy Horizon Institute. As director of PNWER, he also communicates with the state and provincial legislatures of the member states and provinces.

Matt lives in Seattle, where he and his wife Beth have four children. I ask all members to extend a warm welcome to Matt.

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

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just noticed that behind the bar on this side of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, a former member I think known to many members of the House. Mr. Rick Swenson, the current leader of the Conservative Party of Saskatchewan, has joined us this afternoon. So I'd like to introduce him to all members and welcome him to his Assembly.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I noticed up in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, a great friend to education in this province, specifically adult basic education: Mr. Jack Mitchell, who hails from Lumsden. Thank you so much. Please join with me in welcoming Mr. Mitchell to his Assembly.

## PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The undersigned residents of the province wish to bring to the attention of the Assembly that the Saskatchewan Seniors Association has approximately 180 seniors centres throughout the province, the vast majority of them located in rural Saskatchewan. 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 of the seniors who use them, and due to the skyrocketing costs of utilities, insurance, taxes, garbage disposal, and exterior maintenance, approximately one-quarter of these are in danger of closing. The closure of these centres will lead to the deteriorating mental and physical health of many seniors which will lead to additional stress on long-term care facilities and hospitals.

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that 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 these petitions are signed by over 40 people from St. Walburg, Paradise Hill, Spruce Lake, and Frenchman Butte. I so present.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling for greater protection for tenants to protect them from unreasonable rent increases. And we know that too many Saskatchewan tenants are facing a dangerous combination of surging rents, and combined with low vacancy rates, provide for unaffordable living conditions in Saskatchewan. And we know that the majority of Canadians now live in provinces with rent control guidelines, including Manitoba, British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec, and Prince Edward Island.

I would like to read the prayer:

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

I do so present. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand today to present a petition on behalf of my constituents who live in the community of Hampton Village, and it's regarding the need for a new school in Hampton Village:

We, the undersigned residents of the province of

Saskatchewan, wish to bring to your attention the following: that Hampton Village is a rapidly growing community in Saskatoon with many young families; that Hampton Village residents pay a significant amount of taxes, including education property taxes; that children in Hampton Village deserve to be able to attend school in their own community instead of travelling to neighbouring communities to attend schools that are typically already reaching capacity.

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan cause the provincial government to devote the necessary resources for the construction of an elementary school in Hampton Village so that children in this rapidly growing neighbourhood in Saskatoon can attend school in their own community.

Mr. Speaker, the individuals who signed this petition are residents of Hampton Village. I so present.

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

**Mr. Quennell:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition signed by citizens of Saskatchewan concerned about Bill 160 and the significant detrimental effects it may have on human rights law in the province. And I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan withdraw Bill 160 from consideration by the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan and hold extensive public consultations informed by a public policy paper before any amendments to the Human Rights Code, the law that supersedes all others in our province, are even considered.

And the petition today, Mr. Speaker, is signed by residents of Canora, Saskatchewan.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present petitions today on behalf of concerned residents from across Saskatchewan as it relates to the mismanagement of our finances by the Sask Party. They allude specifically to the two years of deficit budgets, the two years of debt growth, and all despite the fact that we have all-time highs in revenues, Mr. Speaker. And of course this comes at a consequence to Saskatchewan people, this year growing our debt load by \$400 million, Mr. Speaker. And the prayer reads as follows:

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

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

These petitions today are signed by concerned citizens of Regina. I so submit.

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

#### Pharmacist Awareness Week

**Mr. Wyant:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are fortunate in Saskatchewan to have committed pharmacists who are dedicated to the people of this province. I am particularly proud to be standing today, given that my wife is the current president of the Pharmacists' Association of Saskatchewan.

Pharmacists are important members of the health care team and health professionals most knowledgeable about drugs and their effects. For this reason, Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize March 6 to 12 as Pharmacist Awareness Week. Saskatchewan pharmacists use this time to educate patients about the key roles pharmacists play in health care. This week also allows us to formally recognize the tremendous contributions that pharmacists make to the health of Saskatchewan residents.

Mr. Speaker, last week the provincial government announced expanded prescribing authority for pharmacists. Effective this past Friday, March the 4th, this move allows Saskatchewan residents more efficient access to health care services and to their prescription medications. Amendments to the Saskatchewan College of Pharmacists bylaw now recognize the ability of pharmacists to improve health care delivery in this province, working in collaboration with doctors and other health care professionals.

Mr. Speaker, pharmacists are valued health care professionals in Saskatchewan, and we support them working to their full scope of practice. I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking our pharmacists for their ongoing commitment to high-quality health care and in wishing them the very best this week. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Junor:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with my colleague from Saskatoon Northwest in recognizing Pharmacist Awareness Week this week and ask people, people across the province, we are encouraging them to visit their local pharmacy and talk to their pharmacist.

Mr. Speaker, pharmacists are clearly an integral part of our health system. Our pharmacists and their association symbolize professionalism, accountability, and stewardship while advocating for and advancing their profession. Mr. Speaker, pharmacists have a unique knowledge about drugs and their use that can enhance the care of patients on an everyday basis. In addition many pharmacists from across the province volunteer on committees to assist with the activities of the Pharmacists' Association of Saskatchewan, including development of pharmacists' service programming and remuneration.

Pharmacists are available to help you manage your health and can do much more than simply fill your prescription. They are a very valuable component of our health system and can provide assistance from helping you manage your chronic illness like diabetes to giving advice on changing your lifestyle to prevent general illness. They are able to provide advice and counselling on adopting and maintaining a healthy lifestyle as well as give advice on safely taking multiple prescriptions. Many pharmacies have clinics to help people with chronic illnesses.

Mr. Speaker, we must continue to advocate for the full utilization of these professional men and women within our health system, and I ask all members to join me in honouring these health professionals this week.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Batoche.

#### Supported Employment Month

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to inform members regarding the proclamation of March as Supported Employment Month in Saskatchewan. The proclamation reflects our government's commitment to full citizenship for all Saskatchewan people. We continue to work with the community to address barriers to education and employment for our people, including providing disability-related support and service that help citizens to prepare for, obtain, and maintain employment.

[13:45]

As demand for workers continues to grow in Saskatchewan, utilizing and appreciating the knowledge and skills of people with disabilities is vitally important to our workforce. Activities during Supported Employment Month include luncheons hosted by local community-based organizations, a conference in Regina including awards to honour businesses for their leadership and commitment to hiring people with disabilities.

Mr. Speaker, over the past two years we've seen a change in how people within and beyond our borders view Saskatchewan. Truly Saskatchewan is a place of opportunity and more people than ever are seeking at finding it right here. We proudly proclaim Supported Employment Month and continue our work to open the doors of opportunity to people with disabilities in Saskatchewan. Thank you.

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

#### Saskatoon Café Recognized

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. *The StarPhoenix* recently in its "52 reasons to love Saskatoon" series gave the nod to the Park Café, owned and operated by Patrick Hearn and Kent Rumpel. It notes its neon sign has become a beacon on 20th Street West, home for Friday lunches and a hangover cure for the 20-something crowd. Now the Park Café opened in 2005 and is arguably one of two or three hip breakfast joints in the city offering the type of experience second nature to brunch crowds in Toronto or Vancouver.

Mr. Speaker, I agree with the paper when it says that:

... what makes it one of the city's most special locales is its diverse clientele that extends far past the hipster crowd and its location on the same street as soup kitchens and pawn shops, a neighbourhood that spent the last few years easing itself into a new paradigm, with boosters claiming, "it's good in the hood . . ."

But the decision to open on 20th came long ago before the neighbourhood began to change, as both Patrick and Kent have lived in Riversdale for the past 15 years. Kent says, if you put out good food, people will come back. And, Mr. Speaker, I agree. Even though some prefer the Sunday eggs Benedict special, my favourite continues to be the egg and pickerel. I ask all members to join me in congratulating the staff at the Park Café and Kent and Patrick for this special recognition and for believing in 20th. And I invite you all to stop by for coffee and pie. Thank you very much.

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

#### **2011 Farm Family of the Year Award**

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last Thursday I had the privilege to attend the farm appreciation celebration at the Days Inn Plaza in Estevan, which was filled to capacity. I was honoured to present the Gilbert Wallewein family with the 2011 Farm Family of the Year Award.

Gilbert began his farming career in 1966. Prior to this, he worked with the PFRA [Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration] and Husky Oil. Gilbert's first farm, which he still farms today, consisted of four quarters of land which he operated as a mixed farm. He continues, along with his sons Kevin and Ken, to farm this along with a sizeable increase in crop land which now totals 30 quarters in size. Gilbert and Helen raised their family on the Viewfield Farm. In addition to their two sons that continue to farm, the couple raised four girls, all of whom went on to post-secondary education.

Gilbert has always been very active in his community and has served as a councillor for the RM of Benson No. 35 for 34 years. As a senior councillor, Gilbert is well-respected by staff, council and ratepayers. He is a true leader of this municipality and community.

Gilbert is a true farmer in every aspect, and to him farming has never been an occupation but a way of life. Together, Helen and Gilbert have instilled the farming values of hard work and dedication to all of their children. These are the values that have made their operation so successful. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the government, I want to congratulate Gilbert and his family and wish them 40 more years of success. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from The Battlefords.

#### **Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford**

**Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Saskatchewan Hospital at North Battleford, a 100-year-old facility that has served the mental health community since its inception in Saskatchewan, is strategically located on the banks of the beautiful North Saskatchewan River on some of the most pleasant and peaceful real estate in all of Saskatchewan. There

couldn't be a better location for a health facility designed for vulnerable people whose mental health requires them to attend or reside in an institutional setting.

It's time, Mr. Speaker, for the provincial government to do the right thing, to act on plans that are in place to support the mental health community, and to respect the residential and treatment needs of some of our most fragile and vulnerable citizens.

It's not helpful, Mr. Speaker, yesterday when responding to questions about the future of the facility, that the Minister of Health refers to The Battlefords location as being in, and I quote, "the back bushes of the province," indicating his clear bias against the delivery of services in rural Saskatchewan. The country people, Mr. Speaker, the rural people of Saskatchewan — people who love the grasslands, the forest fringe, and the bush country of this great province — take offence to the minister's declared bias. And we call upon the Minister of Health to apologize and immediately announce the necessary funding so that the Saskatchewan hospital at North Battleford can proceed.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Humboldt.

#### **Resource Taxation**

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is moving forward, but the NDP's [New Democratic Party] job-killing resource tax would drag us back. It would kill billions of dollars in new investment and thousands of new jobs. There is a growing chorus of opposition to the NDP's job-killing resource tax. We have already received two letters from mayors in the mining community in my constituency.

The mayor of Humboldt says this, and I quote:

We are very concerned about recent discussions regarding changes to the royalty agreements that are in place. The uncertainty these discussions create will have an adverse affect on the investment climate and consequently affect our ability to take advantage of the opportunities that the current growth of the potash industry is presenting to us.

The mayor of Colonsay says, and I quote:

Our community is seeing growth largely due to the potash industry, and we don't want to lose residents and future prosperity because of issues between the potash companies and the provincial government. We want Saskatchewan to remain the place to be for all and don't think raising royalties is a way to encourage this.

There you have it, Mr. Speaker. The communities where the miners work and live are saying no to the NDP's job-killing resource tax. Saskatchewan is moving forward and they do not want the NDP to drag us back. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### **QUESTION PERIOD**

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from The Battlefords.

### Mental Health Facilities

**Mr. Taylor:** — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Minister of Health opened a window into what his mind really thinks about health care delivery in rural Saskatchewan. Yesterday the minister criticized the idea of building a new mental health facility in The Battlefords because, in his words, it's in the back bushes of Saskatchewan. It was a pretty clear statement, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Health harbours some very negative thoughts about health care in rural Saskatchewan.

An apology is clearly not enough, but will he today acknowledge this bias that he has and apologize to the country people, the rural people of Saskatchewan, who love this province as grassland and bush country like nowhere else in the world?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, obviously that member took the statement completely out of context. I was referring, I was referring to their own member in an introduction where he was saying that mental health should no longer be hidden. And I couldn't agree more, Mr. Speaker. That's why I talked about the Les Dubé Centre, Irene and Les Dubé Centre, and how important that is.

But I will take no advice again from that member opposite, after being the minister of Health and doing nothing for his own constituency and that mental health facility in North Battleford, Mr. Speaker. He should have got it done and he didn't get it done.

Mr. Speaker, what they did . . .

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. Order.

**An Hon. Member:** — Come on, Don, tell the truth.

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. Minister may wind up his comments.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Member from Lakeview says, Minister, tell the truth. I will tell the truth, Mr. Speaker.

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Order. I recognize the minister.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, after 16 years of NDP government closing 52 hospitals in this province including the Plains Hospital, Mr. Speaker, it'll be a long day before they ever get back into power in Saskatchewan and especially in rural Saskatchewan.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from The Battlefords.

**Mr. Taylor:** — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. The member, the minister opposite seems to forget what he said yesterday, so let me quote it back to him, Mr. Speaker. It's very clear: "For once, instead of a facility being built in the back bushes for

mental health . . ."

And since the only stand-alone mental health facilities ever built in Saskatchewan, outside of Saskatoon, were in North Battleford and Weyburn, I wonder what else the minister might have meant by his choice of words to describe his government's lack of attention to the North Battleford project. If the minister thinks that two of Saskatchewan's most wonderful cities — North Battleford and Weyburn — are back bushes in Saskatchewan, what does he think about the rest of rural Saskatchewan?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, for far too long in this province, mental health had a stigma to it — stigma, Mr. Speaker, to it. It was hidden. People with mental illness were never part of society. They were hidden off, Mr. Speaker, in institutions. Over the last number of years and decades, the attitudes towards people suffering with mental illness has changed, Mr. Speaker. Absolutely it's changed and for the best.

Mr. Speaker, that's why I referred to the Irene and Les Dubé Centre that is in the centre of Saskatoon — beautiful property, Mr. Speaker, with a very good view, Mr. Speaker. That's what needs to happen with mental health, Mr. Speaker. It needs to be in the forefront. It needs to no longer be hidden, Mr. Speaker. That's what this government is doing.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from The Battlefords.

**Mr. Taylor:** — Mr. Speaker, the minister is just adding to the evidence that he wants to build a facility in Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker, and the other evidence is pretty clear as well.

If the minister does not have a bias against rural Saskatchewan, why can't Big River and Spiritwood find a doctor? Why can't Wawota keep their long-term care beds open? Why can't Hafford open their long-term care beds? And why have 13 rural communities continually had their long-term care beds projects put on hold? Why can't the minister tell rural municipalities he will fund 100 per cent of their care facilities when he has no trouble providing 100 per cent funding guarantee for a Saskatoon project?

If he truly doesn't believe these people live in the back bushes of Saskatchewan, then why did he let that pop out of his mouth, Mr. Speaker? And why aren't these communities being responded to?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, there are so many inaccuracies in that question; I'm not sure where to start. But we'll start with the fact about there are more physicians working today in Saskatchewan than ever before in this province and certainly ever before under the NDP, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there are 13 new long-term care facilities that will be built in this province, Mr. Speaker, that have been ignored by the NDP for year after year after year. Mr. Speaker, some of the living standards were unsuitable. That's why we're moving. Not only are we moving forward with those facilities, Mr.

Speaker, but we listened to what SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] had to say. They wanted an 80/20 split, Mr. Speaker. Our government got it done.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from The Battlefords.

**Mr. Taylor:** — Mr. Speaker, I've read the SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] resolutions book, and it calls for 100 per cent funding, Mr. Speaker. That's what the resolution was.

Five, maybe six years ago, Mr. Speaker, the Prairie North Regional Health Authority took a giant step forward and told the provincial government at the time they were prepared to deliver mental health services at a new facility in North Battleford. This was a courageous and important decision at the time. Prior to that, there was always a concern that when the time came to formally replace the Saskatchewan Hospital, it would be moved to Saskatoon.

Now the Minister of Health has indicated a bias towards the delivery of mental health services on expensive real estate on the banks of the South Saskatchewan River. He has re-opened the door to every fear that has existed in northwest Saskatchewan in the past. Can the minister confirm today that all this thinking about delivering mental health institutional services in any location other than The Battlefords is over and done with?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, regional health authorities offer mental health services throughout this province, Mr. Speaker. All 12 health regions offer mental health in this province, Mr. Speaker. In North Battleford, it is the provincial hospital — has been, there used to be one in Weyburn; he's correct — and now there has been one in North Battleford for over a hundred years. That facility is aging, Mr. Speaker. That's why our government has put in for the first time \$450,000 to that health region that can begin the planning for a new facility, Mr. Speaker.

I've heard that member opposite talk about the fact that they committed dollars. I have checked very, very closely. Not one dollar moved from the General Revenue Fund to the Ministry of Health. Not one dollar moved from the Ministry of Health to the Prairie North Health Region to do anything on that facility, Mr. Speaker. We've moved 450,000 to do the planning, Mr. Speaker. When the capital dollars are there, the planning is done, and it will get built.

[14:00]

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from The Battlefords.

**Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The mental health community was here yesterday. The mental health community in the foyer talked about, prior to the election in 2007, the public meetings that were held in North Battleford to discuss the plans that the Prairie North Health Region had done under the New Democratic Party government, Mr. Speaker. They know these plans have been in place for some time. Mr. Speaker, they also expressed concern for the

well-being of the truly fragile and vulnerable people of Saskatchewan.

The North Battleford planning project began in earnest four and a half years ago. The minister has had three and a half years and new financial resources to make it happen. If he doesn't have this urban bias — which he has not denied, Mr. Speaker — and if he doesn't have this desire to see projects built on expensive real estate along the banks of the South Saskatchewan River, when is he going to actually announce adequate funding to get the much needed and desired North Battleford project under way?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, we have been in government for three and a half years. Mr. Speaker, we've looked at long-term care facilities. We've looked at acute care facilities. And I've certainly had the opportunity to go through the hospital in North Battleford, Mr. Speaker.

What I will say is the reality of an aging infrastructure left after 16 years of NDP government can never be fixed in three and a half years, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we're moving forward on it, and absolutely that facility is a priority. And we're going to be moving on it, Mr. Speaker, when we have the capital dollars to do it.

But I'll take no advice. When he was the minister, he did very little. And when they have been in government for 16 years, they didn't do a thing for that North Battleford hospital when it should have been replaced under their watch as well.

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

### Issues in Health Care

**Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week in Wawota at a community meeting of hundreds of people, the member from Cannington admitted again that the government has failed to properly fund the health regions in the last budget. He admitted that all the health regions received only half of what they asked for. I was there; I heard it. Mr. Speaker, today there's a story on ER [emergency room] overcrowding, emergency room overcrowding at Regina hospitals and people lying on gurneys in hallways waiting for treatment.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister see now that he was wrong to underfund the health regions? Has he learned from his mistake, and will he commit to adequately funding health regions in the upcoming budget?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, the budget for health regions last year was tighter. We gave them some targets which they have done a very good job in meeting when it comes to premium time pay, extra pay. When it comes to sick leave, Mr. Speaker, health regions have done an excellent job. In fact I believe that most of them will be coming in at a balanced budget or a surplus, Mr. Speaker, and that is very good work done by the health regions.



The health regions deliver service, Mr. Speaker — absolutely. And the issue around overcrowding, Mr. Speaker, is an issue that's faced not only here in Saskatchewan but across the nation. It sure didn't help that, under their government, they closed 52 hospitals and sent hundreds of health care workers out of the province.

We're trying to rebuild a system that was broken. In fact as Lewis Draper a former MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] and former physician would say, what the NDP left of this health system, it was a pig's mess. And I would quite agree with how they left the health care system.

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

**Ms. Junor:** — Mr. Speaker, one of the root causes of overcrowding in emergency rooms is the lack of funding the government has provided to mental health care in Saskatchewan. Yesterday a group of concerned people representing the mental health care community came to the legislature to impress upon the minister the need for more investment in mental health care. People with mental health illnesses can't get in to see a psychiatrist and can't get adequate help from CBOs [community-based organization] who are also underfunded, and so they go to the ERs.

Mr. Speaker, when is the minister going to stop making Saskatchewan people pay the price for his mismanagement and finally step up and realize we need more psychiatrists, more psychiatric nurses, more funding for CBOs, and a new mental health facility in North Battleford?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, I would agree with that member on a couple of points — when she said we would need more psychiatric nurses, that we need more psychiatrists. And I couldn't agree more. That's why our government started the psychiatric nurses program after it being cancelled by the NDP.

Mr. Speaker, it's absolutely amazing that in 2011 we need more psychiatric nurses, but in 2007 when they were in the government we didn't, Mr. Speaker. That's absolutely ludicrous.

Our government is working on the proper human resources mix across this province. We have more work to do, Mr. Speaker. But I can tell you; we didn't stick our head in the sand like the old NDP. We're getting it done.

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

**Ms. Junor:** — Mr. Speaker, 88 long-term care beds have been closed because of the government's failure to properly fund the health regions. Acute care beds in hospitals in Regina, Saskatoon, and Prince Albert, for example, are being filled with long-term care patients that don't have a long-term care bed to go to. Mr. Speaker, that means that there are fewer admission beds for people coming to the ERs.

To the minister: when is he going to reopen the 30 beds at

Muskeg Lake, the 5 beds in Wawota, the 16 beds in Canora, the 15 beds in Melville, the 6 beds in Kamsack, the 6 beds in Esterhazy, and the 10 beds in Carlyle, and take the unnecessary stress off the hospitals?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we've worked hard to maintain a proper complement of long-term care beds in this province, Mr. Speaker. But I will tell you that under 16 years of NDP government, they closed 1,200 beds, long-term care beds in this province, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are making sure that there are the proper complement of long-term care beds. That's why we've put a facility in Saskatoon to relieve the pressure out of the acute care centres, Mr. Speaker. I'll take no advice from that member opposite or that opposition party when it comes to long-term care and especially in rural Saskatchewan.

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

**Ms. Junor:** — Well the minister will take no advice and leaves us all looking at him floundering as he tries to answer any question that pertains to any of these questions, Mr. Speaker.

Acute care and emergency room services are closing or being closed all around rural Saskatchewan in communities like Wakaw, Watrous, Big River, Spiritwood, Leader, and the list goes on. People are being left without emergency services because of the government's failure to properly fund the health regions. People have to go somewhere for help, so they go to emergency rooms in Regina or Saskatoon, and these hospitals become overcrowded.

Mr. Speaker, when is the minister going to stop ignoring rural Saskatchewan and provide the funding they need to recruit doctors and keep their hospital emergency and acute care services open so that people can get the care they deserve in their own communities?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, in July 17th of 2000, they had sent out a news release talking about closure of a number of long-term care beds in the province. And it was a very interesting quote from that very member opposite when she said, when she was asked about closing long-term care beds, and I quote, "These plans will lead to a better quality of long-term care overall," Mr. Speaker. That's how they looked at it at the time. Closing beds would lead to a better quality of care, Mr. Speaker.

That is not our plan, Mr. Speaker. Our plan is to renew 13 facilities, long-term care facilities in rural Saskatchewan, as well as adding 100 beds in Saskatoon under Amicus, Mr. Speaker. We realize the need and we're getting it done.

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

**Ms. Junor:** — Mental health needs are being ignored. Acute care and emergency services are being closed. Long-term care

beds are being closed, and doctor vacancies are increasing in rural Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, health care is disappearing in rural Saskatchewan.

Last year we know the Potash Corporation made \$1.8 billion and paid 5 cents on the dollar to the Saskatchewan people. Mr. Speaker, to the minister: has he thought of going to the Premier to tell him maybe more than 5 cents is needed on the dollar for our potash, so he could have more money to properly fund health care and people won't have to suffer?

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

**Hon. Mr. Boyd:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to correct the member opposite in terms of her observations about 5 cents on the dollar for resource taxes. The fact of the matter is . . .

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order, order. Order. Order. I recognize the Minister Responsible for Energy and Resources.

**Hon. Mr. Boyd:** — I'm holding in my hands a financial statement for Potash Corporation. They had \$1.8 billion of revenue. If you subtract out phosphorus and nitrogen that they don't operate here in Saskatchewan, they had \$1 billion of revenue. They paid \$76.5 million in provincial mining and other taxes. But if you look just six lines down, six lines down from there, when you look at income taxes, it adds up to a little over \$350 million in taxes that they paid in Saskatchewan, not 5 cents on the dollar that the member opposite is talking about but \$350 million to the province of Saskatchewan. And that's why we want to make sure that that doesn't stop here in Saskatchewan, rather than putting in place the resource and job-killing tax that they want to put in place.

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

#### Land Purchase

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, we learned yesterday that both the Chair and the Vice-Chair of the SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology] board have quit over a \$6.7 million land purchase that was made without the needed ministerial approval. The Minister of Advanced Education knew about this unauthorized purchase back in September, but he chose to keep it a secret. We only learned of this when the Provincial Auditor brought this unauthorized purchase to the public's attention. To the minister: why did he choose to keep this unauthorized \$6.7 million purchase a secret?

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

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As far as any notion of this being a secret, this is the furthest from the truth. In fact if the member opposite would've taken time to read the SIAST annual report, Mr. Speaker, within the report it says:

. . . Ministerial approval is also required for borrowing and for the acquisition or sale of real property. During the year, SIAST acquired land to be used for the expansion of the SIAST Kelsey Campus to the amount of \$6.902 million, for which the written approval of the minister has not been obtained.

Mr. Speaker, this was a document that was circulated in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. This was then brought up again by the auditor, Mr. Speaker. This has since been addressed in the Public Accounts Committee, Mr. Speaker. This has been available, Mr. Speaker. We have been working through it and, Mr. Speaker, what we've seen is that Pam Schwann has been appointed as Chair. These two honourable individuals have taken responsibility, Mr. Speaker. We hope and see that the future of SIAST is very bright, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, this is about transparency and what information the minister chooses to share on an open basis with the people of Saskatchewan, and we're beginning to notice a pattern here. Just recently we learned that the \$270 million carbon capture deal with Montana has been dead for months, but instead of being open and transparent with the people of Saskatchewan, the minister chose to keep that a secret too. And on an unauthorized \$6.7 million land purchase that contravened the SIAST Act, the minister chose to keep that under wraps. To the minister: would this information have ever come into the public realm had the Provincial Auditor not revealed it?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize Minister Responsible for Advanced Education.

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I've already noted, actually it was in the SIAST annual report, and that came out in advance of the auditor's report, Mr. Speaker. I would anticipate that the member opposite is the critic who would actually have seen that, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The problem with this minister is one of transparency, but it's also one of taking action on what he knows.

The Minister of Advanced Education not only failed to make the information public; he failed to address the problem as well. Even one of the minister's colleagues quoted earlier in question period, the member from Cannington, told the Public Accounts Committee, "I know I would not be very happy had I been the minister in this circumstance." Yet instead of being unhappy, the minister did absolutely nothing for several months. To the minister: why did he drag his heels on this issue?

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

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Mr. Speaker, thanks very much for the opportunity to talk about post-secondary education because

when it comes to doing nothing, Mr. Speaker, we saw the members opposite do nothing. We saw them not build any residence at the University of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. We see them do nothing, Mr. Speaker, when they were in office regarding residences in La Ronge, in Meadow Lake, Mr. Speaker, in P.A. [Prince Albert].

Mr. Speaker, what we've seen is record investments across the post-secondary sector. Mr. Speaker, we know that SIAST needs an additional land piece, Mr. Speaker. What we have here is a procedural error, Mr. Speaker, a procedural error. There has been members held to account. SIAST is moving on. The board is moving on. And thankfully the province is moving on now that they've gotten rid of the NDP.

[14:15]

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, the handling of this unauthorized purchase is certainly concerning, but it's also concerning that the former board felt it necessary to take this step in the first place. We know that SIAST officials have raised concerns about the lack of resources from this government. SIAST resources are stretched thin. They need new facilities, yet this government has largely ignored their concerns.

To the minister: was the board sending a message by going rogue and making this unauthorized purchase to draw attention to the underfunding of SIAST?

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

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. For the public record, what we've seen is increased funding to SIAST under this government, Mr. Speaker. We've seen a 9 per cent increase in total funding and a 15 per cent increase in operating funding for SIAST since we've come in. What we've seen is an institution that is moving forward. It now has residents in one of its four campuses, Mr. Speaker. We know there's more work to do. We've been able to ensure that it's participated within the KIP, that is, the knowledge infrastructure program, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in the case in hand, what we've seen is a procedural error. We've seen individuals stand up and take responsibility, Mr. Speaker. We see SIAST moving forward, our post-secondary sector moving forward, and our students moving forward, Mr. Speaker, with more jobs in Saskatchewan and a bright future, Mr. Speaker, right here in Saskatchewan.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, this is more than a procedural error. The SIAST board asked the minister for approval to buy two pieces of land. The minister clearly said no. The SIAST board went ahead and made those purchases, Mr. Speaker. This is more than simply a paperwork mess-up.

It speaks to an attitude from the minister and the government,

Mr. Speaker. For whatever reason, the SIAST board went rogue, made their own decision, ignoring a clear directive of the ministry, going ahead with a major project without authorization — with financial implications down the road. The minister found out about the purchase, knew it contravened provincial legislation, but he chose to keep it secret and took no steps to address the problem. He left it up to the Chair and the Vice-Chair months later, months later, Mr. Speaker, to resign and leave the board.

After the carbon capture fiasco with hidden information and now this unauthorized purchase, we can't help but wonder what else is being kept under wraps by the minister and by that government. Will the minister unveil today any more secrets, or will we have to wait several more months for someone else to reveal them?

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

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Mr. Speaker, we have the SIAST annual report. Mr. Speaker, we have the auditor's report. Mr. Speaker, we have the audit committee's work and report, Mr. Speaker, through *Hansard*, Mr. Speaker. What we see is . . . earlier, earlier this week, Mr. Speaker, this issue — that is, SIAST having formal title over this land — actually came to fruition Mr. Speaker. It took diligence on behalf of the board and others, Mr. Speaker. This issue is now behind the SIAST institution, Mr. Speaker, and what we're very, very pleased to see, Mr. Speaker, is that SIAST continues to move forward. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

## WRITTEN QUESTIONS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Government Whip.

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answers to questions 658 to 667.

**The Speaker:** — Questions 658 through 667 are tabled.

## 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 Speaker:** — Order. Order. Order. I'm not exactly sure the members heard which Bill was called. I believe it was Bill 161. I recognize the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and with thanks to the member from Cannington for the assist on that ruling.

It's with great interest that I rise today to participate in the debate on Bill No. 161, *An Act to amend The Election Act*. Mr. Speaker, in any sort of democracy, in any sort of proper, functioning democracy, there are two things that are kind of analogous to team sports. So I've got some background in terms of different team sports. And democracy, like hockey or baseball, it's very — you know, not to demean the subject here — but it's very important that the ump be fair, that the referee be fair, and that the rules be clear.

And I guess when we look at the activity of this government when it comes to the actions and their approaches around Elections Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, we can't help but wonder what they're up to.

And I guess if we measure it alongside the situation that we see unfolding with the federal government right now, where we've got one of the members over there of course — the member from Meadow Lake, one of the ministers in that cabinet — involved in the in-and-out funding scandal that sees different Conservative operators and senators up on charges in terms of abridging and breaking the law under Elections Canada, when we see that very same member from Meadow Lake involved in the different activities around things like the hiring of the returning officer for Elections Saskatchewan, things like the amendments that are contained in this piece of legislation around amending *The Election Act*, and trying to change the regime around who gets to vote, and whether or not we make it easier for people to vote or more difficult, and which groups this affects. Mr. Speaker, we look on this with a great deal of suspicion and certainly a great deal of concern and perhaps alarm, Mr. Speaker.

If democracy is going to function, the rules have to be well-understood and observed. And those that have been tasked with the sacred duty of enforcing those rules, they have to be out of the fray, Mr. Speaker. And on both of these scores, in terms of the actions that we've seen this government perform around the returning officer and the actions there, in terms of the process that has been well-established and long-established, to go at it in a bi-partisan, consensus-based model and the kind of games that they played with the appointment of the returning officer, Mr. Speaker, we look at that and we see that coming into this piece of legislation.

And we see what? You know certainly there's a safeguard that must be made in terms of those that are entitled to vote being the people that are entitled to vote. That's without question, as a well-functioning democracy should have that as one of its cornerstones.

But as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when you have a measure brought forward, when there hasn't been significant or hardly any concern brought forward in the all-party process that takes place after every election, and suddenly you've got a move to follow in lockstep with something that was brought forward on the federal level and that has been fought in courts, Mr. Speaker, in terms of narrowing the ability of people to get to the polls, then we as the opposition look at that with a great deal of suspicion.

So in terms of requiring photo ID [identification] for those that get to the polls, what groups have trouble with photo ID, Mr.

Speaker? Well, First Nations generally have some situations in terms of having valid photo ID or what is accepted as valid or what is constrained as valid by the members opposite. Seniors oftentimes have trouble with photo ID and how that is available to them. New Canadians, Mr. Speaker, those that have stood up in citizen courts and have sworn that oath of allegiance, there is another group that has trouble with photo identification. And as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, low-income people in general have trouble with photo identification, which in Saskatchewan's case has commonly meant a photo identification that is attached to the driver's licence.

So what about those four groups would this government want to engage in activity to depress their voter turnout? Well in terms of debate that we understand has taken place, it's because those four groups have traditionally voted a certain way, Mr. Speaker, and it hasn't been in favour of the members opposite. So of course there's an interest on the part of the members opposite to try and to depress the voter turnout amongst those groups. And I guess from the opposition's perspective, Mr. Speaker, and from the perspective of citizens in this province, why they would want to do that is blatantly against the democratic spirit that we are supposed to be upholding in this Chamber, Mr. Speaker.

We've seen elections where the voter turnout has declined. And instead of taking measures to increase voter turnout, to increase enumeration, to provide the funding to enumeration that is adequate for the hard-to-enumerate parts of this province, do we see additional resources being allocated in that regard, Mr. Speaker? No, what we see is a measure coming out of the, I think, a brains trust of the government of this day in terms of trying to make, to game the rules. So we look on that with great concern, Mr. Speaker.

In terms of what happens come the election and how this Bill is actually put forward or what happens with the regulations, it's going to be very interesting. We've seen just as recently as a few days ago where different representatives from that government, in conversation with the representatives from the New North — the leadership in northern Saskatchewan from the municipal sector — saying that okay, well you know, you've raised a concern about this. Maybe we'll take some steps to try and address those.

And we hope that they come forward with some concrete measures in that regard or perhaps pulling this legislation altogether, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the kind of work that they're trying to set out to constrict, to restrain, to undercut the turnout of certain groups at the polling station, Mr. Speaker.

It's a long-standing sort of occurrence in this province, Mr. Speaker, where those that try to game the process, that try to game the rules of democracy, they're going to pay a price for it.

And I think, again I represent Regina Elphinstone-Centre, and the first election that that constituency came into being for was, one of them was 1971. And in 1971 there was something on the order of 19,800 electors in what was then called Regina Centre. And there was a specific riding that had been carved out in the south of Regina, Regina South or Regina Albert Park, where there was of course under 5,000 electors.

And one of the things that came forward as a consequence of that blatant attempt to gerrymander and to undercut the democratic process by which we conduct ourselves at the polls, one of the processes that came forward after that was the move to an independent Boundaries Commission. And again, Mr. Speaker, I think that was a step forward for our democracy. Because it's not just people getting out to the ballot box, it's how they're able to . . . What are the resources that are put forward? What is the fairness of the rules that are put forward?

And in that case, Mr. Speaker, the then Allan Blakeney New Democratic Party came forward with the step to an independent Boundaries Commission. And I guess that was a marked improvement over the practice we had had before, where different people cut up the boundaries and the gerrymandering was alive and well, or as it was called then, Mr. Speaker, Thatchermandering. And the problem with the situation then was remedied in terms of the independent Boundaries Commission.

And then we've seen different sort of variations on the problems that are brought forward under the guise of different things. But we've seen problems that were fought all the way to the Supreme Court in terms of trying to use the plus or minus and the efforts that were put forward by, in the late '80s in this province, to try and make sure that city ridings and different rural ridings, to try and rejig the boundaries, Mr. Speaker. One of the problems, there was the plus or minus and what that did in terms of one vote having equal weight wherever it was in the province, be it north, south, urban, or rural. And that was fought to the Supreme Court, and then again that correction was made.

We've seen different democratic procedures brought forward, be it the change to the voting age, be it the extension of franchise to First Nations, be it even the establishment of the election date, Mr. Speaker. And I well remember the Minister of Justice bringing forward the legislation for the fixed election date legislation and introducing it as the fixed election legislation. And at that point, Mr. Speaker, we thought, well okay, perhaps it's not a Freudian slip. Perhaps this is just the other things being on the mind of the speaker.

[14:30]

But, you know, there are pros and cons to that particular piece of legislation. We've seen other sort of pieces of legislation brought forward as relates to the province and how it interacts with the Senate of Canada. But as it regards the very fundamental process of elections and who participates in those elections, there's nothing more fundamental, Mr. Speaker, than what are the rules surrounding how people have to campaign, what are the rules around who is eligible to vote, and then how those rules are enforced by the non-partisan apparatus of something like Elections Saskatchewan.

So I'll say it again, Mr. Speaker, in terms of what happened in this province over the past couple of years, what has happened in this province over the last couple of years in terms of the games that have been played with what had previously been bipartisan, consensus-based processes wherein the chief returning officer of Saskatchewan would be appointed by these kind of fair, open processes and the way that that caucus and that government opposite reached in to affect the appointment

of the head official as to when it comes to enforcing fairness and accountability in terms of our electoral process, that was alarming.

But now we find another piece of legislation that is brought forward where of course they know not everybody has photo ID in this province. They know that's not part of citizenship in this province. They know that that is affected by income level, that is affected by race, that is affected by age, that is affected by where you live in the province. And in terms of the question on whether or not it's going to be a suggestion or a hard and fast rule, right now that is punted to the regulations.

Well again, Mr. Speaker, in terms of seeing how this government has acted in terms of the process around appointing the returning officer, they'll have to forgive us if we don't have a lot of confidence in their ability to not want to jam this as hard as they can, to not want to get their fingers on the scales and to try to assert some kind of partisan narrow advantage when it comes to who's out at the polls and who's not, Mr. Speaker.

So again, it's particularly ironic when we're in an era where, you know, a few short months ago we had the chief of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations say that one of the things that that individual wants to do is to increase the participation of First Nations at the ballot box and do what they can with working with Elections Saskatchewan and Elections Canada to ensure that First Nations are participating fully in that franchise, which again, Mr. Speaker, is one of the fundamental components of our democracy.

So again, you know, it's interesting. You see on the one hand a greater willingness and a greater interest on the part of First Nations in the province of Saskatchewan to fully participate in one of our most important processes around electing who we represent in this Assembly, and then we see the government moving in to jam the rules so that those without photo ID are going to be forced to jump through greater hoops and have more of a steeplechase when it comes to getting to the ballot box to cast their vote. And of course First Nations are hugely affected by that kind of activity.

So that's something we don't agree with, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the opposition. That's something that I've certainly added to the kind of opposition that has been enumerated by my colleagues in this Chamber, and I know that there are going to be others that want to add their voices in this debate as well. So, Mr. Speaker, with that being said, I disagree with this legislation. I disagree with the way that this government has approached some of the fundamental features of the democratic process in the province, and I will leave the debate to others on our side to continue to voice that opposition.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I'd move to adjourn debate.

**The Speaker:** — The member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 161. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to continue the discussion of the changes proposed to election legislation in Saskatchewan, and specifically here we're going to be talking about Bill No. 162 which is an amendment to *The Local Government Election Act* and also it makes some amendments to a few other pieces of legislation at the same time.

Fundamentally when you look at election Acts, whether it's the provincial election Act or *The Local Government Election Act* or in the federal parliament for the federal elections legislation, your goal is to enhance the participation of the public in democracy. And we have had discussions around how that might happen in our country at a number of different levels. But basically we have stuck with the system that we have now, which is effectively a first past the post system.

One thing these pieces of legislation here in Saskatchewan don't deal with obviously is the whole question of a system of proportional representation based on voting that would more accurately reflect what happens in the community. And, Mr. Speaker, that's not part of this particular legislation. But if our fundamental goal is to enhance the participation of the public in elections, in voting in those who will represent them in the legislature or in the local city councils or RM councils, then I think we're going to need to make sure we don't lose that whole discussion and that whole question.

But, Mr. Speaker, what is happening in this legislation seems to be going in another direction. And it's going to a place where many of us had hoped we would not go in the 21st century, and that's to put up barriers for people to participate in voting and doing it in a way that, as I said the other day, seems to have a bit of a code to it or a secret language to it. Or it's speaking to certain groups in society who now have power and want to keep that power, and they're not willing to let many people on the edges of our community enhance their role in democracy.

Mr. Speaker, I think that's wrong. That's why the people on this side of the House will be challenging this legislation every step of the way. Because when you bring in, as this legislation does, an ability to scare people away from the polls around whether they have proper identification, to scare people once they've gotten to the polls so that they actually leave without voting, to make it difficult for community leaders and others in the local community to assist others to exercise the right of the vote, this is just wrong.

And, Mr. Speaker, I once again urge the Minister of Justice to listen carefully to the voices that have come from many different places and ask him to take this legislation back out of this legislature and allow for more public discussion because, Mr. Speaker, that's not what we're about. We're not here,

elected . . . Now that we're here, we're not in a situation where we're going to change the rules to make sure that others can't participate and select the people who are going to be in this legislature. And, Mr. Speaker, this legislation has a number of aspects that relates to that.

Now Bill 162 is a companion piece to Bill 161 that my friend from Regina Elphinstone just spoke about. And it goes through *The Local Government Election Act*, and it makes some changes that I think are probably ones that were suggested in consultation with municipalities — SUMA, the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association, and probably with SARM, the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities — but I'm very certain that the whole section that's in here about the ability to scare people away from the polls was not something that was suggested by those groups.

Because I know that even more so than we as legislators in this place, those people who are elected in their local communities, they appreciate every effort that's made to encourage as many people as possible to vote in their elections because they know that many times the participation levels at a municipal level are substantially less than what happens at a provincial or a national level. And so fine with some of these suggestions that I think maybe have come from SUMA and SARM, but this suggestion around restricting the members is something that should be dropped.

Now I know that the Minister of Justice has listened carefully to a number of the comments that we've made about this. And it would be possible with some discussion with members on this side to remove those parts which cause difficulty and allow for the rest of the legislation to go forward, but, Mr. Speaker, we've had no indication that there is any interest in doing that. But I'll make this offer on the public record: that we'd be happy to sit down and look at those things that are here which assist and encourage people to be part of the voting public, and then we'll drop those parts or have further discussion on those parts which have the effect of restricting the ability of people to vote.

Now how does this restrict people to vote? Well if one goes to some of the movies that we've seen over the last 10 years, if one reads a number of the books that have been written, if one listens to a number of the radio documentaries or watches some of the documentaries on television, there are quite a number of stories that relate to the voting rights disputes in the southern part of the United States about 50 years, 60 to 50 years ago. And much of that discussion related to the fact that many of the people of other parts of the United States went down into the South to assist people in registering so that they could vote under the US [United States] system. And so there became quite a number of disputes when the ability of those who were marginalized under their voting system substantially increased and started affecting the elections of those people who were in power.

Now, Mr. Speaker, a number of the aspects of this particular legislation are parallel to some of the offensive parts of the legislation which was there in the southern United States of America. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm not totally certain whether some of these parts in this legislation will also not be offensive to our constitution in Canada in the same way that many of those pieces of legislation in the United States were offensive to

their constitution as was ultimately decided by the US Supreme Court. And, Mr. Speaker, when one looks at our constitution, it doesn't set up all of these barriers to voting. It says that there will be an ability for people to participate in our democracy and that we'll have the rules set up.

And so I guess what I would once again say to the Minister of Justice, if he has legal opinions that have looked at this issue in that light, maybe he should reveal them to us so that we can have those as part of the discussion. If he has not thought about some of these things, then I would ask him to consider that.

[14:45]

We do know, and he said this in his second reading speech when he presented this legislation, that he was basing it on other pieces of legislation that had gone forward I think in British Columbia and a couple of other provinces. We also know that in British Columbia there already has been a legal challenge filed on a constitutional question that this type of legislation is unconstitutional. And it may be appropriate to wait to see what the results of some of these kinds of things are before we do this in Saskatchewan.

But I think on a more fundamental basis, here in Saskatchewan, we are very much members of our community. We come from our communities, and we want the people in our communities to have the ability to vote.

And I think that just one example of one of the restrictions in this legislation is quite interesting. Say on polling day you end up with people who come to vote, and they don't have all of the ID that fits some of the kind of technical explanations that are going to be set out in this legislation. Well there's an ability for another member of the community to vouch for that particular person, and it could be that it's a local priest or pastor. It could be a teacher. It could be somebody else who's there. This legislation sets it up so that kind of community person, who might know lots of people in the local community, is only able to vouch for one person. And once they've done that, well then they're going to have to find somebody else to vouch for the next person.

Now how logical is that in our communities? As many people who know, when they vote in Saskatchewan, it's often a bit of a chance for a community visit, if I can put it that way. And everybody knows who's coming into the polls. It's true in the city, in the neighbourhoods. It's true in the small towns and other places across the province where, on voting day, everybody knows a lot about each other. If there's somebody that's kind of unknown to everybody else, there'll be some questions raised, but it doesn't take long to figure out how they fit and how they would be involved in the voting.

So, Mr. Speaker, this kind of legislation goes contrary to much of how we operate in this province. And for that reason alone, I ask the Minister of Justice to seriously consider withdrawing the legislation and allowing for more work to be done.

But even on another level, and especially as it relates to this particular Bill 162 which is *The Local Government Election Act*, when we're having votes in city elections or our town or village elections or rural municipality elections, it's even more

accurate to say that people know who lives in the particular area, who's going to participate in the votes. And to put up restrictions which seem to be designed in a way to exclude certain groups from voting, I think is fundamentally against the Saskatchewan character.

And part of the job we have in this legislature is to identify foolish Bills, identify Bills that are wrong-headed, identify Bills that shouldn't make it into law. And, Mr. Speaker, I think those parts of this particular Bill that go contrary to who we are in Saskatchewan should be removed or at least should have much more discussion in the community before they're done.

Now the line that's sometimes used reflects once again to code words like the integrity of the electoral system. And, Mr. Speaker, I haven't heard of any examples that have been brought forward in the last number of years where that's become an issue. What we do know is that the number of times where one or two or three votes will make a difference in election are very slim.

Now I know that back prior to the advent of the province of Saskatchewan, there was an election that was decided by the returning officer casting a ballot. But there aren't very many examples in the history of this province where 1 or 2 or 5 or even 25 votes will make a difference. And so I'm not quite sure what the meaning of discussion about trying to preserve the integrity of the electoral system . . . comes when basically the integrity of an electoral system is one that will reflect the wishes of the public in electing the people that need to be elected.

And now one of the difficulties that we've been having in the last couple of decades in every part of Canada and in Saskatchewan is that the participation rate in elections has been going down. And some of it can be related to maybe some of the things that the public is interested in, things going relatively well. They stay away from getting involved. But some of it does relate to the kinds of frustrations that people have around going through the election process. And so I do not think we should be in a situation where we will add further barriers to what's happening.

Now in the legislation itself, there are a number of areas where the whole Bill looks at the steps and the procedures that are to be taken. And I guess it's probably important for me to look at those things which are amendments that probably don't cause a huge amount of difficulty.

So if we go and we start at the top of this Bill and look at which sections are amended, well, the first amendment relates to what's the definition of a business day. Well that's kind of an obvious thing which is needed here. It also clarifies that nomination papers also include other documents, that if they're required to be attached to the documents . . . And here I think they're specifically referring to criminal record checks. But once again, this is another . . . [inaudible] . . . on forcing qualification for people in how they would be elected.

Now one of the other parts that's in this particular legislation relates to moving the election cycle for municipalities from three years to four years. And this is something that's had a fair bit of discussion throughout the community and communities

across the province. And there's been, I would say, sufficient discussion about the value of a four-year term which allows people to learn in their job and actually be able to go from being completely new to a city council or a town council in the first year to, by the time they've been there a few years, being able to be quite capable of providing the leadership that's needed.

This is something that has been requested and has come through a number of places, and so it's not something that I think has any major issues with it. And so it's the kind of thing that we could probably work together on seeing how we could get that part of the process included.

And so there are a number of other changes that relate to the actual procedure of the election that we have now, but practically those ones are ones that I think we would not have a great deal of difficulty with because we know that there has been a fair amount of discussion.

But when it gets to the questions around the restrictions on who can vote and how those restrictions are enforced, this is an area where I think there are some real problems. And when the matter was brought forward, as I said earlier, in British Columbia they ended up looking at this in a number of different ways as to how it would end up causing some difficulty for people to participate in the election. And it went everywhere, from new residents in a community who would have some difficulty . . . They obviously would meet the residency requirements for voting in that particular election, but they may not end up having the types of ID that would allow for election.

Also the types of identification that are acceptable are quite restricted, as being suggested here. If one has a passport, that's not sufficient to vote according to this because the passport doesn't have your address in it. So then you'd have to supplement it with something else.

Now we also know that they're trying to get at this question of where does a person reside so that they'll end up with information about that. But when we have rising rents like we have in many parts of Saskatchewan, there'd be a number of people that might not have full 12 months residency in a particular place because they've been forced to move. So they'll create problems there.

But I think the area where it's most troubling does relate to First Nations people where status cards — you know, one of the cards that First Nations people have — would not be accepted on their own as a document that would be usable for identification to vote. And so you end up also, as it relates to those cards, that in many of the First Nations in Saskatchewan because of strange operations of the federal bureaucracy they're only able to issue 50 status cards a year for each First Nation or some limited number. And so there are many First Nations people in Saskatchewan now whose status cards are not up to date. And would those be acceptable if they're being used because that's the only one they've got, and they can't get a new one? I don't know if that kind of question can be answered by this type of legislation.

I think what it does is it creates barriers way beyond what's necessary. So, Mr. Speaker, I think people are asking why

would the Minister of Justice, why would this government come forward with these kinds of changes at this time. Well my own sense, after looking at this and listening to the rationale that we've heard around this, is that the government is concerned that many people who are left out of our economy, those people on the edges are not that anxious to vote to reinstate this government, and that it's those people that would not be supportive of the government who are going to be the most affected by this particular legislation.

If that's not the case, there would be no difficulty in the government's pulling this particular part of the legislation and allowing it to be further discussed across the province and basically have it be re-introduced by a new government after the next election. If the will of the people across the province is that this is the kind of restrictions that we want on our electoral process, I'm sure that a new NDP government would look at that in the same way as this government has.

But I think that the practical effect of this is that this government wants to get this legislation passed this spring so that it will restrict the ability of many, especially First Nations people and other people who are marginalized, from voting. And I think that's fundamentally wrong.

[15:00]

Now, Mr. Speaker, we've seen that there are a number of areas where we're not given the full story about why something happens. It's possible that we will get answers to some of these kinds of questions when the matter goes to committee, but I'm not certain that we will get those answers.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I know that there are other of my colleagues who want to speak about this particular legislation, especially as it relates to their own constituencies, and so I would ask that we move to adjourn this debate.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Regina Lakeview has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 162, *The Local Government 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. 144

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

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

**Mr. Trew:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to rise and speak to this Bill 144, *The Litter Control Act*.

Mr. Speaker, *The Litter Control Act* was first passed in 1973. The then premier was Al Blakeney. And what the concerns were in 1973 were predominantly . . . Pollution had become



part of our everyday vocabulary in those days. Today we have concerns that extend beyond pollution into global warming for example and degradation of the environment. But in 1973 it was literally litter control, and it was to beautify our province and our highways and our streets by taking beverage containers out of the ditches and have them appropriately handled, that is, pop bottles — and it was bottles in those days — pop bottles and alcohol bottles to be recycled. But that was part of the original Act in 1973. It's kind of interesting as you reflect back what for many of us is an entire lifetime to the origins of this Act that we are dealing with today.

Today the iteration of *The Litter Control Act* is dealing with, in some ways, a more sophisticated problem than simply getting containers out of the ditch and off of the streets and appropriately handled. Today we're dealing with a litter control Act that introduces something that most people would think they'd never get out of a right-wing government, that would never see introduced by a right-wing government.

Mr. Speaker, what I am talking about is the retroactivity in this proposal. It proposes to reach back in terms of taking some rights of individuals to pursue recourse through the courts. This Act will take that recourse away, all the way back 13 years ago to 1998, all the way back there. That's what this piece of legislation is doing, introduces retroactivity.

Well, Mr. Speaker, in my time as a legislator, I have seen conservative governments right across this province make their bread-and-butter issue property rights, the rights of individuals, the right to pursue justice through the courts, the right to be heard and the right not to have big government impose upon you its will, not to have big government say not only are we changing the law in March of 2011, but we're changing the law all the way back to 1998, some 13 years ago. We're going to reach back, and we're going to retroactively change this legislation.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if the Sask Party government can do that with *The Litter Control Act*, my question is what prevents them to do it, make some other retroactive changes in other areas? You start down this slippery slope. And my question is, is the government selling its soul to get *The Litter Control Act* passed? And it's an interesting question . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . We're not talking huge money here. We're not talking huge money here at all. By the minister's admission, we're talking . . . There's \$350,000 a year at risk. That's what he said in his second reading speech.

So for \$350,000 what I have, what we have, we're witnessing, is the government going back with retroactive legislation over a relatively miserly amount of money. An amount of money, interestingly, when revenues have never been . . . In anybody's wildest dreams nobody's ever dreamt that the provincial government would have an excess of \$11 billion in 2010-2011 in revenues. Never did anyone believe that. Never did anyone believe that.

Never, never in the last general election platform, Mr. Speaker, did the Sask Party say, we're going to grow government expenditures by more than 10 per cent a year, by 30 per cent in three years and still growing. No end in sight to the government expenditure growth. Never was that said.

At a time of absolutely unprecedented economic growth, boom, revenue for the provincial government . . . State it however you want, but at a time when the provincial government's got more cash at its disposal than ever, what's it going to do? It's going to introduce legislation to save . . . to take somebody's right to sue, right to recourse away, and make it retroactive 13 years for \$350,000 a year.

And the question is — and I know that the member for Rosemont asked it in his part of this debate — he said the real question is, is that fundamentally fair? Is that the world we want to live in in Saskatchewan? Do we believe that any government is justified in reaching back 13 years, taking away an individual's right to court action or recourse for what they believe is wrong?

I'm not trying to say that there is \$350,000 necessarily going to disappear from the provincial treasury in a year, but to me that's for the courts to decide. I'm not trying to say yea, nay, yes, no. It's irrelevant. What is relevant is an individual's right to pursue justice, and that's being stripped in this case. And if it can be stripped here, I argue, Mr. Speaker, that it can be stripped anywhere else.

Isn't it interesting that we live in a time of absolutely unprecedented revenue for the provincial government, the provincial government of Saskatchewan. The Sask Party government has absolutely unprecedented revenue. And yet earlier today I got a phone call from a constituent who had been training for a job that the expectation was that she would be making \$75,000 a year with potential to . . . Frankly you can get almost double that in the field that she was training for, but \$75,000 a year would be a comfortable living. And she was so looking forward to that, Mr. Speaker. And then as she put it to me earlier today, this morning she put it to me, she said, and then life happened. Through no fault of her own, she is now wheelchair bound, could not pursue that career, and is now a recipient of social services.

And, Mr. Speaker, this constituent of mine told me that they've not had a decent increase in what she can get for many years now. She told me that she's living on \$8,000 a year. She told me, in tears, that food prices are going up at an alarming rate and she's not sure that the food is going to last to the end of this month. Too much month at the end of the food. And she's frugal, and I could tell that just by talking to her. And she felt bad to be complaining to me, Mr. Speaker.

But how many people are like my constituent, struggling to make ends meet, desperately struggling, looking for a bit of help? And what do we have? A callous government that, in the midst of absolutely unprecedented record revenue, their answer is, oh well, not only are we not going to help those that really need a hand up, not only are we not going to help those individuals, but we're going to take individual rights away. We're going to take away the right to . . . In *The Litter Control Act*, we're going to take away the right to pursue justice and we'll take it away retroactively 13 years.

Mr. Speaker, it is a shame. *The Litter Control Act*, over the years, has done a pretty remarkable thing, you know, right from its inception in 1973 when it started having Saskatchewan residents address the whole issue of bottle disposal and garbage

and that sort of thing. And how do we keep our highways respectable? How do we try and minimize the pollution, garbage pollution on our streets and highways? And how do we make our province a more welcoming province for the future? How do we make it a place that we want to live in, that we want our children and our grandchildren and their children to live in? How do we make it good for the present and for the future?

And since that early start in 1973, Mr. Speaker, *The Litter Control Act* has had a number of changes over the years, one of which was introduced that brought about Sarcan and the beverage collection regime that we have now. We still have the beer bottle exchange, but then there's also the Sarcan for virtually every other container. And what was introduced at the time of course was a system that brought many jobs in a part of our society that needed jobs and that is doing the jobs, by and large, very, very well.

This change, Mr. Speaker, was in the '80s and it was the Grant Devine Conservative government that brought the Sarcan into being. And it turned out, with hindsight, turned out to be a pretty decent thing to have done. And the proof of the pudding is that Sarcan continues to operate well.

The environmental fees that are levied by *The Litter Control Act* were set up to pay the expenses of Sarcan because you couldn't have, for example, a consumer — in this case I'll point at myself — a consumer pay 10 cents for a can of Coke as the handling fee, and there I have the can and then I take it to Sarcan and they give me 10 cents back. Well it's a no-brainer. They're not making any money off of that. They can't pay their expenses, so there's an environmental levy that enables Sarcan to be the collector.

And of course when I buy my can of Coke in the store or wherever I buy it, out of a pop machine or however I get it, I pay my 10 cents for it. And then when I take it to Sarcan, they give me a dime, the 10 cents, and it goes into my pockets and I can presumably go out and buy another . . . something else . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I thank the Minister of Justice who says that I should leave that dime as a tip. That's a very, very interesting contribution to this . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . 10 cent tip for Sarcan or a nickel tip from the potash industry. It's all relative, and we've had that discussion. I don't want to get too far down the potash debate, Mr. Speaker, but it is interesting to have the situation that we're in right now in Saskatchewan.

[15:15]

Now I related that story about my constituent because I know it's budget time and I know that the government is working on its budget. And my plea is that, for gosh sakes, please, please pay attention to people with disabilities and please, those who are receiving benefits . . .

[Interjections]

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Order. Order. I would ask the member to watch his language as he's going across the floor. I would remind the conversation of . . . Order. I would remind the members not to be engaging across when there's a member on his feet that has the floor speaking.

**Mr. Trew:** — Mr. Speaker, I just want some clarification. The member you're referring to with language is not me.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I would not ask the member to rule on speaking, but he's right. I mentioned the members talking across the floor. So I recognize the member from Regina Coronation Park.

**Mr. Trew:** — Thank you very much. Though occasionally I may slip in what I say, I appreciate the ruling and I just wanted it clear that I wasn't misspeaking.

Mr. Speaker, *The Litter Control Act* amendment that we have is a very interesting piece of legislation. It deals with a new definition that defines the purchaser of a container. And I know that part of the legislation is trying to say that for example a restaurateur or a hotelier are not the purchaser, but rather the end user is the purchaser of the container. And that's for purposes of how this Act is going to be administered and for clarity to make sure that the environmental levy is legally collected and those sorts of issues.

Mr. Speaker, I have no quarrel, no quarrel with the amendments to the Act. I do question the one far-reaching amendment, and that's the amendment that reaches back 13 years, the amendment that introduces the concept of retroactivity — a concept I never thought I'd see, not from anything that the government said they would do either in opposition or in its election platform. I never thought I would see a Sask Party government introduce a retroactive piece of legislation that disabled an individual's right to pursue a court action. I never thought I would actually see that.

And you just have to wonder about the wisdom of us standing here and even debating this reach back with the minimal explanation. And I know I read the then minister's explanation and the minister's explanation in second reading, and I still have to question the wisdom of reaching back. Because if there was a problem with the law, it really is a question then of, well what is the fairest thing for the people of Saskatchewan? And it seems to me that it's not always the fairest thing — in fact usually not — to have a government say, well you know, we made a mistake at some previous point in time and we're going to fix that mistake by introducing retroactive legislation. It just astounded me that that piece of legislation would come from this government.

So you know, Mr. Speaker, there's another piece that happened in this and it's where some things that were previously done in regulation are now moved, and they will have to be done in the future with a change of the Act. And I want to say that, on the surface, that really does look like a step forward because some of the changes that are removed from regulations include things like:

(a) an environmental handling charge of:

(i) with respect to a designated container that is a metal can, 5¢;

(ii) with respect to a designated container that is a plastic bottle, 6¢;

(iii) with respect to a designated container that is a non-refillable glass bottle, 7¢;

(iv) with respect to a designated container that is a multi-material, shelf stable container, 3¢; or

(v) with respect to a designated container that is a paper-based polycoat gable topped container, 3¢; and

(b) a refundable deposit of 5¢.

(2) The Lieutenant Governor in Council may, by regulation, increase or decrease the amount payable pursuant to clause (1)(b) respecting any designated container or any class or classes of designated containers.

Mr. Speaker, removing that list from regulations appears to be a positive step forward because it means that to change that environmental fee would mean that we have to come back before the legislature and justify that change. You'd have a government, presumably a government proposing the change in the environmental handling fee, and an opposition whose job it would be to question the need, the requirement for that change in the environmental handling fee.

One of the things that struck me as I just read this out loud, Mr. Speaker, was section (a)(v) that says removing from regulations "with respect to a designated container that is paper-based polycoat gable top container." And I'm wondering if that means we're going to need a paper-based polycoat gable top container police force to make sure that we get the 3 cents collected on that. It's quite a mouthful, but I think the cup that they're talking about is also more familiar as a Tim Hortons roll-up-to-win cup. I think that's what was described as a 3 cent environmental fee required on that.

Mr. Speaker, the legislation, again I think it is necessary that the legislation be changed. That's not the argument at all. And I'm pleased to see the environmental charges being removed from regulation and going into the Act so that to change that requires a change in the Act. And by definition what that means is the Act would have to be brought before the legislature and dealt with in the public light, so to speak.

What I really don't like about this Act, what I really don't like about the changes in *The Litter Control Act* are the denigration of an individual's right to pursue action in the court, the right for an individual to hire a lawyer and see that the arguments are taken to their logical conclusion, win or lose. Justice demands that there has to be a referee somewhere, and the referee shouldn't ought to be the minister responsible for the Act solely. The referee in our system of democracy and governance often means the court, often means the court.

Our job is to pass legislation. Our collective job as members of the Legislative Assembly is to pass legislation. We hope most of it's good. We hope all of it is necessary. But at the end of the day, part of the job of the judiciary is to pass judgment on the effectiveness and the legality, the legality of that legislation. And here we're removing that one step for individuals or companies, and that step being their right to pursue justice through the courts. And that's just not a proper thing to have happen.

So, Mr. Speaker, the Act is 20-some pages, 22 pages including the coming into force. It's a fairly detailed Bill, a fairly detailed Act, and it introduces some questions around cost recovery that quite frankly have been always on the backburner before. But the cost recovery I'm speaking of is with the environmental assessment fee. That, as I understood it, was set up to help fund Sarcan.

So if Sarcan . . . This has no basis of reality to what Sarcan's budget really is. I'm just doing this by way of example, by way of explanation. If Sarcan operated for, its total budget was \$1 million a year, that was their expenditures, then Sarcan needs — out of either the environmental revenue fee or gift straight from the provincial treasury or some other source of revenue — they need to bring in at least \$1 million to offset that one million expenditure I used in my example. My understanding was that the environmental assessment fee was to pay that \$1 million.

And I see the Minister of Finance paying attention. I want to say the \$1 million, the \$1 million was not in any way to reflect what Sarcan's real costs are. It was by way of example. You have to say it's a number, and so I'm using 1 million as the cost there, and then the environmental assessment fee would bring in 1 million to offset Sarcan's operating costs.

Of course included in Sarcan's equation is when they purchase my tin can, my Coke can in my example earlier in my speech, they bundle it together and bale it. We've all seen the big bales of aluminium cans and the bales of plastic and the bales of paper and the bales and the bales and the bales of all sorts of things that they recycle. They then sell that. They sell that aluminium, presumably to the highest bidder. I can't imagine there being too many options of places to sell it, but I'm sure there is more than one place they could sell the aluminium cans. And whatever price they get for that, they'd use to offset their expenses.

You know, if you sold a bale of aluminium cans for \$1,000, well then in my example of \$1 million operating expenses, they'd use that \$1,000 to take it away from the \$1 million operating expense. And they'd only need nine hundred and ninety-nine thousand, nine hundred and . . . nine hundred and ninety-nine thousand, ninety-nine . . . 1,000 less than 1 million.

Mr. Speaker, I regret having started that math because I know how silly it sounds. But they would use that \$1,000 to offset their expenses. That's the point I'm making here.

So the environmental handling fee should be something responsibly about equal to what is spent on environmental handling fees for Sarcan and any other related collection agency. In principle, you would think that if you're collecting 3 cents for a roll-up-the-rim cup, you should be spending roughly 3 cents to clean up those cups and take care of them and see that they're properly disposed of. If you're doing 5 cents on a can, well then 5 cents should go towards handling the cans. And I know that it is very difficult to be that definitive in terms of how the costs work, but in broad strokes it should be something generally in that range.

So why is it we've not heard any explanation about why this government would choose, why that government there would

choose to go retroactive with its legislation. Why would it choose to go retroactive 13 years? Why would they go that far back to take somebody's right to a proper recourse? Why would they do that? And why, with the litter Act, why is it that the government is so determined to save \$350,000 a year from people who purchase beverage containers?

[15:30]

And we all, literally everyone does at one time or another, some of us purchase more beverage containers than others. But every Saskatchewan resident at some point purchases beverage containers — could be a container of water, could be pop. It could be any other, you know, juice, almost any other beverage. And so we pay the fee, the environmental levy.

Many of the containers also have a recycling fee, a deposit, that we can pay when we purchase the drink. And then when we take the container in, we get that deposit refunded to us. Why is it that the government is so determined, so dug in, in for \$350,000 a year shared amongst all of the province, all million people of Saskatchewan? And yet they won't change the nickel fund that the potash revenue is paying, potash royalties of five cents on the dollar. And they're hidebound, the minister saying repeatedly they're not going to change that.

Well if you made a minute change to the potash royalty rate, it would be — even a small one, minute, or even a small change — it would be make a huge difference, a huge difference on the revenue. And it wouldn't have to go into this retroactively taking away an individual or a company's right to recourse through the laws. We wouldn't have to be taking that part away.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm nearing the end of my remarks and I just sort of . . . I mean we're being met with much silence, and there's that one real thorny issue. And I just can't believe that at a time of, otherwise a time of plenty that the government is so determined to retroactively change and take away people's ability to seek justice.

And just before I'm closing I wanted to again make a plea on behalf of my constituent and others that there be something done in terms of revenue, in terms of helping people that have no means to help themselves, people that need a hand up, some increase in their cost of living that be included in the budget. Mr. Speaker, this is necessary.

I thank you very much for your time as we've discussed the liquor control Act, this Bill No. 144. I think I've outlined my concerns to the best of my ability today and I urge the government to reconsider the retroactive part of this legislation. The question is, is that the slope they want to get on? Is that what they consider a fair thing to do? Is it fair to take away, to strip a citizen's right retroactively 13 years? Or is the fair thing to do, let the courts take its course and then let us do what we can? Like the rest of this legislation, if I were proposing it, I might make some twists and turns, minor changes, but essentially not bad legislation. The retroactive part is the real offensive part, Mr. Speaker.

I thank you for your time. At this point I'm going to move that we adjourn debate on Bill 144.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Regina Coronation Park has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 144, *The Litter Control Amendment Act, 2010*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

### Bill No. 155

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

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

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Glad to be able to rise this afternoon and make a few comments, make a few remarks on Bill No. 55, *The Natural Resources Amendment Act, 2010*.

Before I begin my remarks, Mr. Deputy Speaker, just a comment as to why there's some trepidation and perhaps even concern over the issue of natural resources and our wildlife habitat. And that is going back a few years to where . . . And just to quote something from *The StarPhoenix*, an editorial in *The StarPhoenix* on October 28th regarding . . . and they were talking about reference . . . creation of measures designed to protect the Sand Hills. And the editorial says, and this was in reference to:

However, it only serves as a pre-election reminder of this government's utterly boneheaded move last year to remove nearly 3 million acres of Crown land from the protective umbrella of the wildlife protection Act.

This from of course the unbiased editorial board of the Saskatoon *StarPhoenix*, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So it was with that sort of a preamble that I wish to make some comments here in terms of this very important Act which on the surface, when you first look at a number of the changes, would seem to be acceptable. But that's the track record.

And there's track records on everything that this government has done, particularly consultations, on that whole issue where we have, on a number of now instances, found that where in fact even ministers have said that they have consulted and after checking with the groups, we find that in fact that it's not to be true. It's an unfortunate situation but it gives, on this side, makes our . . . I guess it makes our work that much more difficult, though we would be vigilant anyways in going through the various legislation that is brought before us.

But that is, I think, an explanation of why when we talk to our constituents or people across the province who ask us how are things going, well it's hard to say that it's a transparent government. It's hard to say that it's a government you can trust. Because there are real issues, Mr. Deputy Speaker, real issues that are brought up in and around legislation that we've

had, be it from lack of consultation, be it to withdrawing legislation, resubmitting legislation. And this is a three-year record that has been established.

In amongst that, as we've had different people discuss, in amongst that, in particular the potash debate that's now ongoing where the government has said, well it was the NDP that brought in those changes. And then now of course we're asking for a review of those royalty rates, and they're saying, well no, we don't want that; we don't want those reviews because you don't know what you're doing. And yet it is exactly those changes that the NDP government made that has found that government itself with their treasury full and money to spend. And again it's unfortunate that even in the midst of that sort of atmosphere or that sort of financial situation in this province that the government is still finding itself mismanaging on a number of files.

Now the changes in *The Natural Resources Act* that I wish to speak on or make some comment on . . . And I first want to say that I want to commend the work done by the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation with folks like Ducks Unlimited, Outfitters Association, natural conservatory for the work that they do, for the work that they do day in and day out.

I know many times I had the opportunity to meet with the Ducks Unlimited for one for example, folks who are very committed to the work that they do for Saskatchewan, for the time they've taken, and for all the dedication they put in with the different times that they have come forward and given us explanations on the amount of water, bodies of water, that have disappeared in Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The amounts are almost . . . well it's shocking I guess is the word I would probably say as to the amount of land that's disappeared that used to be there.

And one of the things that I didn't, I have to say, didn't know, and it's an invaluable kind of resource for information that these groups provide . . . Or for example, if you build a trench through and then it drains all the other lakes or the runoff goes into the trenches and then goes further down, then you lose all the small bodies of water which are sort of the natural habitat of our wildlife. So it is very important, this work that they do, and has . . . that they do for the province. And they should be commended for this along with all the other groups that are doing this work. It is important work.

And so when there are changes and when they are asked to, as in this legislation where there is an establishment of an advisory council where they are one of the groups that would be asked for appointments to that advisory council, is in some ways heartening for me to know that these people will be on there.

However the point still is here, is that they are an advisory council. And they are an advisory council, and we're not certain here that the minister has to take that advice. And we have seen that time and time again on the other side, how the ministers have not taken the advice of the advisory council of the constituents of any issue, or in fact even consulted them, and have said they've consulted. So the concern here would be would they actually listen to the advisory councils and do what they would have done.

Now the establishment of the council, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they say there'll be seven members appointed by the Lieutenant Governor and "The minister may request organizations that represent hunting, fishing and trapping interests to provide the minister with a list of nominees . . ." And again then "No member of the public service is eligible to be appointed as a member."

That in itself is an interesting point, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in terms of not having the civil service involved or as some sort of member. And I'm not certain whether they would have perhaps the deputy minister or somebody sitting on that advisory council so that they could assist, provide certain assistance, certain professional assistance that the group might need. So a little uncertain as to how that might work. And that is in no way taking away from the work that this advisory council would do.

There is still some concern as to how the people would be appointed, and again it's for three years but at the pleasure of the minister. So there is a very strong control here by the minister, I think.

Again as I started out, it would be very easy for us to simply accept this had we not had the track record here that we have of ministers, particularly in this former minister, particularly in this file, that found themselves now not — I suppose for lack of anything better to say — not there any longer and being replaced by new ministers. And we wonder whether that's just a revolving chair and that there isn't really some other agenda at play here simply to . . . in the government's pursuit to establishing or taking away protected lands in dealing with what is a treasure for all of us here in Saskatchewan.

Now again the section 21 and 22 form, what I would say, the majority of changes here that . . . and I suppose the changes in the fund, but for me that I look at and make my comments to.

The advisory council, again we would hope that in setting it up, we can't see any fault in terms of the people that would be appointed from them, and particularly if the organizations themselves provide the minister with a list of those nominees which the minister could pick. Now again there is some concern that could the minister then just simply decide not to pick certain people because of views perhaps that they've expressed that run counter.

[15:45]

Because at the heart of this is again the ability to consult, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the ability to consult. And that seems to have clearly . . . It's not an area that this government has scored well on, has scored well on in order to endear itself not only to this side but to the public of Saskatchewan.

And so we have great, great concerns that in fact the advisory council would not be listened to or that perhaps some of the nominees might be looked over basically because they didn't agree. As has been stated by the minister, now the Minister of Finance, the Deputy Leader, that if you don't agree with the direction of the government, perhaps you wouldn't be employed.

So I guess the same as these groups that put forward nominees

who they feel, people who have risen within their ranks, who understand the issues, that the government if they find them . . . I'm not certain. It's on the record, the Deputy Premier saying that he would not . . . that people who did not agree with the government would be fired. So I guess in this case, I guess that would mean that they would not simply choose the nominees who disagreed with the government direction.

So I'm not certain whether that means that they would not have anybody who was opposed to transferring land, wildlife habitat land, from under protection or Crown land that perhaps is protected, transferring that land and not having it protected. That's the question when we don't know whether, you know, what . . .

Well I guess I shouldn't say we don't know. Because it was very clearly stated that we know the agenda of that and have seen that agenda for the last three years on any number of fronts, and where, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's a very right wing agenda and at times a very destructive agenda. And it's ideologically, with blinders on and moving forward without . . . But again that sort of thing, they will feel the effects of that come the election in November.

So this is very important to all of us here in Saskatchewan — wildlife habitat, the funds. Again as I spoke previously and said that the fund is . . . Previously I would think that the fund was basically used to purchase, perhaps purchase lands. And there will be now a section where the minister will be allowed to appoint . . . a minister will be allowed to contract-in services, other services, to put forward or to carry out the department's directions. And that is . . . that in itself raises some issues just because they're not really clearly identified who those services would be contracted from.

In that is under 11, section 20, 11(1) is amended:

**by repealing clause (b) and substituting the following:**

“ the acquisition, by purchase, lease or otherwise, of any equipment or materials or the retention of any services that the minister considers necessary to restore degraded fish or wildlife populations for fish or wildlife habitat, to create new fishing, hunting or trapping opportunities or to manage fish . . . [and] habitat, wildlife or wildlife habitat.”

Now again, what services would that be? Would it be from the groups who mention . . . Would it be from Ducks Unlimited? Would it be from the Sask Wildlife Federation? Who in fact would that be from? These are very important questions for us. And again here we find that perhaps not very clear in what the intent of the legislation is.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I trust that you understand the . . . or at least our reluctance here to simply have this Bill go through until we have contacted any number of people with these organizations. And in some ways . . . Well I wouldn't say unfortunate because I think it's our job to contact the various groups, but that when we do it, we're certainly not sure. What is somewhat causing us some concern is that we have to ask: have you been contacted? Have you been spoken to? What exactly was the discussion, and what are your thoughts on the

legislation? In fact in some cases, did you know about the legislation coming because in fact that was not done.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of the minister himself talking about the wildlife fund, the minister talked about:

The . . . Fund was established in the mid-1970s when resident hunters, anglers, and trappers asked the government to place an impost on hunting and fishing licences and to use the revenue to purchase and improve wildlife habitat. [And then] currently, 30 per cent of the revenue generated from the sale of hunting, angling, and trapping licences is directed into the Fish and Wildlife Development Fund. This amounts to approximately 3.5 million annually.

[He went on] the Fish and Wildlife Development Fund provides the money necessary to secure habitat to support a diversity of fish and wildlife species. To date the fund has acquired, through purchase or donation, approximately 212,000 acres of land for wildlife habitat purposes, with many acres under joint title with various partners. Aside from the obvious benefits to hunters, anglers, and outdoor enthusiasts, it is important to note that much of the land continues to be made available to local communities for haying and grazing.

[Now again] the largest piece of this funding goes to the on-the-ground preservation and securement of natural habitats. Over recent years much of this funding has gone to the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation, the Nature Conservancy of Canada, Ducks Unlimited Canada, and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation under cost-sharing arrangements. In [most] . . . instances, a dollar that has gone into the fund from licence sales has leveraged significantly more dollars from the federal government and the private sector through fundraising efforts of non-governmental organizations.

[And then, Mr. Deputy Speaker] as a result of the amendments contained in *The Natural Resources* . . . the current Fish and Wildlife Development Fund steering committee will evolve into the fish and wildlife development advisory council. The council will play a greater role in directing how and where the FWDF resources are spent so as to maximize the value of ecological diversity that those expenditures generate. The council will play a major role in reviewing, evaluating, and making recommendations on agreements proposed or already funded under the Fish and Wildlife Development Fund.

Now it would be things like that that we would have said that should have been followed on each. These are certainly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, common sense approaches to an issue such as natural resources and management of those natural resources.

That they now talk about these, when in fact we wish they would have been talking about that when they allowed 3 million acres of land, protected land go from under the protection in the province . . . so now we have this minister talking about this and having a committee set up that would help advise on this.

And it would seem, it does appear, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that they would now be venturing into further issues where the committee would be allowed to contact or to give advice to the minister. However, of course, the concern is that whether or not the minister will in fact take that advice.

Again here as I mentioned previously, the minister has the ability to contract out. We are not certain what that exactly will mean. So I think all in all, with some more consultation with these groups, with some more work in . . . providing we can have a minister that would in fact listen to the advisory council, we might see some positive results here. However as I started out, Mr. Deputy Speaker, earlier, it is with concern and more than just a slight concern that we have regarding actions of this government when comes to these very sensitive areas and things that are very important to the people of this province.

With those remarks, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know that a good number of my colleagues also wish to enter into the debate on this and other issues and other Bills proposed by this government. And with that, I would adjourn debate.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Saskatoon Fairview has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 155, *The Natural Resources Amendment Act, 2010*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to join in the debate and certainly talking about the Human Rights Code amendment Act, Bill 160, and to maybe inject a bit of a comment that I would have from my perspective in terms of the intent of the Bill.

I understood that the minister gave a fairly lengthy introduction of the Bill in terms of the intent and certainly the information attached as to what he intends to do with the Bill in the process.

And, Mr. Speaker, from my understanding, reading through the document, I can surmise that what the minister wishes to do — when you are talking about human rights complaints — is do one simple thing which is the primary focus of the intent of this Bill, is to simply replace a tribunal that typically hears some of the complaints and makes a decision and to take the tribunal process and have that tribunal process taken to the court system. And that's where the courts themselves would hear some of the complaints around human rights cases.

As many people that are listening may or may not know, what happens typically if there's a human rights complaint based on

a number of issues, whether it's age, race, any kind of discriminatory practice in the workplace or even in the public in general . . . that anybody can launch a human rights complaint. And typically what happens is the Human Rights Commission prepares all the documentation. They have people that will help in that regard, and then the person that would be making the complaint, the complainant, along with the help of the commission, would then approach — in the past — a tribunal. Lawyers, a bunch of lawyers sit there and hear your case as to why you feel that you were offended.

Now what the minister wants to do is he wants to replace that tribunal of lawyers to actually take it to the Court of Queen's Bench, so it goes back to the court system. Because there are some changes there that some groups would like and some people certainly like to also ask questions about, and that's one of the reasons why today we're certainly taking a lot of interest on any kind of activity relating to the Human Rights Commission.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I point out that there is still a lot of information forthcoming in relation to this Bill. And some of the points that the minister makes and other folks certainly support — I think a number of commission members may support — they made reference to Judge Arnot who is well known and certainly has a high degree of admiration from a number of different groups throughout the province. He noted that — Judge Arnot did — that some of these changes may be of value to the province overall. And, Mr. Speaker, I certainly want to take the time to understand the file completely, but in these opening comments I want to point out, to explain to people as best I can the way I understand it, the changes that are being proposed.

And the challenges with the tribunal, in terms of the minister's comments and notes, is that many times the lawyers that make up the tribunal, they have their own practices. Certainly they don't have tenure. They don't have administrative support or financial support to do the job as best they can, and that in itself may be a weakness, or it may be a flaw within the system, and that's something that ought to be recognized and certainly something that ought to be addressed.

And his logic in terms of trying to replace that tribunal, the group of lawyers that hear these concerns and take it to the court system, well perhaps there is some discussion and some merit to what is trying to be accomplished in that regard because of the challenges identified with the tribunal members who are primarily lawyers that, again as I mentioned, they may have their own practices. They certainly have their own lives. They don't have the administrative support, and so on and so forth. So that may not necessarily weaken but it may certainly at some point create some problems for the process that we're speaking of today.

[16:00]

The other issue I would raise is that in terms of the Court of Queen's Bench, as noted by the minister himself and a number of other different groups, they have the capacity to certainly address a lot of the human rights complaints because I see some of the numbers. There may have been 10 cases last year in which some of these complaints actually went to a court

proceeding. And that's something that ought to be taken into consideration as well.

Obviously the courts have lawyers that have many, many years of experience. They have experience with charter issues. So there is a lot of merit in the court system that the minister makes reference to in terms of how they would be not necessarily better equipped but perhaps better positioned than the band of lawyers that form the commission's hearing stage.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if you look at the factors out there, what the minister's trying to do, the simple fact is trying to move the process of determining some of these cases from a tribunal of lawyers into the court system for a variety of reasons. Those are some of the things that we want to certainly pay attention to.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we are having other meetings and other groups that are coming forward to talk about some of the changes that are being proposed. And we obviously want to respect the process, and we certainly want to respect their opportunity to present to us as the official opposition what they see as some of the challenges attached to this Bill, some of the shortcomings, and some of the other great ideas they may have that can actually improve the process. As an opposition, we're all certainly supportive of any process that is streamlined, becomes more efficient and becomes more effective.

And certainly the Human Rights Code and the Human Rights Commission themselves, their work is valued and very valuable. And we certainly want to continue seeing that work help many, many people throughout Saskatchewan.

The final point I would make, Mr. Speaker, is that while the intent of the Bill is to look at the structure and how we deal with human rights violations and how we treat potential complainants, the process itself is straightforward. And one of the things I think we ought to do is to try and make sure we focus on the intent of the Human Rights Code to make sure that it is there to help people and to make sure that the process is always tweaked and always adjusted to make it more efficient, more responsive, and certainly more effective.

Mr. Speaker, at the outset when I was asked to speak on the Human Rights Code amendment Act, I was going to bring in the whole notion of the ID Bill that was going to be presented and passed by the Sask Party government, in which the Aboriginal people would be dramatically affected and so would the immigration community and, I think, the elderly people as well. And that's the whole notion of *The Election Act*.

I think that the election Bill that's being brought forward — where there is photo ID required for voting in elections — I think that's another violation. I think in total fairness to the people that are out there and that are not being heard, this whole notion of photo ID to cast a ballot is absolutely ludicrous. It's very silly. And perhaps the Human Rights Commission could certainly engage themselves and make the connection as to how this diminishes and certainly alters the intent of many people on how they want to develop democracy throughout Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of things and issues to talk about. There's a lot of notes that have to be incorporated in this

process. And as much as we get an explanation of the minister himself in terms of what's being intended here, we still want to hold forums with a number of other groups to ask for more advice, to ask for more input, and to see if there's any ways and means, if there's ways and means that we can improve the Bill. And on that note, Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill 160. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — The member from Athabasca has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 160. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

### Bill No. 149

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

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

**Ms. Morin:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure, Mr. Speaker, to be able to speak to Bill 149, *The Income Tax Amendment Act*. This Bill, Mr. Speaker, implements a five-year tax holiday for mining corporations making investments of at least \$125 million and maintaining at least 75 full-time employees.

On . . . [inaudible] . . . of it, Mr. Speaker, the opposition is supportive of this measure and of any measure that would bring new corporate head offices to Saskatchewan. But as we've all learned in the debate about the future of the Potash Corporation in Saskatchewan, the devil lies clearly in the details.

So, Mr. Speaker, when we look at for instance what's happened recently with the BH Billiton situation, where the Premier was quite adamant about the fact that it's a strategic resource and that the sale of . . . to BH Billiton, I should say, should not be approved by the Government of Canada. And in doing so, Mr. Speaker, the Premier cited a number of promises that were made by the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan to the people of Saskatchewan in terms of some of the changes that it would implement going forward.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's just interesting to see what's happened so far out of those promises. We were told that corporate head office would be expanded and that there would be people from the executive that would be moving to Saskatchewan, transferred to Saskatchewan, and that we would see of course new purchases of homes in Saskatoon where the branch office is located, Mr. Speaker. And from that deal we saw Mr. Doyle himself say that he was going to purchase a home in Saskatoon.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I found it very interesting that *The Globe and Mail* reported that Mr. Doyle previously had a residence in Saskatoon along the riverbank, I understand, that was worth approximately \$6 million or so. And in this new pledge to Saskatchewan from the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan,



because our Premier stood up for the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan and didn't allow the sale of BH Billiton to go through, Mr. Speaker, we saw a phenomenal commitment by Bill Doyle himself of purchasing a condo that's 1,000 square feet and worth \$300,000, Mr. Speaker. That's quite the investment in Saskatchewan real estate, Mr. Speaker. And you know, we're quite pleased to see that he's purchased some real estate in Saskatchewan, not quite equalling the \$6 million home that he once held in Saskatoon, but nonetheless it is a piece of property in Saskatchewan. And I guess Mr. Doyle feels that he's fulfilled his promise to the people of Saskatchewan in terms of that relocation.

And, Mr. Speaker, we're interested to see how many other promises are going to come to fruition and in what way, Mr. Speaker, as I said. The devil is clearly in the details on this one, Mr. Speaker, as to how this is all going to come out in the wash.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what's interesting about this is that we are seeing the government yet again make some sort of a concession for industry in terms of spurring on the economy. And that's something obviously that the opposition is not opposed to in terms of wanting to ensure that we see good, positive economic growth in this province, Mr. Speaker. But we also need to see that the resource that the Premier referred to as a strategic resource — which is potash, Mr. Speaker — that this strategic resource also sees the return that it should for the people of the province of Saskatchewan, given that it is a strategic resource that is owned by the people of the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

And currently, Mr. Speaker, what are the people of Saskatchewan seeing for a return on that strategic resource? They're currently seeing 5 cents on the dollar, Mr. Speaker. That's right, Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan gets to keep 95 cents on every dollar that is earned and 5 cents, 5 cents is returned to the people of this province.

Now the member for Moose Jaw Northeast, I believe, believes that there is something quite different. And I'd be interested in hearing what the member from Moose Jaw has to say about that. Because, Mr. Speaker, what's interesting about that is we've not heard anything different from the Sask Party government when this has come up in discussion in the legislature over the last three days. But apparently the member from Moose Jaw feels he knows more than the Minister of Energy and Resources. Perhaps he knows more than the Minister of Finance. Perhaps he knows more than the Premier himself, Mr. Speaker, because the member from Moose Jaw feels that that's inaccurate. But you know, Mr. Speaker, the truth of the matter is 5 cents on the dollars. Five cents on the dollar is the return that Saskatchewan people are seeing from their ownership, from their strategic resource called potash, in the province of Saskatchewan.

Now it's interesting that of course obviously the member from Moose Jaw and the member from Energy and Resources feel that that seems to be a fair return, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, that's very interesting because that policy was put in place many, many, many years ago, Mr. Speaker, I dare to say over 20 years ago, in order to spur on the economy in the province, Mr. Speaker. And that was done by the NDP

administration in the early '90s to spur on the economy, Mr. Speaker, and the industry of potash in this province, Mr. Speaker.

But what's happened since then? It's gone from \$130 a tonne, Mr. Speaker, to the rate that it's currently at and climbing, Mr. Speaker. Now why is that? That is simply because the world needs potash. The world needs potash, Mr. Speaker, and that's not going to change any time soon. The corn belt in the United States needs potash. China needs potash. There are a number of different areas around the world that need that strategic resource, Mr. Speaker.

So with that high need that's currently in place, Mr. Speaker, around the world, does anyone really and honestly think that we aren't going to see growth in the potash industry in Saskatchewan just because we think that there should be a review of the royalty structure in this province, Mr. Speaker? It's absolutely ludicrous.

And what's even more ludicrous, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that we currently have a Sask Party government who is pledging not to look at reviewing that royalty structure for 16 years. They love to throw around the figure of 16 years. They're saying that they're not going to review the royalty structure for four terms. Four terms, Mr. Speaker, that's 16 years in total. Now how irresponsible can any government be to be able to say something like that? That's so far out in terms of having no idea what the future holds for potash in the future, Mr. Speaker. Sixteen years is when they're saying that they're going to do a review of the royalty rates in potash, Mr. Speaker. It is absolutely unconscionable that they are going to allow the Saskatchewan people to not have a fair return on a strategic resource that the Premier touted so greatly across the country, Mr. Speaker, and presented himself as Captain Canada on the issue, Mr. Speaker, for 16 years, Mr. Speaker. It's unconscionable.

Now what's more interesting about that, Mr. Speaker, is the amount of projects that this government, the Sask Party government, has not been able to go forward with because they don't have the money. Why? Because they're spending it in various other ways that . . . We know I could get into a long debate about their priorities versus the priorities of Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker. But nonetheless that's how the Sask Party government has decided to spend the money and the revenue, the record revenue that has been coming into this province since 2005, Mr. Speaker. And since 2007, the revenue that has increased has been so dramatic that it's hard to believe that they're still looking at a shortfall, Mr. Speaker.

So when you look at it in terms of Bill 149, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting that the Sask Party government is not considering a royalty review. Because a royalty review, Mr. Speaker, would bring more money into the province of Saskatchewan. More money for what, Mr. Speaker? More money to move ahead with some of the projects that even the Sask Party government isn't able to move ahead on and can't even keep their promises on, Mr. Speaker. More money, Mr. Speaker, for education purposes, Mr. Speaker. More money for health, Mr. Speaker. More money for the environment to do better initiatives, Mr. Speaker, on moving forward with protecting the environment of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, or even mitigating the

circumstances, Mr. Speaker, by speaking to Alberta about the fact that we're receiving 70 per cent of the pollution that's coming from the oil sands.

But this government doesn't care about that. They don't care about talking to Alberta and ensuring that Saskatchewan is being compensated for the fact that it's Saskatchewan that's absorbing 70 per cent of those emissions, Mr. Speaker.

So the royalty review, Mr. Speaker, is something that is absolutely required. It's being touted by a number of third party validators, Mr. Speaker, who are clearly people who have expertise in the field, Mr. Speaker. And yet the Sask Party government says, you know what? We're comfortable with the fact that Saskatchewan people are getting five cents on the dollar, and we're not going to look at doing a royalty review for 16 years. Sixteen years, Saskatchewan people can suffer the fact that they don't have the amount of money that they need to be able to do the things that they want to do with the programs that they want to see happen in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. It's unconscionable.

[16:15]

So when you look at Bill 149, Mr. Speaker, again we see that, you know, the Sask Party government is ensuring that it looks after the industry in terms of spurring on growth. But it does nothing, the Sask Party government is doing nothing to look after the interests of the people of Saskatchewan in terms of the return that they're seeing on those strategic resources, Mr. Speaker, those strategic resources being potash and uranium in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Five cents on the dollar is what Saskatchewan people are currently seeing from the strategic resource of potash in this province, Mr. Speaker.

And I'm curious to hear what the Sask Party member from Moose Jaw has to offer to his caucus tomorrow by way of providing more information. I know that our critic of Finance is curious as well to hear what the member from Moose Jaw has to say about that. I'm sure that the Sask Party caucus is interested to hear what the member from Moose Jaw has to say about that because clearly so far there hasn't been any contention on the fact that Saskatchewan people are seeing five cents on the dollar, Mr. Speaker, five cents on the dollar from a strategic resource. It's unconscionable.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it'll be interesting to see what commitments mining companies have made in exchange for this tax holiday and how successful this government is at making sure they keep their commitments because given their recent record it's hard to be optimistic. Mr. Speaker, this government, this Sask Party government has a very poor record of keeping the promises that it's made to the people of Saskatchewan.

And I refer to a number of them, Mr. Speaker. How about the surgical care centre, Mr. Speaker? How about the fact that instead of pumping millions and millions of dollars into private health care delivery in this province, Mr. Speaker, they didn't go ahead with the surgical care centre that was promised for Regina, Mr. Speaker? Now that surgical care centre would have addressed a lot of the backlog that it's currently seeing, Mr. Speaker. It would have addressed a lot of the orthopedic surgeries that need to be addressed, Mr. Speaker.

But instead of putting the millions of dollars into making that promise come to fruition, instead of doing that, Mr. Speaker, they're pumping millions of dollars into private health care delivery in this province, Mr. Speaker. And why the Premier thinks that that is something that the people of Saskatchewan would like to see move ahead, that instead of enhancing the public health care system, Mr. Speaker, they are putting more money into private health care delivery, Mr. Speaker, again is not something that the opposition can understand, given the amount of feedback that we've been getting on the issue and the amount of concerns that we've been getting on the issue about the privatization agenda of the Sask Party government, Mr. Speaker.

And that's what it's all about, Mr. Speaker. It's all about a privatization agenda, whether it's to do with the Crown corporations and cutting off bits and pieces of various Crown corporations like SaskTel and SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] and SaskEnergy, Mr. Speaker, or SaskPower. Regardless of whether it's that, regardless of whether it's private health care delivery, it's all about a privatization agenda.

Now the Sask Party knows well enough to know that the people of Saskatchewan are not very excited about a privatization agenda. Matter of fact, it was very clear in the 2003 election that the people of this province do not want to see a large privatization agenda in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

But, Mr. Speaker, despite the fact that the Sask Party government heard loud and clear in the 2003 election that people do not want to see a privatization agenda in this province, Mr. Speaker, what did they do in the 2007 election? 2007 election, Sask Party government — the Sask Party at that time, I should say — promised the people of Saskatchewan that it doesn't have a privatization agenda. It doesn't want to privatize the Crown corporations of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. But what happened after the Sask Party won the 2007 election? They couldn't wait to get their hands on the Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker. They couldn't wait to start sawing off bits and pieces of certain Crowns like SGI, SaskTel, SaskEnergy, SaskPower.

And they look stunned right now at me, Mr. Speaker. I don't know. Maybe they haven't been following what's been happening, but I'd be glad to send over the list of Crowns that have seen a privatization agenda chipping away at those certain Crowns, Mr. Speaker. I'd be glad to send that over to the office . . . to the Sask Party government.

But, Mr. Speaker, so we wonder again, are the terms of Bill 149 true and clear, Mr. Speaker? Is it really as innocuous as it currently seems, Mr. Speaker, because we're seeing quite the different story on a number of other fronts.

Let's also talk about other promises they made, like for instance they said they wouldn't introduce most . . . essential services legislation. Well, it wasn't within . . . It was within, what? Less than seven days, Mr. Speaker. Why, I believe it was the Minister of Health that said that actually, and there were other as well. But Minister of Health himself was quoted numerous times as saying that they have no agenda, no agenda to

introduce essential services legislation. Within seven days of being elected, what happened, Mr. Speaker? There was an announcement made that they are going to move forward with essential services legislation. There you go, Mr. Speaker. They say one thing and yet they do quite another, despite the fact that they heard loud and clear that people were worried about them introducing essential services legislation.

And you know, one of my colleagues just said, it's a trust factor. And you know what? He is right. He is absolutely right. The member from Cumberland is correct when he says it's a trust issue, Mr. Speaker. Because right now the people of Saskatchewan are saying we have less and less trust in the Sask Party government because they always say one thing and they do another. They promise a surgical care centre and then they announce they're not going to do it. They promise a carbon sequestration project and then they announce that they can't do it. It's constant broken promises from this Sask Party government.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's constant broken promises the other way. They promise they're not going to introduce essential services legislation, but what do they do shortly after they're elected? They announce that that's exactly what they're going to do.

And, Mr. Speaker, they do so in a way without public consultation. And that's what's the most offensive issue, Mr. Speaker, is that when they go against the will of the public, they don't hold public consultations because they know what the outcome is going to be and they don't want to hear the outcome and they don't care about the outcome. They have their agenda and that's what they're sticking to. No different than the privatization agenda that's happening with the Crown corporations in this province currently under the Sask Party government.

And you know, they think they're pretty cute, Mr. Speaker, because they think, gee, people don't know about this. Matter of fact, I'm surprised. I think some of the members opposite don't even know about it, Mr. Speaker. But the fact is, people are paying attention and there's a list being made, Mr. Speaker. And people are growing concerned. There is a list being made. And you know, the minister, I still don't know what portfolio unfortunately he's responsible for, but anyways the minister for, I think it's Immigration still . . . Is it Immigration? Yes. So the Minister for Immigration, he doesn't know there's a list, Mr. Speaker. But again, like I said, we'll be glad to send that information over.

And no, it's no longer Status of Women because I know that the minister found out at some point that he was responsible for the Status of Women. But I know that the minister's no longer responsible for the Status of Women because it was a surprise to him at the time, so I know that having the Status of Women given to another minister is not a surprise to him. So I know that that point is clear, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, I understand that the issue around royalties is something that's very sensitive to the members opposite. Because they're hearing from Saskatchewan people that people don't feel that that is something that is prudent at the time, given the changes in the world market with potash in terms of the prices that are changing and the need that is taking place,

Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, the fact that the Sask Party government doesn't want to hear this NDP opposition talking about wanting to have a royalty review in this province on the strategic resources of uranium and potash, Mr. Speaker, comes as no surprise to us since they're so far out there, they're so far out there on the fact that they have already said publicly many times that they are not interested in a royalty review for four terms. That's 16 years, Mr. Speaker. That is pretty hard to reel that hook back into the rod, Mr. Speaker. So it's no surprise that they don't want to talk about the royalty review because they're so far out there that they can't really change their position on that.

But we in the NDP opposition understand that there is always changes going on in the global market, Mr. Speaker. There's always changes going on, and it's very important for a government to be flexible and to be able to react to those changes in a timely fashion, Mr. Speaker. And with those global market changes, Mr. Speaker, comes the understanding under the NDP opposition that what was once a good policy to stimulate the industry in the province of Saskatchewan is no longer a fair policy to the people of Saskatchewan.

When you see the CEO [chief executive officer] of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan earning \$500 million when the people of the province of Saskatchewan aren't even earning close to that, that's no longer a fair system of royalties, Mr. Speaker. The people of Saskatchewan deserve to see more than five cents on the dollar. The Premier himself has called potash a strategic resource. The Premier himself has gone to bat for the people of the province of Saskatchewan on that strategic resource in terms of ensuring that there isn't some jeopardy of that strategic resource, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, the Premier himself should be someone who is wanting to see more than five cents on the dollar from that strategic resource.

And you know, we can understand why the CEO of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan doesn't want to see that formula change because that's his responsibility. His responsibility is to the shareholders of the Potash Corporation to ensure that they can get the maximum amount of return from the industry that they are pursuing in the province of Saskatchewan.

But, Mr. Speaker, the Premier of Saskatchewan is in effect the CEO for the people of Saskatchewan, and his primary concern is supposed to be the good and welfare and what the people of Saskatchewan should be able to see as a return from their strategic resource. So the Premier of Saskatchewan shouldn't be so concerned with protecting the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan or anyone else that's going to be looking at mining, the strategic resources that we have in this province — being potash and uranium — and should be more concerned about what Saskatchewan people get to see from the return on that strategic resource.

He's supposed to be looking out for the good and welfare and for the return for the people of Saskatchewan from those strategic resources, Mr. Speaker. So with Bill 49, Mr. Speaker, when this Bill looks at implementing a five-year tax holiday for mining corporations making investments in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, we want to ensure that the gains

for the people of Saskatchewan are still being met and that there's a fair and equitable balance in terms of what the people of Saskatchewan should be seeing from their ownership of those strategic resources, Mr. Speaker. And that's not something that the Sask Party government is currently proving themselves to be responsible for.

Currently the Sask Party government seems to be more concerned about protecting the industry, making excuses for the industry versus looking out for the best interest of Saskatchewan people. And when Saskatchewan people are having difficulty meeting their rents, Mr. Speaker, when Saskatchewan people are using food banks dramatically in terms of . . . a dramatic increase in using food banks in the province, Mr. Speaker, especially over the last year, and when Saskatchewan people can't afford their utilities because the Sask Party government has decided to cut the lowest cost utility bundle despite the fact that the province, the Sask Party government is seeing record revenue in the province of Saskatchewan since 2007 when they were elected, Mr. Speaker, despite all these reasons, the Sask Party government sees no reason to do a royalty review in the province of Saskatchewan to ensure that there is more money coming to the people of Saskatchewan to be able to offset some of those higher costs, Mr. Speaker.

And those costs, Mr. Speaker, are especially hard on the people who have the least amount of means to pay for those increases in costs, Mr. Speaker. And it's unconscionable that we have a Sask Party government that will cut the lowest cost utility bundle, that won't see more return on the return it gets from the potash in the province, Mr. Speaker.

They won't fight for equalization with the Harper Tories, despite the fact that the Harper Tories promised the government . . . the province of Saskatchewan, promised the people of Saskatchewan that if the people of Saskatchewan elected the Harper Tories to government that they would see an \$800 million return on their non-renewable resources, Mr. Speaker. So an \$800 million per year promise was broken by the Harper Tories. And what did we see from the Sask Party government? Well I recall that we saw from them the withdrawal of a court challenge on that issue, Mr. Speaker.

[16:30]

Mr. Speaker, the former NDP government said that that was unfair; it was a broken promise, and that the Government of Canada — being the Harper Tories or the Harper government as how he likes to refer to himself now — should be held accountable. But what did the Sask Party government do under our Premier, Mr. Speaker? It decided that it was going to remove that court challenge, that it was going to drop that court challenge, that apparently, according to the Sask Party government, it was okay that we weren't going to see an additional \$800 million per year coming into the province of Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, when you look at what that amounts to per capita — well we consider we had one million, a population of slightly over one million, Mr. Speaker — it is a dramatic increase in the coffers, the revenue of this province of Saskatchewan that would have been able . . . could have been

put to good use, not the least of which their own broken promises on a surgical care centre and a carbon sequestration project, Mr. Speaker. So it's quite surprising that once again we see that they have no interest in properly representing the people of Saskatchewan when it comes to discussions with the Harper Conservatives.

So let's recap, Mr. Speaker. We see a court challenge that has been dropped with the Harper Conservatives amounting to the tune of \$800 million a year. We see no discussions with the Government of Alberta with respect to mitigating the fact that 70 per cent of the air emissions of the pollution from the oil sands in Alberta is directly affecting the economy of Saskatchewan and the health of Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker. We see no representation from the Sask Party government in terms of seeing a better return on potash royalty, Mr. Speaker, and they're quite content with Saskatchewan people only receiving 5 cents on the dollar from their strategic resource that the people of Saskatchewan own, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, one has to wonder when exactly the Sask Party government is going to kick it into gear and start representing the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Because right now we're not seeing much of that. We're seeing a whole bunch of protectionism of their friends in Alberta, their friends at the Harper government, and their friends in the industry, but we're not seeing them protecting the people of Saskatchewan and looking out for the best interests of the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

And it's absolutely unconscionable that these people can sit there smugly, Mr. Speaker, and not think that this is something that they should be looking into, Mr. Speaker. Because clearly there is a lot of money that is owed to the province of Saskatchewan, that the province of Saskatchewan should be able to see from that, Mr. Speaker, and it's surprising that the Sask Party government doesn't feel it's their responsibility to make those changes happen by speaking up and speaking out on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there's also questions about the origins of this specific piece of legislation. And again, who benefits from it? Right, Mr. Speaker? With respect to Bill 149 specifically, who benefits from this legislation? And as I said, Mr. Speaker, the only ones that we can see benefiting from, right now, are industry.

Now if it's, like I said, if there is positive spinoffs from the legislation in terms of ensuring that there's growth in industry, Mr. Speaker, the opposition can understand that. Because clearly the NDP opposition, the NDP government at the time, put a lot of policies into place — especially in the years from 1991 until 1999 and moving forward as well, but especially in those very lean years, Mr. Speaker, those very lean years when in 1991 the NDP government came into office and found out that the Devine Tories, prior to 1991, had accrued in a \$15 billion deficit on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan.

Now again we see these similarities, Mr. Speaker. We see the similarities between the former Devine Tories who accrued a \$15 billion debt on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan, and we see the current Sask Party government who clearly wants to distance themselves from the former Conservative government,

who is not looking out for the financial best interests of the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

And isn't it funny that it's always the conservative governments of this province, Mr. Speaker, who are very good at spending and are not very good at accruing the money that the people of Saskatchewan so desperately need to move forward with respect to the programs that they want to see move forward, Mr. Speaker.

So like I said, who benefits? And are the benefits likely to result in significant new greenfield investment, or is this something intended to benefit only one or two players, Mr. Speaker? Who does Bill 149 benefit? I repeat: are the benefits likely to result in significant new greenfield investment, or is this something intended to benefit simply one or two players, Mr. Speaker?

Now, Mr. Speaker, I hear lots of questions from the Sask Party government. Maybe these are things that they didn't think about before they brought forward Bill 149, which of course wouldn't be a big surprise to the NDP opposition because we've already seen a number of Bills come forward from the Sask Party government that have been ill-conceived and not well thought out and quite frankly, for the most part, Mr. Speaker, haven't undergone proper consultation. And when Bills aren't properly thought through, when Bills don't receive the proper consultation that they should and that they deserve, Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party government ends up putting forward Bills that are problematic and quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, that are just absolutely to the detriment of Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the other question is, who asked for this Bill specifically? Who asked for the changes to Bill 149? And, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting that when we talk about other Bills that sometimes they'll put forward the names of organizations that they claim are the stakeholders that they've consulted and that they claim are the stakeholders that are in favour of their Bills. Well when I read through the notes on this Bill, Mr. Speaker, more specifically I guess the second reading comments by the minister, I have difficulty finding anything that refers to who the minister is wanting to refer to as being proponents of this Bill, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, we'd like to have more knowledge, Mr. Speaker, on who was consulted — and not the obvious industry players that would reap the benefits of this Bill, Mr. Speaker, but also others that would have some say, some other stakeholders that would have some more expertise and knowledge on the issues, Mr. Speaker, and who would want to have some input on Bill 149, Mr. Speaker. So we'd like to know, who asked for this? Who was consulted? And what exactly were the comments that the government received, if those consultations were properly constituted and if those consultations actually took place, Mr. Speaker?

So, Mr. Speaker, as I said, just to recap, we want to know — from the NDP opposition — is this Bill simply there to provide another tax holiday for industry, Mr. Speaker? Is there going to be meaningful growth in the industry because of this Bill, Mr. Speaker, which, you know . . . The opposition will be curious to see what happens in terms of when this Bill ends up being passed by the Sask Party government and what happens from

that, Mr. Speaker. Or is this something that is just a quick idea that was brought forward that the Sask Party government wanted to do to help out a friend of theirs, Mr. Speaker, or one or two players in the industry, Mr. Speaker, because again as I said, we see them moving quickly on Bills like this that we haven't heard of a lot of consultation on. But what we also hear from the Sask Party government is complete inaction on something like a royalty review for 16 years, Mr. Speaker. That's a promise that they've already made — four terms, 16 years. They're not going to do a royalty review for 16 years.

Despite the fact of changes in the global market, despite the fact that there is a higher need for the strategic resource that the world has now talked about . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And someone else is chirping about getting the facts. And like I've said, I'd be more than willing to provide the facts regarding Bill 149 and some of the other things I've talked about today because clearly they're still needing some more information.

And it's very unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, that they don't have these discussions in caucus obviously because, you know, when we were in government . . . and they loved the number 16, Mr. Speaker. So I'll put this out there. When we were a government for 16 years, when the NDP was in government for 16 years, we did discuss extensively Bills in the caucus first, Mr. Speaker, and then at various other committees, Mr. Speaker. And then it would come back to caucus and then also go to cabinet for approval.

So it's interesting that some of the members in the Sask Party government don't have the details and the facts on Bills such as this and the information that I've provided today because they're asking for those facts to be sent over. And like I said, if those individual members want to make themselves known to me, I'd be glad to do so, Mr. Speaker. It's just hard to decipher who exactly has been chirping from their seats because there's many people in the House obviously, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's many questions that I've already presented, and there's a lot of information that the NDP opposition is still looking for. We're looking for some clarification. I'm hoping that the Sask Party government will be reciprocal. As I said, I'm glad to provide any facts and information on anything I've spoken about today or any other time, for that matter. And it would be very nice if the Sask Party government would be wanting to be reciprocal in that offer, Mr. Speaker, and provide some answers to the questions that I've posed today in my comments and the questions I'm sure that will be posed and have been posed by some of my colleagues with respect to Bill 149 as well.

So as I said, there's many questions that are yet to be, need to be explored in committee. So at this time, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to adjourn debate and allow others to weigh in on their comments as well.

**The Speaker:** — The member from Regina Walsh Acres has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 149. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**Bill No. 150**

[16:45]

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

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

**Mr. Harper:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it truly is a pleasure for me to have the opportunity to enter into this particular debate in this fine Assembly of ours and to have the opportunity to share a few of my thoughts on Bill No. 150, *An Act to amend The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Act*.

And I will certainly like to let the member opposite know that it will eventually get to committee, but we will need to have the opportunity for the opposition to scrutinize this Bill because, like many Bills, it needs to be carefully looked at before it can be sent on the committee so that the good people of Saskatchewan can be . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well it takes time to do good work, you know, to the member from Pelly. It takes a little time to do good work, and that's what this opposition does. It does good work. And we're very, very efficient and very effective and very thorough on our examination of the government Bills. And we have to because the government does challenge us on a regular basis by providing the Bills that need to be looked at very, very closely.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this particular Bill is short in stature, I guess you would say. It only has six clauses including the coming into force clause, but that doesn't mean, Mr. Speaker, that it's short in the requirement of the opposition to do a thorough job and to make sure that this Bill does address the issues and the intentions, I guess you would say, of the government. And I think in some ways, in some aspects there are good points in this Bill, and I think the government has recognized that.

And I would say that this Bill basically, Mr. Speaker, when I've glanced at it, it basically has two main provisions. The first one is to — and I think this is a very good thing — this is to clarify how spousal survival benefits are to be calculated in the case of a person who may have been married more than once and is now a superannuate and is now collecting the pension, and how that needs to be properly balanced, properly calculated in those cases where there is more than one marriage involved and who may have both current and former spouses who would have claimed the right, I guess you would say, to qualify to receive some type of survivors benefit.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's very important that that be addressed because we have a duty to ensure that the superannuates are treated properly because, at some point in time, Mr. Speaker, we're all going to be there. And to ensure that in a case where there are spouses and in some cases multiple spouses, then we have to ensure that the legislation here covers and certainly balances those situations so that there's fairness and equality in the treatment of spouses in those situations. And, Mr. Speaker, I think that's fair to say because at some point in time we're all going to find ourselves as a superannuate.

And it's I suppose a situation where, in my opinion at least, superannuates actually lose power or lose their ability to negotiate on their behalf, whereas we enjoy that very much so here today, as those of us who are elected officials within this Assembly, we have the power and the ability to make those changes. This is why it is necessary, when we approach issues such as this is, that we can ensure that there has been a thorough discussion with the people who are affected.

After all, Mr. Speaker, it's the superannuates and their spouses who are the people who are on the front lines of this particular issue. And this is why it's essential to have their thoughts, their ideas, their experiences added to this mix. So our role as legislators here — the role of government members, the role of opposition members — is to ensure that when we produce a piece of legislation, when it does go through committee, when it does get its final approval in the third reading here in the Assembly, that it reflects properly and adequately the needs of those who are the front line troops here, in this case superannuates and their spouses.

So, Mr. Speaker, it is, I think, incumbent upon all members of the legislature to ensure that we have a proper consultation process and a proper discussion with the stakeholders on any piece of legislation, but particularly on this one because superannuates are the people who have dedicated their lives to this province. They are the people who have provided us, the elected people and the people of this great province of Saskatchewan, the services that we have so much enjoyed and in many cases benefited from, Mr. Speaker.

And it is I think incumbent upon us to ensure that when these folks become superannuates, when they retire, that they do so with a system and a support mechanism through the legislation that supports their needs as adequately as it is possible for this province to do so. And in order to do that, we have to have the feedback and we have to have the input from those front-line groups, the superannuates who are ongoing and for those who have gone before us, as some of us are getting closer to that, Mr. Speaker, than others but we'll all eventually get to that stage.

And I think we want to ensure that those people who have served us well through this province, served us well as civil servants in this great province of ours, receive due attention, the attention that they have earned, and to ensure that the legislation that supports superannuation is legislation that is adequate to meet the needs of those who are superannuating.

Mr. Speaker, I suppose the other part of this Bill, the other provision of this Bill is of concern. I think, Mr. Speaker, and it goes on to state, it goes on to state that the second provision of the Bill continues the same pattern as we've seen from this government before, is not necessarily being forthright with everything. And in this particular case, the government's proposing that to remove from public record or from the public recording the amount of money and the benefits being paid out to individual superannuates. Mr. Speaker, I believe it even goes on further to say that they wouldn't even require the names of superannuates in the documentation of government.

Now in the past, Mr. Speaker, that information was available because the name of the individual and the amount the individual was receiving as a superannuate was made available through the public accounting system, and the public was available to that through public . . . That information was available to the public through public accounts. As I understand it, Mr. Speaker, this particular legislation, once passed, would change that process.

And that then, Mr. Speaker, makes it more difficult for the opposition certainly, but for the people of Saskatchewan to be able to recognize whether or not individuals may be using their ability to double-dip. And that is, they could be drawing . . . They could be superannuate. They could be drawing their superannuation as well as doing work for the government, contract work for the government, and it wouldn't be available for the public to know because it wouldn't be, that information would no longer be available through public accounts.

So, Mr. Speaker, that of course raises an issue and a concern with the opposition. And that, Mr. Speaker, I suppose opens the door then to the ability for a government to favour its friends by allowing an early superannuate to withdraw their superannuation early and then go back and doing basically the same job they were doing, but only now doing it under contract. So really being paid twice for the same work from the provincial government.

But that, Mr. Speaker, certainly raises a concern, and that's why the opposition would term that as the ability to double-dip. And the opposition believes that this could result in a former employee having the ability to collect pension benefits while working for the government on a contract basis. And that would otherwise be a double-dipping process and that would not, that information would not be available to the public, would certainly not be available to the opposition. So you know, that is certainly a concern about this legislation, certainly the second portion of this legislation.

But, Mr. Speaker, as I had said earlier, there are some aspects of this legislation that are I think positive, and that is the ability for this legislation to set forward a calculation system that would allow for fair and adequate calculating of a superannuate's survivor's rights to those who might have found themselves to have certainly a spouse or multiple spouses that would qualify for some type of survivor's benefits. And that calculation of course would allow for an equity, I guess you would say, within the process of ensuring that these survivors do receive equal and fair treatment.

The opposition, I would think, wants to have a better understanding of the potential impact of this provision and particularly on the vulnerable people and however it may affect them and how the government certainly would set up a system to ensure that the vulnerable people are protected within the process of doing the calculation for the benefits.

That's why, Mr. Speaker, I think it's absolutely essential on any piece of legislation — not just this one, but any piece of legislation — that the government certainly has an obligation to consult with those people who are the stakeholders, who are the front-line troops, who are being and will be affected by any changes to this legislation. It's been my experience, Mr.

Speaker, in this House for a few years here now, that what one might think is a simply black and white issue is really not. It's always a bit of shade of grey, and that is because of the role that government plays within our society and our economy.

And how it is governed and regulated through our legislation and regulations is that when you make a change to a piece of legislation, it can very well have a domino effect . . . [inaudible] . . . one little piece here it may affect something well down the road. So to ensure that those effects are positive effects and not negative and that no one is hurt or left out in this, it's the role of government to do a very thorough job of researching what effects may happen when a piece of legislation is changed.

In order to do that, Mr. Speaker, I think it's essential that government carries out a meaningful consultation process, not only with the immediate stakeholders, but I think it's the role for government and the responsibility for government to look at carrying out a consultation process with the general public. Because there are those of us, as the older we get, the more concerned we become perhaps over the rules and regulations around superannuation.

But I think it's fair to say that there are many of our people in our great society in this province of ours who recognize that we're all going to get old, and we're going to fall into that system where we will eventually become retired and in some cases a superannuate. And they want to ensure that those rules and regulations that are being amended today, the amendments will have a positive effect on not only in the immediate future here and those people who are now superannuates or soon will be, but they will be in place in a meaningful way into the future, so some of the younger folks who are superannuates today, when they become seniors and certainly be in a position to superannuate, that the system in place and the regulations in place and the legislation in place will reflect in a meaningful way their needs at that time.

So, Mr. Speaker, once again I think this is incumbent upon the government to make sure it has carried out meaningful dialogue with not only the immediate stakeholders but I think with the population of Saskatchewan as a whole. So that then raises the question with me, Mr. Speaker, of why does the government feel the need to make these amendments? Why does the government feel these amendments are required at this time? What was caused the government to say this is a very important issue and this is something that needs to be done and we need to do it now, and we need to have the okay of the Legislative Assembly and the people of this great province to make these changes? What was it, what was it, the issue? What was the circumstances that caused the government to think that this was an immediate issue and had to be addressed within short order here, and therefore brought in Bill 150, the Act to amend the superannuation.

And it's really a short Bill, Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier. It only has six clauses, and it raises concern that the government brought in such a short Bill that really focuses in on two fronts.

And as I said earlier, I think that the clarifying the spousal survival benefit calculation is a very good thing. I think that's something that needs to be done. We don't want to have a situation out there where a spousal calculation is not being done

on a proper basis. In this case, the example being used is an example where a superannuate may have been married on more than one occasions and therefore has two surviving spouses who both have claim, or believe they have rightful claim, to the superannuate's survivor benefits.

So that, Mr. Speaker, I think we can all agree is certainly a step in the right direction and something that needs to be clarified so that there is no misunderstanding, so that there is a clear understanding of what needs to be done.

So, Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of work to do on this Bill yet, and the opposition will need certainly more time to further the review of this Bill. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude my remarks by moving adjournment of debate.

**The Speaker:** — The member from Regina Northeast has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 150, *The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Amendment Act, 2010*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Agreed. Being near the hour of adjournment, this Assembly stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 10 a.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 17:00.]



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