



FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

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The Honourable Don Toth
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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

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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 member from Weyburn-Big Muddy, the Minister Responsible for Environment.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all members of the House I would like to introduce a number of special guests that we have seated in the Speaker's gallery.

It was a bit of a surprise visit for me about an hour and a half ago when I ran into them in the hallway. Of course, I think members of the Assembly will notice the familiar face of Kim Heidebrecht who works in our Legislative Library and does an excellent job for not only members and staff but also the visiting public.

Joining Kim are her mother, Colleen, from Weyburn and also Norm and Bev Alexander and a special friend of theirs, Manuel, who is a new resident to the city of Weyburn. And I had the opportunity to say hello to them, Mr. Speaker. Members may know that I'm related through marriage to the Alexander family, and so I will certainly be on my best behaviour this afternoon. And I'd ask all members to welcome our special guests here to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the House a very special group sitting in the east gallery. It's a group of students, new Canadians coming here from around the world as part of the English as an additional language program offered by the Open Door Society in my riding in Saskatoon. There are 55 students here today. We had a chance to talk earlier about what will happen in the proceedings here, and they're looking very much forward to the day's proceedings.

I'd like to mention the teachers: Don Campbell is up here, Sylvia McCorkindale, and Tsering Mullens. And I'd just ask all members to give these folks a warm welcome to their legislature. Thank you very much.

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join the member opposite in welcoming these individuals, those that are taking this English language course, to their legislature. We know how significant immigration is for the new Saskatchewan, and we're absolutely delighted that they're helping to contribute to our increasingly diverse, dynamic, and cosmopolitan communities, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm absolutely delighted, and I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming these people to their

legislature. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and to all members of the legislature 17 grade 11 students who are in the east gallery. They're part of the Regina Trek School program which is based at Sheldon-Williams Collegiate, and they're accompanied by their teacher, Karen McIver. So I ask all members to welcome them here to the legislature.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition on behalf of citizens of Saskatchewan, in particular renters, Mr. Speaker, that are facing a combination of rising rents and some extremely low vacancy rates in many communities across the province. Many of these folks have been dealt rental increases of almost double to what they were paying, and they are feeling the pain, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, they also acknowledge that a majority of Canadians now live in provinces where rent control guidelines are evident and that the argument that the private market will deliver sufficient affordable housing in the absence of rent control has proven to be false. And the prayer reads:

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

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

Mr. Speaker, these petitions are signed on behalf of citizens in Moose Jaw, Yorkton, Saskatoon, Clavet, and Regina. I so present.

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

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today to present a petition on behalf of the residents of Saskatchewan who wish to bring to our attention that Saskatchewan Seniors Association that has approximately 180 seniors' centres throughout the province, and the vast majority of them are located in rural Saskatchewan, that these centres provide much-needed recreation and social activities as well as important health clinics and workshops and contribute to an enhanced quality of life for many of the seniors who use them. And due to skyrocketing costs of utilities, insurance, taxes, etc., approximately one-quarter of these centres will close in the next 18 months, and the closure of these centres will lead to the deteriorating mental and physical health of seniors, which will lead to an increased stress on long-term care in facilities such as 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 this petition, Mr. Speaker, is signed by over 40 people from Carrot River, St. Walburg, Meota, and Codette. I so present.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition in support of eliminating poverty in Saskatchewan. And we know that freedom from poverty is an enshrined human right by the United Nations and that all citizens are entitled to social and economic security. Saskatchewan's income gap between the rich and the poor continues to grow, and now one in five children in Saskatchewan live in deepening poverty. I'd like to read the prayer:

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

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

I do so present. Thank you very much.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to stand today and present a petition on behalf of my constituents who live in Hampton Village, concerning the need for a new school for their children:

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 live in Hampton Village. I so present.

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

Mr. Quennell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today to present a petition signed by citizens in Saskatchewan concerned about the introduction of Bill 160 before the Legislative Assembly and the detrimental effect it will have on the development of human rights law in the province. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request the Legislative Assembly 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.

Today this copy of the petition is signed by residents of Regina, Moose Jaw, and Melville, Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise once again today to present petitions on behalf of concerned residents from across Saskatchewan as it relates to the mismanagement of our finances by the Sask Party. They allude to the two consecutive deficit budgets, the two years of debt growth, Mr. Speaker, and the burden and consequence this has for Saskatchewan people. This year alone, at a time of unprecedented highs in revenues, adding \$400 million to our public debts bottom line simply isn't acceptable, 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 residents of Estevan. I so submit.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Silver Springs.

Saskatoon's Citizen of the Year

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Last Friday I had the opportunity to bring greetings on behalf of the Premier, the Government of Saskatchewan, and all members of the House at a luncheon in Saskatoon to honour the recipient of the CTV [Canadian Television Network Ltd.]

Citizen of the Year, Ms. Lisa Rendall.

I commend CTV on the excellent job they do in recognizing Saskatoon's outstanding citizens with this annual award.

Lisa joins other influential Saskatoon citizens that have been recipients of this award such as Senator Sid Buckwold, former mayor Cliff Wright, Peter Zakreski, and a former member for Saskatoon Northwest, Ted Merriman.

Saskatchewan's provincial motto is "from many peoples, strength." The CTV Saskatoon Citizen of the Year award has been bestowed on a recipient that is the epitome of this model. Lisa Rendall was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2000, some 11 years ago, and she has faced her battle with an upbeat attitude. Shortly after her initial diagnosis, Lisa made it her mission to raise as much money as possible for breast cancer research. To date, over \$2.5 million has been raised through events such as the C95 Radio Marathon and the Lisa Rendall Golf Classic.

Lisa is a dedicated warrior in the fight against breast cancer and an engaging speaker who brings audiences to laughter and tears as she tells a compelling story of diagnosis and living with incurable cancer. Lisa demonstrates not only true Saskatchewan spirit, but her display of courage has had a positive impact on the many lives that she has touched. What an inspiration to us all. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating Ms. Lisa Rendall on this well-deserved award as Saskatoon's Citizen of the Year.

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

Homelessness Awareness Campaign

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to honour the consciousness-raising efforts of the students at the universities of Regina and Saskatchewan who are taking action to draw attention to the issue of homelessness.

Sleeping outside with none of the comforts of home for five days, Mr. Speaker, these students are raising money for Carmichael Outreach in Regina and Egadz in Saskatoon, community organizations that serve the marginalized and youth at risk. From March 13th to the 18th, they eat and drink only what is donated to them, and they sleep only with pillows and sleeping bags and do it all while attending their classes.

Mr. Speaker, the five days for homelessness national campaign began at the School of Business at the University of Alberta in 2005 when three students decided to live without the comfort and safety most of us take for granted to raise money for local youth emergency shelters.

Since that group of three raised \$2,000, the campaign has spread to 22 campuses this year, and its 2011 goal is to raise 200,000. More importantly than the money raised though is the awareness this student campaign is raising about the issue of homelessness in our society.

Mr. Speaker, I conclude by pointing out that the social work students took the lead role in organizing yesterday's rally in

support of affordable housing here at the legislature. The principled dedication of all these young people can teach us all a lesson about working together to build a society where everyone can feel at home. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Biggar.

Senior Girls' Basketball Team Wins Playoffs

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Biggar Central 2000 senior girls' basketball team went to Unity for conference playoffs on Saturday, March 12th. The senior girls' team consisted of eight players: Jordyn Litwinow, Julianna Tan, Ashley Ries, Stephanie Lichkowski, Edyn Keith, Carlyn Brandt, Ceejay Lehnert, and Sabrina Yurchak. Coached by Cindy Weekes and assisted by Karen Litwinow, the team played against Onion Lake and won, which advanced them to the playoff game against Unity, who they defeated by just one point. The girls now advance to regional play in Shaunavon this Friday and Saturday.

The senior girls' team started out their season with about 13 players, but because of other commitments in the community and some girls having after-school jobs, they were down to seven very dedicated players. The coach pulled up a player from grade 9 to help fill the roster in case of injuries; however she proved to be an asset to the team.

The girls have had a remarkable improvement over the season, therefore were able to pull off that exciting conference win. They haven't been able to advance to regional play in quite a few years, so were absolutely ecstatic when they realized they had made it. Cindy and Karen are very proud of the girls for how hard they have worked. It has certainly been a great season for everyone, especially for the three grade 12 players who will be ending their high school year with exciting playoffs. Thank you.

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

[13:45]

Crime Prevention in North Battleford

Mr. Taylor: — The city of North Battleford last year rated number one on the Statistics Canada crime severity index — a position we are not proud of and do not want to repeat. And yet year-end statistics reported to the end of December 2010 seem to indicate that the city will once again find itself in that number one position.

There is mounting evidence that North Battleford needs provincial assistance and support to deal with what appears to be high and growing criminal activity within the city. We need to reduce the incidence of crime and that means putting a plan in place. The RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] officers working in North Battleford have the highest caseload per officer in all of Canada. If North Battleford officers are going to be able to take time to be involved in a number of specific crime prevention activities, there is going to have to be additional funding available here.

Some have argued the addition of four new police officers

would help a lot. Other ideas that would benefit from provincial government attention include greater support for citizens' organizations like Concern For Youth, Neighbourhood Watch, and Citizens On Patrol. And let's not forget that some have argued that we need to pay greater attention to things like more affordable housing in the community and overnight shelters for youth and young adults.

There are good ideas for helping North Battleford reduce the incidence of criminal activity. There is a role that the provincial government can play in helping. I renew my call for the ministers responsible to come to North Battleford to meet with the mayor and council and others who are working to make this a better place to live, work, and raise a family. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Arm River-Watrous.

Farm Equipment Company Recognized

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise in the House today to talk about a remarkable farm equipment company with a branch in Davidson. This past February, Western Sales was recognized as one of the top 50 Best Managed Companies in Canada for the year 2010. This is the first time the company, a John Deere dealership, has been granted this honour.

I'm sure that the members from Rosetown-Elrose, Biggar, and Thunder Creek will all join me in congratulating Western Sales, which was established in Rosetown in 1947 and later expanding to locations in Biggar; Central Butte; Elrose; Outlook; and 2007, Davidson.

In his statement, Western Sales president Fred McGrath said the company's success was a testament to the strong relationships between its employees, the customers, and the communities they serve. He thanked the customers for the continued support over the last 64 years. He also said, "When you have the good fortune of working with quality employees and customers over the years, the actual management has not been difficult. We are proud to be part of the west central Saskatchewan business community."

I would ask that all members of the legislature join me in offering their congratulations to Western Sales upon their recognition as one of Canada's top 10 best managed companies of 2010.

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

Radio Interview

Mr. Furber: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Normally we offer words of welcome to special guests joining us in one of the Chamber galleries but today, Mr. Speaker, is an exception. I rise today to offer greetings to somebody who isn't actually with us today, though she found out yesterday exactly what it's like to hear questions answered by the member from Saskatoon Greystone.

Pre-tweeted as an interview with Saskatchewan's Minister Responsible for Uranium, his appearance on CBC's [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] *Power and Politics* had everybody atwitter with anticipation. But then the questions started, and the interview began to follow a pattern all too familiar with those in this Chamber. CBC's Rosemary Barton asked a direct question about the percentage of Saskatchewan's uranium used to generate power around the world, but the only firm figure that she established was the percentage of the minister's verbiage used to generate vagueness and confusion. Mr. Speaker, that figure was at 100 per cent.

As the minister rambled to a close, Ms. Barton was left to utter the phrase that makes her an honorary guest in this Chamber. She says, I quote, "Okay. I'm sorry again, but I'm sure that time you didn't answer the question." Rosemary Barton, welcome to our world.

Mr. Speaker, I close by thanking you for this opportunity to update this Chamber on how this minister's miscommunication strategy is working for the government nationwide. And I know that if it continues, I will be welcoming many more of Ms. Barton's colleagues, in spirit at least, to Saskatchewan's legislature. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Resource Royalties

Mr. Bradshaw: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition must be confused. Depending on who he's talking to, the current NDP [New Democratic Party] leader is telling two different stories about his job-killing resource tax.

Mr. Speaker, in an interview with the Mississippi broadcasting corporation, the Opposition Leader told the reporter he was not sure whether an increase in uranium royalties was needed. But as the Opposition Leader always says, how does that square because in the latest NDP television commercial he states, here are some things government needs to do: charge more royalties on our potash and uranium.

Mr. Speaker, here we can see another vintage NDP flip-flop. Since being elected as the NDP leader two years ago, the member from Douglas Park has been consistently inconsistent — saying one thing and then doing another. Mr. Speaker, this is just another example of the NDP putting their mouth into gear before engaging their brain. When the leader is talking to people in northern Saskatchewan, he isn't sure whether an increase in royalty rates is needed, but then in his own TV commercials he promises to do just that.

So, Mr. Speaker, we will be looking forward to more flip-flopping on issues because I'm sure there's more to come. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Negotiations with Health Care Workers

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Sask Party gave the CEO [chief executive officer] of the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region a 24 per cent pay increase to over \$376,000 per year and the CEO of the Saskatoon Health Region a 40 per cent wage increase to over \$400,000 per year. The rationale behind the increases is to keep them competitive with their counterparts in other provinces.

Mr. Speaker, the over 3,000 health sciences professionals are being offered a measly one and a half to two per cent wage increase annually, leaving them making 25 per cent less than their counterparts in Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: why doesn't the same rationale of competitive wages with their counterparts not apply to health sciences professionals? Why the double standard?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to say at the outset how valuable all the health sciences workers are, not only to the people that they serve each and every day in this province but absolutely valuable to this government, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, right now the negotiations are being conducted between SAHO [Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations] and the Health Sciences Association. Those negotiations have been under way for a long time. I would hope that they continue to talk till they find a collective agreement, Mr. Speaker, because what we have seen in this province is that there have been fair and competitive wages offered to many unions across this province, whether it's the SMA [Saskatchewan Medical Association], whether it's CUPE [Canadian Union of Public Employees], whether it's SGEU [Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union], Mr. Speaker. All have come up with a fair and collective bargaining agreement, Mr. Speaker, that's been good for the employee, good for the people of Saskatchewan, and most importantly, competitive across Western Canada.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Eastview. Order. Order. I would ask . . . Order. I would ask guests in the gallery not to participate in the debate. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Eastview.

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad the minister mentioned SAHO, because talk about setting the stage for disrespect. The ads that SAHO has set out now against Health Sciences are totally uncalled for and unprecedented in this province.

The over 3,000 Health Sciences Association professionals, many of who are in the gallery today with their leadership, have seen the minister turn his back on them. They're the very health providers that look after our grandparents and our parents, our children, and our partners.

Mr. Speaker, if the Sask Party is serious about recruiting and retaining health professionals, providing quality care to Saskatchewan people, and bringing down wait times, they

should start by offering the very people that provide the care a competitive contract now.

To the minister: how does he think he'll recruit and retain these professionals when he's keeping them earning 25 per cent less than their Alberta counterparts?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, as I said from the outset, all the workers within our health care system are absolutely valuable. They work 24-7 to provide care across this province from the northern regions, Mr. Speaker, right through the southern regions, and do an excellent job.

That's why we've been able to offer, I believe, competitive wages for all the unions that have settled, Mr. Speaker, competitive across Western Canada. That being said, it's not higher in some cases, Mr. Speaker, but it's far from the lowest. The opposition critic talks about Alberta and, you know, her leader would know all about that province and the wages offered in that province, Mr. Speaker. We haven't met every wage in Alberta, Mr. Speaker, but I can tell you it's fair and competitive and, Mr. Speaker, if we're not number one, we may be number two but not far behind number one.

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

Ms. Junor: — Yes, Mr. Speaker. If I've ever heard number two, that was it.

Mr. Speaker, not only are health science professionals being offered a contract that will pay them 25 per cent less than their Alberta counterparts; they will receive no top-up if they go on maternity leave. Other government employees receive up to 100 per cent top-up for anywhere up to 52 weeks when they go on maternity leave.

Mr. Speaker, these health care providers spend as much as \$80,000 educating themselves, are offered 25 per cent less than their counterparts in Alberta, and given no top-up when they go on maternity leave.

To the minister: why is he jeopardizing the health care of Saskatchewan people by giving the very people that provide the care no incentives to stay in the province, and basically discriminating against the professional women represented by Health Sciences?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, I have been very consistent in the three and a half years that I have had the privilege to serve this province as a Health minister. Not once have I ever engaged in negotiations on the floor of this Assembly, and nor will I ever engage in negotiations on the floor of this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, having said that though, I was very heartened to read in the *Leader-Post* not very long ago when they were talking about the negotiations between the Health Sciences and SAHO and hearing that it sounded like there was really a

couple of outstanding issues, maybe maternity leave and some extra pay, Mr. Speaker. I would ask those two parties to get back to the bargaining table, Mr. Speaker, and iron out those two issues, maternity leave and extra pay for extra hour of work, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, Health Sciences represents over 3,000 health care providers from more than 30 health care professions that include paramedics, hospital pharmacists, perfusionists, physical therapists, speech language pathologists, and social workers, to name a few. These are the people working to ensure that Saskatchewan people receive timely, quality health care. Mr. Speaker, it's Saskatchewan people that will suffer when these professionals leave for jobs outside of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: he's risking the health of Saskatchewan people by undervaluing the work of the health sciences professionals. When will he offer a fair and respectful contract to HSA [Health Sciences Association]?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, as I said, these health workers, professionals, supply an excellent service to the people of Saskatchewan, as do all health care providers within the province, Mr. Speaker. That's why this government, through SAHO, has been able to offer a fair and competitive wage, Mr. Speaker, whether it's the CUPE or SEIU [Service Employees International Union], Mr. Speaker, the SMA. And I believe, Mr. Speaker, once this contract is settled, Mr. Speaker, we'll continue to see the in-migration at record amounts, Mr. Speaker. Never has this province seen the in-migration that it has seen under a Saskatchewan Party government.

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

Environmental Issues

Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday we asked the government what it's doing to protect Saskatchewan people from contaminants being dumped from the Alberta oil sands in the water systems that flow into Saskatchewan. Based on the acting minister's responses, the answer, we believe, is nothing. But the danger from the oil sands does not just travel in water, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan is also inundated by airborne pollutants being dumped out by the oil sands.

The acting minister yesterday said this province is aggressively monitoring for acid rain in northern Saskatchewan, although there is no evidence to support his comments. Why won't the minister commit to aggressive action to deal with this air pollution coming to Saskatchewan from Alberta?

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We certainly believe in a science-based approach on

this issue and an approach based on collaboration and not confrontation.

Mr. Speaker, our government believes in ensuring that our boreal forest lakes remain pristine, Mr. Speaker. That's why we signalled our intentions in the fall legislative session with a Throne Speech. And we'll be coming forward, Mr. Speaker, with new initiatives such as an acid deposition management framework and also an enhanced monitoring program to assess cumulative impacts.

Mr. Speaker, a significant, a significant amount of work has been done since this government was elected in 2007, Mr. Speaker. And one only has to look at a report issued by the Pembina Institute and the Saskatchewan Environmental Society, and it says — the article is titled *Carbon Copy* — and I quote, "Prior to the autumn of 2007 there had been very little monitoring for acid rain in northern Saskatchewan, but that is now beginning to change." Mr. Speaker, one of the co-authors was Mr. Peter Prebble.

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

Mr. Taylor: — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. There was of course another study done, Mr. Speaker. It was released in December by the Royal Society of Canada. The Royal Society of Canada said, with rapidly increasing production in the oil sands, the amount of gases being released into the air is growing rapidly as well. Those toxins are drifting into Saskatchewan and affecting people close to Alberta, including those of us who live in The Battlefords or even Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker. Poor air quality creates more cases of respiratory illness, exacerbates existing ailments, forces more people into ER [emergency room], and drives up the cost of health care.

Mr. Speaker, the minister says Saskatchewan is working with Alberta — who by the way has cut their monitoring programs — but why is the Saskatchewan government not doing anything to ensure that Alberta actually works at reducing those toxic and damaging gases coming across our common border?

[14:00]

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, we are certainly committed to keeping our environment clean, particularly in northern Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, I want to quote from another report submitted to the federal Minister of the Environment by the Oilsands Advisory Panel just this past December. And it says, and I quote:

We make one over-arching recommendation. We recommend that a shared national vision and management framework of aligned priorities, policies and programs be developed collaboratively by relevant jurisdictions and stakeholders.

Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment are currently working on a Canada-wide comprehensive air management system, something that we approved in October at our ministers' meeting last year, Mr.

Speaker. And the Ministry of Environment is playing an active and leading role in pursuing a national understanding and a solution for acid rain through the acid rain task force. Mr. Speaker, we are taking clear action on this file after many years of inaction by the NDP government.

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

Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. With the release of that Oilsands Advisory Panel, the New Democratic Party immediately in December put forward a letter to the federal Minister of the Environment to say we want to see Saskatchewan and Alberta working together, Mr. Speaker. We need that federal help, Mr. Speaker. The New Democratic Party wrote that letter.

I ask the minister opposite to tell us how he responded to the federal government's response in this regard, Mr. Speaker. And will he tell us why the Saskatchewan government is not yet working publicly with Alberta to reduce the impact of oil sands pollution on this province? And why won't he provide us with the interprovincial working agreement that will in fact protect Saskatchewan from this dangerous pollution?

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, we are certainly working very closely with our federal counterparts and also the Government of Alberta. In fact yesterday I was in Edmonton meeting with Minister Renner to discuss this and other issues that we have in common, Mr. Speaker. But I want to inform the people of Saskatchewan that there was very little action under the NDP government on this file, Mr. Speaker.

There was a mobile monitoring lab that was purchased by the NDP government that was not operational, Mr. Speaker. We've hired the people to make that operational. Air quality focused on local issues: Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert. Mr. Speaker, we've deployed that mobile unit to Buffalo Narrows, Ile-a-la-Crosse, Loon Lake, Cluff Lake, Beauval, to name a few.

Mr. Speaker, under the NDP there was insufficient internal capacity within the Ministry of Environment to do statistical analysis and modelling. Mr. Speaker, we have doubled the FTEs [full-time equivalent] that are working on this important file, including two individuals that have Ph.D.s [Doctor of Philosophy] in this area, Mr. Speaker. And through the northwest sustainable development program plan, Mr. Speaker, we've tested 300 lakes in northern Saskatchewan since 2007. The federal government has tested 600 lakes, and now we have that internal capacity, Mr. Speaker . . .

The Speaker: — Order. The minister's time has elapsed. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Fairview.

Minimum Wage

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, a report on minimum wage was due to the government by December 31st of 2010. When they couldn't hit this deadline, the government rescheduled the date to February 28th. This is the second deadline for the report

as the government already missed its first deadline.

To the minister: where is the report that was promised to be delivered to this body by February 28th?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The report's been received by the government and will be released before the end of the month. The government would like a chance to review the . . .

An Hon. Member: — Which month?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — By this month, Mr. Speaker. I hear the members opposite.

The Minimum Wage Board panel had asked for an extension. We granted them an extension to February 28th. They provided us with a copy of the report on February 28th. The Premier's been away. And we will be able to table the report in the Assembly before the end of the month, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Social Services was calling minimum wage increases Sask Party increases. Well, Mr. Speaker, any minimum wage increases in Saskatchewan during the past three years have been NDP wage increases.

To the minister: with the Sask Party announcing that they're freezing minimum wage until after the election, putting adequate housing out of reach for those on minimum wage, is the government going to rethink its minimum wage freeze?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, at current minimum wage of 9.25 an hour, we have one of the higher minimum wages in Canada. But I would like to correct the minister opposite. Since 2008, Mr. Speaker, this government has increased the minimum wage by 16 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, it is an important thing to us to look carefully at minimum wage. These are some of the lower income people in our province. These are people whose income needs to be carefully looked at. We look at the income of these people in the context of what needs to be done for housing and a variety of other initiatives to ensure that lower income people are adequately and appropriately protected and are able to deal appropriately with the effects of inflation, Mr. Speaker, and that is why we called for a report on minimum wage indexation, Mr. Speaker, because that is the goal of this government, is to deal appropriately, carefully with lower income people. And, Mr. Speaker, we will take every step to ensure that they are dealt with appropriately.

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, I see the member from

Saskatoon Silver Springs sitting over there smirking. It was he that went around prior to the last election saying we're going to index minimum wage. They're going to index minimum wage. And then, Mr. Speaker, they handed it over to the member from Saskatoon Greystone who not only can't answer questions, but he's just sat on his hands when it came to doing anything for three and a half years, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, these costs of food are spiralling out of control. Gas, electricity, telephone service, and everything is rising sharply. To the minister: how long will it take before the government takes appropriate action to address the affordability in Saskatchewan and lift the minimum wage freeze?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I remind the member opposite that we are the government that asked for the review on indexation, Mr. Speaker. That review will be released shortly.

Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the members opposite as well, we are the government that doubled the low-income tax credit. We've reduced provincial income tax and removed some 80,000 low-income people from the provincial tax rolls. We've increased funding for housing programs by 45 per cent. We've increased shelter rates in the Saskatchewan rental housing supplement four times and we've indexed those to the cost of living.

Mr. Speaker, in 16 years the NDP failed to increase shelter rates. For 13 of those 16 years over that same time, there was an inflationary increase of 30 per cent, Mr. Speaker. We have as well offered over 700 additional affordable housing units, as well approximately 1,250 more units are in development or planning stage. Mr. Speaker, during the time of the government was in their last full year, 58 units, Mr. Speaker — an embarrassing record.

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

Situation of Low-Income People

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, we hear it again right here, right now, Mr. Speaker. This government continues to boast about 92,000 people being removed from our provincial tax rolls as a result of tax measures two years ago. They continue to celebrate, but that this is only a good news story, Mr. Speaker.

To the Minister of Finance: what is the average income of those 92,000 people?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite will know, the member opposite will know that during the Saskatchewan Party's term in government, we have made the largest change to the personal income tax system — \$4,000 increase to the personal exemption has resulted in 92,000 people not on the tax roll.

Mr. Speaker, it was interesting when that group over there, who

are now in opposition, were in government, Mr. Speaker. What they used to do is they used to increase the minimum wage, Mr. Speaker, without changing the personal exemptions. What it really meant, Mr. Speaker, is that someone on a minimum wage would end up paying more tax to the NDP government.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — If that minister, Mr. Speaker, would take just an ounce of the phony outrage he displays in this Assembly and focus it towards Saskatchewan people, we'd be in a lot better shape.

Mr. Speaker, the minister is willing to grandstand, to press release, but he doesn't know the facts. The question was, average income. The unfortunate reality is that of these 92,000 people, many are making 12, 15, \$20,000, as examples. It's fair to say the average income would not paint a positive story. Question to the minister: what is the average savings of those 92,000 people?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, one of the other revenue initiatives that our government has implemented is, in fact, the very indexation of those brackets, Mr. . . .

[Interjections]

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

An Hon. Member: — Numbers have always been a mystery.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Well, you know, Mr. Speaker, the comment by the member opposite deserves some comment. Mr. Speaker, we're going to talk about some numbers. We're going to talk about the fact that indexation, the very indexation of those brackets is going to mean the following, Mr. Speaker.

Last year, an individual, a senior, Mr. Speaker, a senior who was earning \$20,000 worth of income through pensions, Mr. Speaker, that individual last year paid \$15 worth of personal income tax because of the changes that we have made in the past, Mr. Speaker.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, because of the indexation that we have introduced, effective January 1, where all of the personal exemptions of individuals, the spousal exemptions, the dependent child exemptions were increased, Mr. Speaker, do you know what? Now someone who is earning \$25,000 worth of pension income will only pay \$536 worth of tax.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, again that minister is willing to grandstand, to celebrate, but has no facts, no answers to the two questions that were put to him. The two questions were average income . . . The other question was average savings. The fact would be that the individuals in question

include many people saving only a few dollars; to the high end, a few hundred dollars, Mr. Speaker. And this is what's being celebrated by this government. While at the same time and through the same period, they have faced annual increases to the cost of living in the many thousands of dollars through housing, utilities, food, and gas. For example, a monthly rent increase of \$400 is almost \$5,000 a year. Any small gain has been entirely eaten up and absolutely outstripped by the thousands of dollars a year increase, representing a net loss for Saskatchewan families that are being squeezed and that are under great strain.

Mr. Speaker, with these facts on the table, will the minister commit today to cut the use of this sound bite? The fact is it's a complete disrespect to the hard-working families and the individuals that he references and the real hardship and strain that they face.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, the number of people that are paying taxes at the lower income are lower. The numbers are lower. There are 92,000 less people paying tax than there were before we made the changes. Now, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is asking about what kinds of savings do these people really have.

Well, Mr. Speaker, since we've made this largest personal income tax saving, reduction, I want to talk about low-income, single parents, Mr. Speaker. Low-income, single parents are saving \$2,800 annually, 2,800. Senior couples, Mr. Speaker, senior couples are saving \$2,200 annually. Single seniors, Mr. Speaker — and I've just indicated to you what, in fact, even indexation is going to do — single seniors are saving \$1,300 annually. So, Mr. Speaker, when we start to look right across the piece, even a family of four, Mr. Speaker, is going to be saving over \$2,600.

[14:15]

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, that minister's completely out of touch. For him to highlight those numbers that don't reflect the real numbers of this program, Mr. Speaker, and even in the case of an individual that maybe did fully exercise the program and save \$1,000, to be outstripped many times over for rent, utilities, and cost of living, Mr. Speaker. They're losing ground.

This government has not only grandstanded and celebrated this reality as a positive circumstance, but they have shamefully used it to rebut and spin when defending itself against the concerns of families and individuals facing unmanageable increases to cost of living.

The fact is that this pool of workers, 92,000 people, represents 18 per cent of the entire Saskatchewan workforce. This is a sad story, not only for the individuals and families facing costs of living that are putting them under water, displacing them from their homes, that are not able to make ends meet, but sad that we have a government that is not only out of touch with the

reality facing Saskatchewan families but that deliberately spins the numbers to try and dismiss the real concerns of Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, disingenuous spin doesn't cut it. When will this government put forward a plan to start action to address the true and real hardship facing so many across this province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, I'm going to ask the people of Saskatchewan: do you want to have today, because of the indexation, a personal exemption that is \$13,535 tax free? Mr. Speaker, there's no tax being paid on \$13,535. Or do you want to go back to the NDP years when that exemption was just in the \$8,000?

Mr. Speaker, those are the numbers. The member opposite can multiply the difference between those two values by 11 per cent, and he'll know what the savings are. But you know what, Mr. Speaker? What the NDP don't want to talk about, they won't want to talk about the fact that when the Leader of the Opposition was in NDP government — 17 tax increases. PST [provincial sales tax], PST raised three times, Mr. Speaker. Income tax raised twice. Business taxes raised four times. Fuel taxes raised. Tobacco taxes raised. Alcohol taxes raised. Mr. Speaker, 17 tax increases by that NDP government when they were there. Mr. Speaker, we never want them back on this side of the House.

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. Order. Why is the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow on her feet?

Ms. Higgins: — Mr. Speaker, to request leave to introduce a guest.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to the House for leave. It gives me great pleasure to introduce a constituent and someone sitting behind the bar who is no stranger to people here in this Assembly. I'd like to welcome Mr. Rick Swenson who is the leader of the Progressive Conservative Party. And I don't know whether he likes to admit it, but I am his MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly], Mr. Speaker, and we have chanced to run into each other numerous times in Moose Jaw.

And I have on the golf course, I chanced to run into his father on the driving range. So, Mr. Speaker, I spent a fair bit of time — didn't get much practice done on the driving range — but spent a fair bit of time speaking to his dad about a variety of political issues. So I know where Rick gets his dedication not only to the community but the province, and his ability to express a point, Mr. Speaker. So I'd ask all my colleagues to

please welcome Mr. Swenson to the Assembly.

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 805 through 852.

The Speaker: — Questions 805 through 852 are tabled. I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Weekes: — I wish to order the answers 853 through 855.

The Speaker: — Questions 853, 854, and 855 are ordered. I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answers to 856 through 868.

The Speaker: — Questions 856 through 868 are tabled.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill. No. 164 — *The Police Amendment Act, 2011*

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

Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the end of my remarks today, I'll move the second reading of Bill No. 164, *The Police Amendment Act, 2011*. In spring 2007 the Ministry of Justice, which was the ministry responsible for policing services at that time, invited members of the police community to consult on amendments to *The Police Act, 1990*. Consultations were ongoing over the course of three years, concluding in the spring of 2010. They included the Saskatchewan Association of Chiefs of Police, the Saskatchewan Federation of Police Officers, the Saskatchewan Police Commission, municipal boards of police commissioners, and the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General.

The recommended amendments which emerged from the consultation process were either fully supported by the stakeholders or were considered a reasonable compromise that served the public interest. The proposed amendments are largely procedural changes to improve fairness, efficiency, and transparency among Saskatchewan municipal police services. They apply to discipline process, public complaint process, police boards, and the role of independent observers to internal investigations of police actions.

Proposed amendments relate to enhancing the police discipline process by making it faster, ensuring cost isn't a factor in constraining police services from using the discipline process, encouraging timely and cost-effective mediation processes, balancing public openness and transparency with the privacy needs of police officers, protecting police officers who in good faith report misconduct by a police chief, ensuring appropriate

disciplinary action is taken in all related matters, and making the discipline process fair and more equitable while discipline proceedings are pending.

Another aspect of the proposed amendments will require all members of municipal boards of police commissioners to take mandatory training. It is also proposed that the independent investigation observer process be improved. These improvements include having both the deputy minister of Justice and Attorney General and the deputy minister responsible for Policing receiving the observer's report. Currently only the deputy minister of Justice receives the report. The amendments will also provide municipalities with flexibility in choosing their own police service provider.

Finally the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General has proposed amendments related to their responsibilities for the Public Complaints Commission. These amendments will improve the timeliness of investigations into complaints against police officers and police services and will help increase openness and transparency throughout the complaint process.

The financial implications of these amendments apply to the appointment of an investigation observer and the costs of police discipline and oversight. Costs related to these processes will be absorbed by CPSP [Corrections, Public Safety and Policing] and are estimated to be in the range of 55,000 to \$85, 000, depending on the number of cases annually. Cost implications relating to disciplinary hearings and oversight are not considered significant, representing less than 1 per cent of the current \$150 million investment that the province makes in policing each year.

These amendments to *The Police Act, 1990* serve to strengthen the support that this government provides to police services. The partnership between municipal police services and the province is tangible evidence of our commitment to public safety. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I move that *The Police Amendment Act, 2011* be read a second time. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The Minister Responsible for Corrections, Public Safety and Policing has moved second reading of Bill No. 164, *The Police Amendment Act, 2011*. Is the Assembly ready for the questions? I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I want to say to the minister, I appreciated his comments, looking at the changes that are being proposed in the amendment to *The Police Act*.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Police Complaints Commission and the improvements that are being made there, I would have to say that on first glance, I would agree that most of them seem to be improvements. The minister talked about openness and transparency, also making sure that the discipline process is fair and balanced, and touched on a number of areas. When you go through the legislation and have a look at it, it seems to be good changes.

But I have to say, Mr. Speaker, there are a number of areas where I do have some questions, and I suppose many of those will be addressed specifically when it comes to the discipline

and the process and when complaints are filed with the commission. And that's something that we're going to have to go through and look at a little more closely what the previous process was and what improvements and how they will actually work and come into play.

But, Mr. Speaker, what I was listening for, and the minister touched on it quite quickly, one sentence I believe, talked about municipalities choosing their police service provider. And, Mr. Speaker, that was one of the first things that jumped out at me. And when we look at the explanation of what's in the existing legislation and what change is being made, we're seeing that there is a cap reduced . . . And I'm looking for . . . Oh here it is, Mr. Speaker, 23.1, right now:

23(1) Subject to the approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council, a municipality having a population greater than the minimum size prescribed in the regulations, but not greater than 20,000, may enter into agreement with the Government of Canada to employ and pay for a sufficient number of members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to provide policing services within the municipality.

So, Mr. Speaker, that could change quite significantly the services that are provided and how those services are provided in communities across the province. And I think it really deserves a little more than one sentence. It needs to be given a little higher level of scrutiny. And I also lacked I think a number of areas of consultation. When the minister talked that this consultation process has gone on for three years, I didn't hear any consultations done with municipalities if they were requesting this change, if there are municipalities out there that are looking at the idea of getting rid of their police force and looking at changes to the RCMP, utilizing the RCMP. That's what this removal of the cap on the size of communities in effect does, Mr. Speaker.

So there's a number of questions as to how far the consultations went. I didn't hear municipalities being discussed or police associations. I didn't hear that being commented on by the minister. So when we're talking about three years of consultations, I think there's been a few folks that have been missed that could be impacted by that one change that the minister obviously felt was insignificant enough that he only addressed it with one sentence in his second reading speech.

So, Mr. Speaker, without a doubt we need to go through the process, look at it in more detail to make sure that the new initiatives are adequately addressing the issues that have arisen out of the previous process. But also there needs to be a great deal more consultation done on the changes proposed to allowing the RCMP access to municipalities or municipalities access to the RCMP. That's something that is open for a broader discussion, I have to say.

So, Mr. Speaker, I know there are a number of my colleagues that want to make comments on this Bill and the proposed Bill, and also there is consultations that we need to do. So at this point in time, I'll adjourn debate on Bill 164.

[14:30]

The Speaker: — The member from Moose Jaw Wakamow has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 164. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 165 — *The Adult Guardianship and Co-decision-making Amendment Act, 2011*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of *The Adult Guardianship and Co-decision-making Act, 2011*. Mr. Speaker, this Act sets up procedures for the appointment of a personal or property decision maker to assist in the day-to-day affairs or property management of adults who are incapable of or need assistance in managing their personal or financial affairs.

The Act provides for a range of decision makers depending on the person's needs. A personal or property co-decision maker may be appointed for a person who requires help with decision making but does not need full guardianship services. Where an adult is unable to make his or her own decisions, a personal or property guardian may be appointed pursuant to the Act. Finally where an adult needs a guardian for a short time, a temporary personal or property guardian may be appointed for no longer than six months. Once appointed, the Act also establishes the duties and requirements of an individual appointed to act as a personal or property decision maker.

Mr. Speaker, the abuse of vulnerable adults is an issue of ongoing concern for this government as well as for the public. Some adults, including the elderly, who are unable to protect themselves are at risk of both personal and financial abuse. This Act protects such people by establishing specific criteria for persons applying for guardianship orders. The Act also protects adults by establishing duties for guardians, such as to account.

The protections in place are of course balanced against the desire to encourage family members and friends to pursue applications by keeping those applications and the duties upon decision makers as streamlined and transparent as possible. Several amendments have been suggested to enhance operation of the Act while continuing to ensure that vulnerable adults and their property are protected.

Mr. Speaker, the amendment adds protection that will allow the court to recognize foreign guardianship orders. Jurisdictions in Canada and other countries have established legislation and procedures for the appointment of personal and property decision makers. Currently a decision maker appointed in another jurisdiction cannot reply in the appointment order in Saskatchewan either to deal with property in Saskatchewan or because the adult has moved here. Instead the decision maker must bring in an entirely new application before the court.

The amendments will allow guardians appointed in a recognized jurisdiction to apply to the court to have the appointment order resealed in Saskatchewan. In some circumstances, a guardian may still want to pursue an entirely

new application, but a valid, existing order from a recognized jurisdiction should not be entirely disregarded.

The amendments will also clarify inventory and accounting provisions to make it clear when and what a property decision maker is required to provide. A property decision maker is currently required to provide an inventory of the adult's assets within six months of the application date. This delay is often necessary, as individuals may not be able to obtain all the information they require without a court order. Still a property decision maker could cause substantial damage in six months, so these amendments will reduce the filing time to three months.

Property decision makers are also currently required to file an annual accounting outlining the adult's property as well as any decisions made in the previous year. A form providing the regulations that decision makers are not required . . . is provided in the regulations, but decision makers are not required to use it, which results in decision makers not providing enough information. Currently the Act does not specify when the annual accounting must be provided. The Public Guardian and Trustee's office receives and reviews all of these accountings and ensures that the accountings are complete and accurate. Mr. Speaker, requiring that the annual accounting be in a prescribed form and be filed with the court and the Public Guardian and Trustee within three months of the anniversary of the appointment will assist the Public Guardian and Trustee's office, as it will know when to bring an application forward. It will also assist the property decision maker, as he or she will know what is required.

Currently the Act does not require a final accounting. A final accounting may be necessary when the adult dies so that their executor or administrator is aware of the status of the estate. A final accounting may also be required where a decision maker is discharged or removed. That way the adult or future decision maker will have an accurate accounting of the estate. The amendments will add a new provision for a final accounting within six months of the adult's death or the decision maker's discharge or removal.

Mr. Speaker, these amounts will also allow the court to require that a temporary property guardian file a bond. At present temporary guardians are not required to file a bond. Temporary property guardians are tasked with protection of the adult's estate for a short period of time; however substantial harm can be done in six months. The amendments will grant the court the discretion to require that the temporary property guardians file a bond if the value of the estate is above a prescribed amount.

The amendments will also provide that a fee schedule may be established for the regulations. The Act currently allows the decision maker to charge fees only if fees are set by the court. If an order for fees is not made, the decision maker cannot charge a fee. In practice, however, decision makers either fail to request a fee at the time the original application's made or do not know how much the appropriate amount is to request, or else they will indicate they will not charge a fee and later change their minds at the accounting stage. A fee schedule will provide decision makers with a guideline as to the fees that they may charge. It will also make it clear that if they want to charge more than the schedule permits, they will need a court order.

Mr. Speaker, in some situations, a decision maker will no longer be able to act or will be discharged by the court. If an adult is still in need of a decision maker, an entirely new application needs to be made before an individual can act on behalf of the adult. The amendments will allow the court to appoint an alternate decision maker at the time the original order is made. This alternate will be entitled to act if the original decision maker is unable to act by simply notifying the court and the Public Guardian and Trustee but without further application or court order.

The amendments will also specify that a property guardian can make payments for the maintenance, education, or benefit of the adult's spouse or dependant children, including the property guardian if he or she is the adult's spouse. There is no question that the property guardian can spend funds on the adult, but the current Act does not specifically consider what payments can be made for the ongoing support of the adult's family.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the amendments will add a new provision that authorizes property decision makers to make gifts out of the adult's estate if the requirements set out in the Act and the regulations are met. A property decision maker has the authority to make decisions with respect to the adult's property, but the Act is presently silent on the issue of gifts. As a result, property decision makers sometimes make gifts to family members and to themselves, but they were not required to specifically account for those gifts, and the Act establishes no restrictions.

The new provision will allow a property decision maker to make gifts out of the adult's estate only if the gift is not required to meet the needs of the adult and there are reasonable grounds to believe that the adult would have made the gift if he or she had capacity. Also the value of the gift must not exceed an amount that will be prescribed in the regulations.

Mr. Speaker, these amendments will clarify powers and duties of decision makers. They will allow individuals who have already been appointed under a court order to act without further application and continue to provide protection for vulnerable adults. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of *The Adult Guardianship and Co-decision-making Amendment Act, 2011*.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Justice has moved second reading of Bill No. 165, *The Adult Guardianship and Co-decision-making Amendment Act, 2011*. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege to rise and make comments on Bill No. 165, *An Act to amend The Adult Guardianship and Co-decision-making Act* which also makes some consequential amendments to *The Public Guardian and Trustee Act* and *The Public Trustee Amendment Act*.

Mr. Speaker, I think listening to the minister and his comments on second reading, he was fairly thorough in his comments. And by all of the information that I've seen when looking at the explanatory notes and going through the Bill, it seems to be really an updating and addressing of the Bill to make sure that it

is current and appropriate for the situations that it needs to address.

I believe a little more discussion needs to happen. And I know I need to do some work on my side because, Mr. Speaker, this is something that it's pretty rare to run into in our constituency offices when there is decisions that have been made by a personal decision maker or property decision maker on behalf of an adult when there is a guardianship circumstance or situation. But I know that there can be many situations that will fall through the loopholes or the cracks in a piece of legislation and that when we have had these cases brought to the constituency, which is pretty rare, they can be pretty difficult to deal with.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would like to take the time to be able to go through the changes that the minister is proposing. It seems to cover off many areas. It seems that there has been a number of areas that have been updated and some accountability issues that have been addressed and also, Mr. Speaker, the idea of an alternate decision maker, which I think will fill a gap that has probably arisen a number of times, and also the issue of these. I think we have to be very clear when we come to adult guardianship and what decisions are made, how those decisions are made.

So, Mr. Speaker, while there is a little bit more work to do on this Bill and actually work through it, see how it would actually apply to cases we have run across or situations that we know of, until that work is done, Mr. Speaker, and some of my other colleagues have a chance to make comments on the Bill, at this time I'd adjourn debate on Bill No. 165.

The Speaker: — The member from Moose Jaw Wakamow has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 165. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 157

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Boyd that **Bill No. 157 — *The Oil and Gas Conservation Amendment Act, 2010*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Furber: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased today to rise to speak to the Bill No. 157 for a number of reasons. But certainly in looking at the Bill and having gone through it in some detail, it's interesting that while the Bill is 29 pages long, which is quite lengthy for a Bill, the explanatory notes are 44 pages long. So it's a very comprehensive and complex Bill that we have before the Assembly today.

Now the Bill is a serious Bill in that it makes some pretty dramatic changes to legislation governing *The Oil and Gas Conservation Act* currently. And because of the importance of the changes and the depth and breadth of them, it's important to do proper consultation, Mr. Speaker. And we have just in this past few years of this government witnessed occasions where they have failed to consult. And it's numerous occasions, Mr. Speaker, if you want to talk about Bills 5 and 6 where they were cited by the ILO [International Labour Organization], an international body, for having not consulted, when the minister in her second reading speech said that they had consulted on *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*, and she named specific groups who refuted what she'd said in her second reading speech.

Their history of consultation on important Bills in this legislature is sadly lacking. However in this case they have gone out and they have spoken with a number of companies, organizations that represent them, small producers, large producers, through the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers and organizations like that, Mr. Speaker. So I will commend the government for having consulted on this Bill. They've done a good job there and in this case.

Now the history of governments consulting on oil and gas Bills in Saskatchewan is a good one. Certainly the royalty regime structure that we own currently, the minister responsible currently from the Saskatchewan Party has given credit to the New Democratic Party for setting that regime structure. We're proud that we did that entirely in conjunction with the oil and gas industry.

Certainly if you look at what it takes to explore and extract a barrel of oil, there are enormous capital investments that have to take place. Certainly there's some enormous volatility in the marketplace. The capital that they employ is as liquid as the oil that they extract. It can move from jurisdiction to jurisdiction at will. And certainly unlike other strategic resources we have in the province, oil and gas has a very . . . We own a very small percentage of the world's reserves and production of oil and gas, Mr. Speaker.

[14:45]

So it's important that the Bills are modernized to keep up with what is an exciting but ever-changing circumstance for oil and gas companies. There isn't another industry that employs so many different types of technology in their work, that works so hard at research and development, mostly by companies on their own to develop their own technology in very specific places in the world because of different geographies . . . sorry, geologies that are existing in Saskatchewan right now.

Each different geology requires a different technology to extract oil. If you look at the North in terms of the oil sands in Saskatchewan, there've been many different technologies that have been attempted to employ there. We have heavy oil in the West and light sweet crude in the East in the Bakken. And so each of these technologies or each of these circumstances requires a different technology.

In the past, vertical drilling was sort of the benchmark and was essentially all that existed for a large number of years in the

industry. But in the last number of years, we've used horizontal drilling, which is very prevalent in Saskatchewan, fracking, and multi-fracking. There are companies employing THAI [toe to heel air injection] technology, SAGD [steam assisted gravity drainage] technology. They use fire floods and water floods. And certainly there are a number of companies, especially in the Bakken, that use carbon sequestration which is a technology that we pioneered or helped to pioneer so many years ago in Saskatchewan. We're world leaders in that area.

So as you will note, Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of technologies that are employed and it's important that government keeps up. And this Bill certainly does some of that, and so we appreciate that.

Now how does the Bill keep up, Mr. Speaker? Well in one of the ways, it's in record keeping. And it seems a pretty standard thing that now you would want to modernize that because oil and gas companies do a lot of their work in the field, and they work 24 hours a day, seven days a week all over the province of Saskatchewan. And so they want to access records and submit records to the government on their own time frame. And so to modernize the climate in Saskatchewan for oil and gas companies to better enable their work here, I think is important and good work that the government's doing.

Now there are many different types of records that are utilized by oil companies and that they're asking that we convert and are able to manage electronically. Applications to government, records, stats, forms, reports, maps, plans, and surveys are all a part of this legislation, Mr. Speaker. So again it's important that we get this done for the industry.

In addition to some of the other things I'd mentioned about technology and capital investment, I don't know that there's another industry in the world outside of farming that is as multi-jurisdictional as oil and gas is, Mr. Speaker. It's all over the world with exploration and extraction, production. And so it's helpful to industry, in the consultation that I've done, that the access to records and the records that they have to provide, it's better for them if they're uniform. And so certainly we're pleased that the governments have been able to make a change again to streamline the regulatory structure in that case.

Now one of the other things that this legislation does is increase fines for non-compliance, especially when it comes to the environment. And I would argue that moving the fine to \$25,000 or five times what it was before is a helpful step because it serves to provide a more adequate deterrent for oil companies that are outside of the Act.

Now interestingly, and we're pleased about this, that the Bill has come before the legislature, but I think, Mr. Speaker, it's mostly because it had to. The minister referred in his comments to the fact that this is one of the early deliverables out of the New West Partnership. Now that is a sweeping change in Western Canada that was not brought before any legislature. It was an agreement that was signed that the Saskatchewan Party government said that they would not sign.

And so we're pleased to see Bill 157 before the legislature for the scrutiny of the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and I will have some questions for the government in committee on

this Bill. And with these comments and with future questions, I would ask that we move this Bill to committee. Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion presented by the Minister of Energy and Resources that Bill 157, *The Oil and Gas Conservation Amendment Act, 2010* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — To which committee shall this Bill be referred? I recognize the Minister Responsible for Crown Corporations.

Hon. Mr. McMillan: — To the Committee on the Economy.

The Speaker: — This Bill stands referred to the Committee on the Economy.

Bill No. 159

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

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure this afternoon to join in on the discussion on Bill 159, *The University of Regina Amendment Act*. There's been a few members from the opposition who've had a chance to share some thoughts on this proposed piece of legislation, amending the U of R [University of Regina] Act. And I'm happy, as critic now, to be able to do the same, Mr. Speaker.

Certainly the University of Regina plays a very important role here in Saskatchewan. It's an important institution for the city of Regina, for our province, for our country, and on the international level for the fine research and scholarship that occurs on campus at the University of Regina. So when dealing with proposed amendments to an Act affecting the institution, it's certainly important to do so in a thoughtful manner and with proper consultation with relevant stakeholders and in a manner that truly serves the best interests of the institution over the long term.

The proposed changes to *The University of Regina Amendment Act* cover a number of areas. And I would, Mr. Speaker, like to speak to the different areas that are being covered, providing my view on certain aspects of the legislation.

The first area, Mr. Speaker, that is suggested as a change, and it should say . . . I should mention that these changes come at the request of the University of Regina's administration, and I will take the minister at his word that the proper consultation occurred with the U of R to ensure that these changes do in fact reflect the wishes of the university.

The one change, Mr. Speaker, is repealing the visitor section. As has been the existing legislation dealing with the U of R, if a student wanted to make a claim that he or she was not treated properly, they had the option of requesting that the visitor of the university review their case and make a ruling. In practice, Mr. Speaker, this has been the Lieutenant Governor.

What has been happening, Mr. Speaker, actually, at the U of R, as is indicated in the minister's remarks, that this aspect of the legislation has not been used since its inception in 1974. And in cases where it does occur, the Lieutenant Governor would refer the item to the court system. So this change simply does streamline the process. And I have to say, Mr. Speaker, in my opinion it does make good sense, and it's similar to the actions that we've seen in recent legislation with the University of Saskatchewan for changes that have come through earlier on in this government's term.

Another area, Mr. Speaker, where changes are being requested is in the area of increasing the number of members to call an extraordinary meeting of convocation. And the change, Mr. Speaker, is from 25 to 50, simply increasing the threshold for the number of individuals requesting such a meeting. To me, Mr. Speaker, given the high number of graduates from the U of R, with so many members belonging to convocation at this time, in my opinion, Mr. Speaker, this seems like a reasonable increase and not an unnecessary or not an inappropriate change.

There are other changes, Mr. Speaker, which have to do with the composition of the senate as well as how the position of chancellor is selected for the university. There are changes, Mr. Speaker, that address how an interim chancellor can be provided or installed, how the senate reps are elected by region, and also how professional organizations choose who is their representative on the senate. And all these changes, Mr. Speaker, allow the senate to make bylaws for the ongoing administrative functions, thereby allowing the senate to choose the chancellor.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the visitor section, as we have seen with changes to *The University of Saskatchewan Act*, this follows on the heels of that, and it seems to be a reasonable request in my opinion, Mr. Speaker. Also for meetings of convocation increasing the threshold from 25 to 50, I also do not see major problems with that and it would seem like an appropriate change given the number of members of convocation now that do belong to the University of Regina.

As for the changes to the senate, Mr. Speaker, in having an ability to select an interim chancellor, that too makes sense if a chancellor is selected and for whatever reason he or she is unable to serve the full duration of the term. It would be appropriate to have a means by which an interim chancellor could be selected before a scheduled selection date for a future chancellor.

And on the topic of professional bodies choosing who they send to senate to represent their professional organization, that too, Mr. Speaker, seems like a reasonable idea because it is the professional organizations. If they are self-regulated and have the ability to determine the future or determine the aspects and the enforcement of the rules for their profession, so long as there's a proper selection process within those professional organizations to choose who the representatives should be, that makes sense.

Another change under the senate, Mr. Speaker, is the change in that when a district representative is selected to serve on the senate, it is the members of convocation who live in that particular geographical region who choose who that person is. I think that provides an important tie to the local community.

The biggest change, Mr. Speaker, and the one that some members in the Assembly and some members of the public may not be fully supportive of, Mr. Speaker, is how the position of chancellor is selected. And we had this debate when the Assembly considered the changes to *The University of Saskatchewan Amendment Act*, and the change from having all of convocation, or every graduate of the institution, having the option to vote in a process to select the chancellor as opposed to the senate having the option through a democratic voting process to select the chancellor.

[15:00]

I think, Mr. Speaker, given . . . I know the arguments in favour of changing to the senate being allowed to choose the chancellor. The arguments are those of that it is an expense to mail out the ballots and have that electoral process occur, and also the participation rates may not be as high as many would like in order to be a true reflection of what is the will of convocation. So the thinking is, as I would understand it, Mr. Speaker, is that members of the senate who are engaged with the university and do have a fairly broad representation in Saskatchewan society, that they are in an appropriate position to make those types of decisions. So that is the request occurring here by the university, that changes would occur to *The University of Regina Act*.

Now as the minister recognizes in his remarks, Mr. Speaker, not everyone agrees with that change. There is some controversy around it, Mr. Speaker. But it is an approach that has been adopted at the University of Saskatchewan and is at present in other Canadian institutions of post-secondary education. So I know that does perhaps provide a reason for a time of questioning in committee to ensure that the process by which the chancellor is selected maintains aspects of democracy with respect to how the senate does select the chancellor, and I look forward to asking those questions in committee, Mr. Speaker.

But I will say in general principle I support the changes that are included in *The University of Regina Amendment Act*, although there are certain questions about particular aspects. But I'm happy to carry on that discussion in committee. So at this time, Mr. Speaker, I would move that Bill No. 159, *The University of Regina Amendment Act* be moved to committee. Thank you.

The Speaker: — Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the Minister Responsible for Advanced Education that Bill No. 159, *The University of Regina Amendment Act, 2010* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — To which committee shall this Bill stand referred? I recognize the Deputy Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — I designate that Bill No. 159, *The University of Regina Amendment Act, 2010* be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

The Speaker: — The Bill stands referred to the Committee on Human Services.

Bill No. 144

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

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

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again it's a pleasure and an honour for me to have the opportunity to enter into debate in this fine Assembly on behalf of the good folks of Regina Northeast and to have the opportunity of sharing some of their thoughts and some of my thoughts as it applies to this particular Bill, this Bill of course being Bill No. 144, *The Litter Control Amendment Act, 2010*.

Mr. Speaker, I've been, through some of my preliminary research, I've been led to believe that this Act originally came into being, originally was passed in 1973. And it was passed with the purpose of providing the provincial government with the authority to address the litter-related issues.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think we all would agree that that is a well-meaning piece of legislation and certainly something that we all need to ensure that we have a mechanism in place to address the environmental issues. We certainly want to see litter controlled. We don't want to find ourselves in a situation where we have no control over the environment and have no control over the littering aspect of our society. And I think for the most part, Mr. Speaker, as we travel around I think we see that the vast majority of Saskatchewan citizens certainly respect and show respect for our environment by containing their litter and handling it in the designated areas, designated ways. But, Mr. Speaker, there's always the need to ensure that in those rare instances where it doesn't happen, then we have a way of addressing it or a way to ensure that there is a mechanism in place to address any litter issues as they come along.

And certainly, Mr. Speaker, this Bill that was introduced for the first time in 1973, and passed, was certainly a step in the right direction. And we must take off our hats to those legislators of the day who possessed the vision and the forethought to enter into such a legislation so that we could have a mechanism to protect the people of this great province and to ensure that our environment is protected at the same time.

Mr. Speaker, it went on to this particular legislation and through the regulations that accompany the legislation. They established a provincial beverage container collection and recycling program. And that, Mr. Speaker, I think is certainly a visionary step and a step in the right direction that enabled our society to have a way to control and to be able to handle beverage containers.

Particularly, I think it was about that time when we started to see an uptake on beverage containers being used to provide themselves to people of Saskatchewan as well as elsewhere in the world, elsewhere in this great country, through not only the tradition of soft drinks being available through containers but also we started seeing the expansion into fruit juices and bottled waters and that sort of stuff which meant then there would be a lot more containers within the system. And certainly a mechanism was required to be able to address the need to have those containers handled in a way that was environmentally friendly.

So, Mr. Speaker, once the collection and recycling program was in place, it certainly indicated some very serious foresight of those who took their places in this legislature in 1973 to bring in such legislation and to introduce it and to pass it. That simply went a long way to respect and protect our environment.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, if we look a little further ahead we once again see that there were changes made to this Act in 1988 where *The Litter Control Act* was amended to create a program for recycling designated containers. That, Mr. Speaker, certainly is the containers that we would commonly use today, which would include containers that would probably be purchased at local grocery stores and service stations that provide us the opportunity to pick up a bottle of pop or a jug of milk or bottled water, which really is becoming a very popular item these days, Mr. Speaker with more emphasis in our society on health care and looking after ourselves and finding ways and means to provide ourselves with good health care.

We see more and more people have turned to the consumption of simple water. We've seen today a real market in bottled water, which is a very healthy item, and one even I myself subscribe to, Mr. Speaker. And it is certainly a plus, I guess you would say, as far as maintaining our health is concerned. And if we look at many of the issues that are pressing North Americans particularly, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to health issues, it's the question of overweight or in some sections, obesity. And one of the mechanisms used by health care providers to suggest that we need to do something about the weight of our nation is to look at various forms of dieting and look at various options within our food intake.

And one of recommendations that has been made very clear by our health care providers is that the increased consumption of water is a benefit to addressing weight problems, addressing

weight loss issues. And that, Mr. Speaker, has probably led to the increased amount of bottled water being available on a regular basis, whether it'd be at service stations, or whether it'd be in the grocery stores, or whether it'd be in convenience stores. And that in case, Mr. Speaker, most of these are provided in containers that a lot of times is a pick up and go. We're in a hurry; we're perhaps travelling someplace. You want to have something to refresh yourself with, so you buy a bottle of water and it thusly comes in a container.

Mr. Speaker, there is to provide the opportunity for management of those containers, there is a deposit that you pay when you purchase that particular item. That deposit then, Mr. Speaker, turns into a rebate when that item, when that bottle, when that empty bottle is turned in, it of course results in a rebate. So what it does, Mr. Speaker, it creates the ability to control and to ensure the control of beverage containers particularly that would otherwise perhaps litter our highways and certainly litter our public areas and that would not be a friendly asset to our environment. So, Mr. Speaker, I think it's a very thoughtful program.

And now that the program at this time has . . . We pay, as I said, Mr. Speaker, a deposit and then that deposit turns into a refund when we return the container to basically Sarcan. And most of us use Sarcan. And that certainly, Mr. Speaker, creates the program that ensures that we have a system in place to handle the containers that we simply do not want. And in a situation where they're going to clutter our environment or certainly have a negative affect on our environment, what we want to see is a mechanism in place that certainly addresses that. And this certainly does, Mr. Speaker.

So I think, once again, we have to recognize the foresight of those legislators who were in government at the time in 1973 that brought in the legislation and those who have served in this great Assembly over the years who saw the need from time to time, particularly 1988, to make amendments to make the program even more effective and more efficient. And that I would say, Mr. Speaker, is something that we all as legislatures . . . legislators, rather, would strive for.

And I think again, Mr. Speaker, each member of the Legislative Assembly will agree that Sarcan does a tremendous job, does a tremendous job in this program of providing the opportunity for those containers to be recycled in a very positive program. And I have to say, within the foresight of those who in 1973 and the work that was done in 1988 to create legislation was forward-looking and forward-thinking. It was welcomed by all of us today who, simply we all benefit from that program.

Mr. Speaker, as I look at the amendments suggested by the government here on this particular Bill, I see that it seems to be that is more about the government protecting itself and taking away the rights of individuals to seek compensation when they feel that they are wrongfully done by. And this piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, is I think more to do with the government trying to protect itself through some retroactive legislation, as taking away the rights of individuals to seek compensation when they feel that they have been wrongfully done by, by a particular government or by this particular program.

And this piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, is retroactive legislation. And this legislation is retroactive, to my understanding goes back as far as 1998 so that it would basically erase 12 years of history. And that, Mr. Speaker, is done so that the government can protect itself by taking away individual's rights to seek compensation for what they believe was mistreatment. And I think, Mr. Speaker, it's regrettable that the government has decided to do this because I think there is mechanisms in place. It's called a court of law that would settle that and should allow the individual to have that right to be able to seek compensation for what may be a wrongdoing, or what may or may not be a wrongdoing, but that would be settled in a court of law, Mr. Speaker, and not in a legislature through retroactive legislation.

Mr. Speaker, our job of course as government is to consult with the good folks of this great province of ours when such legislation is put forward. And that's the role of opposition is to consult with the people of Saskatchewan to find out what effect this particular legislation would have on them, how they feel they may be impacted.

[15:15]

It saddens me, Mr. Speaker, that the government hasn't taken that initiative because I would think the government would feel, a government of any political stripe, Mr. Speaker, would feel the need to be able to represent the people of this great province in a way that best protects the interests of people of Saskatchewan. In order to do that, I think, whenever a government wants to make changes to legislation, they should only do so after they've done consultation with stakeholders, after they've done consultation with the people of Saskatchewan who may be impacted upon by these changes.

So, Mr. Speaker, once again it raises the question as who asked for these changes? Who in this great society of ours came forward to the government and said, we need these changes and we need these changes because . . . Mr. Speaker, we've seen no evidence, and the government hasn't provided us any evidence to suggest that anybody has come forward in urging the government to make these changes and asking for these changes because there's nowhere in the information that's been provided by government in support of the amendments to *The Litter Control Act*, nowhere does the government provide any of that information suggesting that any groups or individuals have come forward with credible and legitimate concerns requiring changes to this particular piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the government would be how was it determined that these changes were needed? How did the government come about determining that these changes were needed? What mechanism did they use? Who did they talk to? Did they talk to anybody or is this something that's in-house. Is this desire only in-house to make these changes? Because, Mr. Speaker, once again the government has not provided any indication at all that there was any groups that are concerned about our environment that came forward and asked the government to make these changes because it would further protect the environment. We see none of that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, before the government brought these amendments forward, what consultations did they do? What consultations

did the government do? Who did they talk to? What groups did they talk to? What individuals did they talk to? Did they carry out the consultations in an open manner, Mr. Speaker, and that's just simply going out and holding public hearings and asking the good folks of this province for their input. Or did they, if they did consultations, did they narrow those consultations down to simply the amendments? And did they go out and say, here's the amendments we're proposing. What do you think? Did they limit that discussion only to those amendments, or did the government have an open consultation process where the public could have made their points and their concerns known?

So, Mr. Speaker, once again the government hasn't answered any of these questions. Certainly, Mr. Speaker, we have no evidence of the government doing any consultation on this. But I'm going to give them, for argument's sake, the benefit of the doubt and suggest that perhaps they did do some consultation. Perhaps they did talk to some groups. Perhaps they did talk to individuals.

Mr. Speaker, what I would like to know is, what was the reaction from the good folks of this great province that they did talk to? If they did talk to groups or if they did talk to individuals, what was the reactions from those folks? Were they positive? Were they supportive of these amendments? Or did they have concerns about these amendments and the impact that these amendments may have on the people of this great province? That, Mr. Speaker, once again the government hasn't provided that information. They haven't provided that information to the opposition. They certainly haven't provided that information to the general public, Mr. Speaker, to support their claims for the need for these amendments to be passed here.

Mr. Speaker, if the government did do consultations with groups or individuals, what form did those consultations take? Did they hold public meetings across this great province in every corner of Saskatchewan so that the general public would have reasonable access to these hearings, would have reasonable access to being able to make their points known to the government? Was there perhaps a communications, a questionnaire sent out, mailed out so everybody in Saskatchewan would have the opportunity to answer that questionnaire and on that questionnaire express their thoughts and their opinions and mail back to the government, back to government at parliament, back to the minister's office? Did that happen, Mr. Speaker? We don't know.

Or, Mr. Speaker, did they do a poll? Did they do a poll or did they do some type of communications with the great people in Saskatchewan to get a sense of what it is Saskatchewan people are thinking on this particular issue before they brought these amendments in? Mr. Speaker, all of these questions remain unanswered.

But, Mr. Speaker, one of the questions I would like to ask the government is, have they done any research? Have they done any forward thinking as to what would be the impact upon Saskatchewan people as a result of these amendments? If these amendments get passed in this legislature — and likely they will because the government of course has the majority — but if they do and they go through the committee stage and they get

passed in this legislature, has the government contacted anybody in Saskatchewan to get an understanding of what impact these amendments would have on the people of this great province of ours?

So, Mr. Speaker, as you can tell, there are a number of questions that the opposition have that the government certainly has failed to answer. You can tell that there's a number of questions, Mr. Speaker, that the opposition have that reflects the questions of the people of Saskatchewan. And simply, that this government has once again not been forthright with its process, has not been forthright with the opposition and/or the people of this great province in regards to the reasons for the amendments that the government is proposing on this particular Bill. And, Mr. Speaker, that of course is a concern with all of us.

So, Mr. Speaker, the opposition is certainly going to need more time to do further research on this Bill and further consultations. Probably we're going to do the consultations that the government never did. And, Mr. Speaker, there's a real need to ensure that the wants and the needs of Saskatchewan people are going to be addressed in the amendments as the government has suggested that they would like to see done. So with that, Mr. Speaker, in mind, I would move adjournment of debate on this Bill.

The Speaker: — The member from Regina Northeast has moved adjournment of debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 155

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

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise and make some comments about Bill No. 155, *An Act to amend The Natural Resources Act*. Now, Mr. Speaker, it's always interesting to figure out why particular Bills are brought forward at any particular time within the legislative cycle of a government. So we are now in the fourth year of this particular government, so I think it's appropriate that we look fairly carefully at the proposals that are brought forward.

When one looks at this Bill, which is not that long, you see that the, sort of, the main theme is changing the name of the department that's involved here to the ministry. So that really doesn't have too much affect on what is happening. But when one looks at this a little more closely, one can see that it has a certain connection with a number of other Bills that we've been dealing with in the House.

And let me explain what I'm talking about here. We know that

this government has set out some goals for itself, which include diminishing the role and the size of the civil service. And they've said, oh they can do that without diminishing the service that is provided. And so each year we've had some legislation which has an aspect of allowing for the moving out of the civil service into other places of work that is presently being done in a particular department. And, Mr. Speaker, I will show, in a few minutes, how this Bill has that aspect of moving or contracting out work from the Ministry of Environment which for many decades has been a sole or a main part of providing the best professional advice to the Ministry of Environment as it does its work within the total government.

But before I go there, I want to just say that this has some similarities to a few other Bills that we've seen in this particular legislature. And the ones that I'm talking about are *The Provincial Court Amendment Act*, *The Provincial Court Consequential Amendment Act*, which are Bills 153 and 154, and then also the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code amendment which is Bill No. 160.

And the Provincial Court Bill effectively responds to the Minister of Justice's comments by saying that we're not going to have any more Provincial Court judges, even though the amount of, the number of criminal cases that are showing up in our courts as a combination of both some of the things the provincial government has done but more importantly what the federal government has done as it relates to the Criminal Code, we're not going to appoint any more judges to handle those cases. So therefore we're going to eliminate the civil division and get justices of the peace in to help with matters that have been traditionally been Provincial Court judge work. So there you have sort of a budget decision in that one.

You end up, in the Human Rights Code amendment, a similar control on the costs and the number of people involved by transferring a fair bit of the work that's there now to another place for hearings. And so it also has a budget emphasis coming out of the Department of Justice.

So in this particular Bill, Mr. Speaker, we get into a more difficult to ferret out — if I can put it that way — issue which is, what's going to happen with the Fish and Wildlife Development Fund?

Now at the present time, the Fish and Wildlife Development Fund has a long, good history of providing for the enhancement of fish stocks and basically dealing with the purchase of property and enhancement of habitat across the province. And the legislation quite clearly sets out what this fund and what the assets of the fund can be used for. And, Mr. Speaker, I think it's well worth quoting what is presently the law, and then we'll go and see how the minister wants to change this. The present law says that the assets of the Fish and Wildlife Development Fund can be used for:

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 populations or fish habitat, to create new fishing opportunities or to manage fish habitat or wildlife habitat.

They can also be used for “the design, development and

operation of facilities to enhance fish habitat and fishing opportunities.” It can be used for “the acquisition of fish for fish stocking projects.” And I know that's one that most fishermen in the province are very pleased about, is there can be fish purchased to stock various lakes and reservoirs across the province. And also the fund can be used for “the assessment or evaluation of any waters in Saskatchewan for their fish or fish habitat potential or any land for its wildlife or wildlife habitat potential.”

So that's the law as it stands right now, and it's work that's been done through that particular fund. Some of it's done obviously within the Ministry of Environment, and much of it is done in partnership with other groups. And those groups include the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation. It includes the Nature Conservancy of Canada, Ducks Unlimited Canada, and there are other groups that have some of this work.

[15:30]

Now what's interesting and perhaps troubling about the Bill that we have before us today, Bill 155, is that they're changing the nature of what's actually going to be done with these funds without necessarily explaining what's going to happen. And the key part that causes me some difficulty relates to the fact that they've put in a blanket clause that says, “the engagement of any services that the minister considers necessary to manage the fund” and then further, “the payment of the expenses of the council.”

Now, Mr. Speaker, what this appears to allow, and I think in fact is intended to allow because it sets right out in the explanatory notes that we have, it says:

The amendments to this section also include the addition of two new subsections to allow the Fund and the Advisory Council to contract services that are deemed necessary for the management of the Fund.

And in this note it says:

These services could include contracting expertise from groups such as the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation, the Nature Conservancy of Canada or Ducks Unlimited Canada for management of land within the Fund.

Mr. Speaker, at this time and with the present legislation, we have a number of professionals, whether they're biologists or water specialists or other people with broad experience who work within the department, who will provide these services and will also then manage the contracts that the ministry might have with some of the outside agencies. What this amendment appears to do is it allows for a number of those in ministry jobs to be eliminated and transferred out to some of these agencies.

And, Mr. Speaker, this may accomplish the Minister of Finance or, I think more appropriately, the Premier's goal of trying to flatline or reduce the size of the civil service. But it goes right to the heart of hollowing out or causing difficulties within the professional civil service to have the sufficient expertise to manage some areas which we think, on this side of the House, are crucial for the future of this province. And, Mr. Speaker, it moves people to some of these non-profit organizations.

Now what we do also know is that there are decisions made that sometimes cut back or limit the ability of some of these groups to continue the work that may have been contracted to them, or some other contractor may come in and take over some of this work.

Mr. Speaker, we fundamentally disagree with this style of organizing a government because what we need are the . . . What we need is a strengthening of the Ministry of Environment so that we can deal with the acid rain issues from Alberta, so that we can deal with a number of the substantial issues that are happening right across this province. As I've said in this House many times, Mr. Speaker, we are a great green space in Canada, and we have a certain obligation, a certain responsibility to make sure that we're not in any way jeopardizing the role that we have within Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I think that some of the underlying rationale for the changes that are made here goes fundamentally against the principle of making sure that the role of the government as the monitor of industry, of the people of this province and their use of the environment, of the parks, everything else, I think it all goes against the principle that we need to have the best people possible working in secure jobs within the Government of Saskatchewan.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I'm very concerned that this step will allow for a further diminishment of the capacity of the Ministry of Environment to do the job which the public expects them to do. I'm not in any way saying that these various organizations don't do a good job in some of the things that they do. But I think they would agree with me that it takes a combination of the kind of work that they're doing — as the Wildlife Federation or the Nature Conservancy of Canada or Ducks Unlimited — it takes a combination of the work that they do together with good, solid, secure expertise within the Ministry of Environment to make sure that the goals of all Saskatchewan citizens are met as it relates to the protection of the environment.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think that there are some fundamental questions around how this particular Bill has been brought forward. And I want to make sure that we also follow very carefully — and I'm sure the auditor will be following very carefully — how jobs may be transferred out of the records of a department to accomplish some of the other goals. I think it's unfortunate that some of those political perspectives of the government are going to influence and affect and I think substantially damage the capacity that we have in this province right now to protect our environment.

And unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, some of the actions last spring as it related to the wildlife habitat lands don't give us any comfort that there is a respect by this Premier and this government for the environment here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I know other of my colleagues will want to speak about this, and at this point I will adjourn the debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bradshaw): — The member from Regina Lakeview has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 155, *The Natural Resources Amendment Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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 Acting Speaker (Mr. Bradshaw): — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I join in on Bill 149, *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2010*. I have a few things to comment on. I think in general, it looks like they're trying to bring in legislation that may help the industry and create jobs. In that way, it's looking like it's a good Bill. It has some good things.

And they're referring to giving tax holidays, tax breaks to companies that want to bring in minerals from other parts of Canada into Saskatchewan to process and to move forward, which sounds positive. It looks like more jobs. Maybe there's an opportunity for higher paid jobs than minimum wage jobs. And people are looking at it; so that, to me, could be seen as positive. And it's nice to comment on some of the positive things that are going on, and that's all right to do that.

But also I want to make very clear, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the process and how we get there and to ensure that people's rights — First Nations and Métis people — making sure that anything that impacts areas of land, whether they're going to create this employment, that there's opportunities for First Nations and Métis Saskatchewan residents to have those jobs.

I want to be very clear. In light of some of the numbers we've seen, shocking numbers, with the Aboriginal employment in our province . . . And we have a large Aboriginal population. To see the numbers going down with employment is pretty shocking. And, unfortunately, at a time where we have a young Aboriginal population, you would hope the current Sask Party government would be working in a positive way, not hurting them the way they are doing. And that I cannot say I support, in what they're doing that way.

But to bring legislation to employ people and jobs is good. But I'm hoping at the end of the day that if this legislation does pass and goes through, you know, debate it . . . And we're going to do that here in the House, and the committee will have a chance to go over it. And I know a lot of people will have discussions and prior to me talking have spoken on this and had a chance to debate the Bill.

But I want to be very clear. We want to make sure people and communities that are impacted where these, I guess, jobs will be coming or the industry will be developed . . . And they might be new companies. It might be old companies trying to give it a go or are trying to . . . And there's nothing wrong with it, like I said. But I think at the end of the day, we have to make sure, in light of some of the numbers we're hearing with the Aboriginal population growing, young people, and the jobs and seeing unfortunately what this Sask Party government has done to the Aboriginal population. Not supporting it in the way they have

really speaks to their commitment to the Aboriginal population very clearly.

I think their commitment to the Aboriginal population has been made very clear when you have people and professors from universities and people referring to economic disasters. That to me says something very clear and loud. And it says something to the Aboriginal population in our province — that the Sask Party government is not supporting them, is not giving them the access to opportunity and a life, a quality of life, that they have a right to.

So there is many issues that may come up yet and people will want to ask and want clarification on. And overall like I said, the legislation, Bill 149, it might do some good. I hope that when it does that good for a company, and the company benefits on a tax holiday, that it will definitely be Aboriginal people who will benefit, and Saskatchewan people. But when we look, and I want to be very clear, the Aboriginal population is not doing so well with the economic going on the way they are. People are doing really well. Some people are doing great. But there's a lot of people, especially the Aboriginal people, that are not doing as well.

So I want to make it very clear that, you know, in general one might think this is a good Bill and a good legislation. And we might say it creates employment. And that's good. We want to create jobs, lots of jobs for Aboriginal people and Saskatchewan people. They have a right to that.

But I want to go back, you know, and just say the process will happen. And the process will be that we will discuss these Bills and issues.

And people . . . You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it goes back to a trust thing too. And I've said this before, and I will say that people trust their government will do what's best for them. And, you know, currently what we've seen from the Sask Party government, they haven't done good for a lot of Saskatchewan people, low-income or seniors. We're seeing housing issues. So really at the end of the day, to sit here and say that that group will benefit from this, I don't see it.

And they can cheerlead on all the different things they're doing for low-income people and taking some people off the tax. We try to get questions answered. They won't answer them, but they spin. And unfortunately that spin's not working because people out there that are suffering with rents, with utilities, groceries, trying to provide for their family, people losing their homes — they're losing their homes because they can't afford to pay the rent. They can't afford to. They have to balance everything out. It is sad.

So when I see jobs coming in and, you know, it might be good-paying jobs, I hope for all our Saskatchewan residents that there is an opportunity to have a good-paying job to pay the rent, to pay for the food, the clothing for their children. But I hope that there is that. That's a dream for a lot of people, but you have to give people a level playing field. And this current government is not giving Aboriginal people a level playing field.

So when I think about it, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you know, when

I think about the questions that Aboriginal people have and people in my constituency have, and a lot of the other constituencies out there, they're wondering, why are they left behind? Why doesn't this economic success and story they're hearing about, how come it's not impacting them and their families and their children and their grandchildren? There's a few benefiting greatly, but there's so many that are not. They're feeling the hardship, struggling. The food bank numbers are going up. We see it all the time, people losing their homes. I get phone calls from people because they can't afford to pay their rents. They have to be . . . Well they're being removed from their homes because they can't afford to. How do you balance it out?

So when we hear all this positive stuff, and I see a Bill like this 149, and it sounds really positive, you know. They spin it out that there may be good-paying jobs, and that's great. For Saskatchewan people that's great. And someone might get a tax break and encourage them to invest in our province. There's nothing wrong with that. But don't forget the people out there that are suffering, and suffering under the Sask Party government's, I guess, direction, decision making, picking winners and losers, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So when I say that, at the end of the day, we have to speak up for the members out there of our province that belong to this beautiful province, that are suffering, that aren't doing so well. And that's why we're here debating Bills that will affect them.

[15:45]

And I want to make it very clear: our First Nations and Métis community must be consulted. All of our province should be; residents should be consulted. But I think very clearly under constitution, very clear, makes it clear, very clear that First Nations, Métis must be consulted when things are impacting them — their lands, their communities, their way of life. And I think that's very clear.

But at this time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know some of my colleagues want to go ahead and get in on the different debates. So at this time, I am ready to adjourn debate on Bill 149, *The Income Tax Amendment Act*.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bradshaw): — The member from Cumberland has moved adjournment of Bill 149, *The Income Tax Amendment Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Bill No. 150

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bradshaw): — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to get in and join the debate on Bill 150, which is the superannuation supplementary provisions Bill that's being presented by the Minister of Finance.

And, Mr. Speaker, based on some of his notes, there's actually a few things that he's indicating that he wants to do. One is to certainly look at the notion of how spousal benefits would be calculated in the case of a person who may have been married more than once, and certainly there's also some provisions in relation to *The Income Tax Act*. And of course the publication issue, that a lot of people don't realize that the superannuation Act allows some of the names and the amounts of people that do get superannuation benefits be published.

So, Mr. Speaker, on Bill 150 we wanted to have a look at this, and certainly from the perspective of the intent of the Bill, we see that there is some certain sections that do have merit. Certainly if you look at the provisions as it relates to somebody marrying twice, you know, obviously as the superannuation person that would get some of these benefits there'd be some discussion on whether the first spouse or the second spouse, how you would certainly look at the divvying up of the benefits under the superannuation Act if the person who certainly received a pension had passed away. And some clarification on how we'd break up that estate, so to speak, is something that's always a tough task to do in not only going through the loss of a loved one, but certainly when you have two marriages that occurred over one person's life.

And, Mr. Speaker, the other notion that we have in relation to this Bill is also *The Income Tax Act*. And there's a bit of worry that I have because certainly when you look at the whole notion of how you're able to garnishee some of your pension plans — some of it is child maintenance orders; others of course there's other provisions in there as well — this may open up a few other avenues of, certainly from the income tax perspective, of how you're able to garnishee the pensions of different people.

And as long as the whole notion around *The Income Tax Act* itself applying to the pensions, if it's confined to that . . . And obviously everybody has to pay their taxes, and certainly if you don't there ought to be ways and means that the federal or provincial governments or the territorial governments can collect those taxes. So there is that qualification that I have that we ought to make sure that it is confined to that, that there's obviously that protection and provision there for folks that may have tax owing to the governments.

The third component, according to the minister's notes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the fact that some of these people that are receiving these benefits, that their names not be published. And certainly I think there's a lot of merit in that point because, as they served their public and as they served their years to the province and to the people of our great province, then as they retired, they obviously put some of this money away. And there's benefits attached to that, and the province certainly helps in many ways as well.

And to have their names published as to how much they're getting each year, I don't know if it's very productive. And certainly I think in the whole notion of accountability and transparency you can go a bit too far in that regard. So if

somebody such as yourself or myself who, we've designed a pension plan for ourselves and after we're done, retired from whatever we do, then having that out in the public domain, you know, some people think it's the right to know and other people say, well that's privileged information. There's always that balancing act.

And I think in some instances it's not really necessary to having somebody that's getting a superannuation benefit having their names published every year. I'm not certain that there's a lot of value to that — unless and until that individual is, say for example, hired by the government. In that instance, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you are a superannuate . . . [inaudible] . . . pensioner and you come back and you work for the government, then you ought to be . . . That information ought to become public then.

But if you're retired, you're living on your pension plan and living your life in peace, then obviously having everybody know what you're getting as part of your superannuation plan is not really productive, nor is it necessary to protect Saskatchewan's interests.

But if you start working for the government or working for the Crown corporation, then I think you're game to having that information become available. Because you don't want to see people double-dip, and you certainly don't want to see people try and hide behind the provisions that protect the identity of the people receiving those benefits because all of a sudden they got a contract offer from the government. And then that's what I think we want to make sure that there is that qualification as it comes to the provision of public disclosure as to who's getting what and how much are they getting each year.

Now, Mr. Speaker, again based on those comments, as I mentioned, the first provision of this Bill is to clarify how spousal survivor benefits will be calculated in the case of persons married once or twice.

Secondly, there's a bit of reaching out in terms of *The Income Tax Act* to make sure that there are provisions to accommodate that federal Act, that there is some provisions there. And we would say, don't go too far. As an example I would use collection agencies and so on and so forth, that may want to eye your pension as you get older.

And of course the third point is the public disclosure aspect that there is again, as I mentioned, merit in not having all the information and all the people getting benefits from the superannuation plan, having their names and how much they get each year. I don't think it's productive. I think it's counterproductive. It's not fair to their privacy situation.

However if they do come out of retirement and they do work for a company or work directly for the government that is in somehow being paid by the province, then that information ought to come forward. Because what you don't want to do is you don't want to see double-dipping, nor do you want to see people, through the back door, being hired to do certain work without people knowing that they are retired and they're being paid extra.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, those are the very brief comments I have on Bill 150. As always, you know, there's been a lot of

opportunity for us to reach out to different groups and talk to them about certain Bills. And we will do the same in this regard, because in any Bill that you bring forward, there's always intended consequences. There's always unintended consequence. We want to know why the Bill was presented. We want to know what the implications are, who is it affecting, who is asking for it. We want to know who is not supportive of it and these kinds of questions go on and on.

And that's why it's important in this Assembly and for those that may be listening to realize the importance of debating each of these Bills through processes such as this to make sure that we hold this government to account, and to make sure that the consequences are pure, that the consequences are straightforward, and that the consequences of this Bill is fair-minded and intended to do good for not only the people that we serve, but the people that may have served in previous years. So in that regard, Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill 150.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bradshaw): — The member from Athabasca has moved adjournment of debate on Bill 150, the superannuation amendment Act. Is the Assembly ready for the question . . . ready to adopt the motion? Excuse me, is the member . . . He's adjourning debate. Is the Assembly ready to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bradshaw): — Okay. Carried . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I did ask the right . . . No. Sorry. I did put the question to the adjournment. It was agreed, so we will move on. Carried.

Bill No. 153

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

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

Mr. Broten: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to join the discussion here this afternoon on Bill No. 153, *An Act to amend The Provincial Court Act*.

Mr. Speaker, when we think about the aspects that make Saskatchewan a great place to live with respect to being a strong democracy, an important part of that, Mr. Speaker, is the court system. The judicial branch, Mr. Speaker, that ensures that citizens can trust in the court system, that proper decisions are made, and that when an individual breaks the law that there are consequences for that individual, that rulings are handed down by a judge.

So, Mr. Speaker, when we look at possible changes to *The Provincial Court Amendment Act*, we should never do so in a light manner. It should always be done with thoughtful consideration, because the implications for our court system and citizens' trust in that system can be so directly related to the changes that are occurring or being proposed.

When we look at Bill No. 153, Mr. Speaker, there are a number of changes that are suggested in this proposed piece of legislation. Changes, Mr. Speaker, that address the nature of the court system here in Saskatchewan and also changes that affect the day-to-day operations of judges, who can be a judge in the province, as well as some of the concerns around the Judicial Council.

Now what I would like to do, Mr. Speaker, in my remarks on Bill No. 153 is speak to some of the aspects that aren't perhaps quite as controversial or have implications quite as great as some of the others. I'll address those first and then move into some of the more, as I see it, significant changes that are proposed in Bill No. 153.

And, Mr. Speaker, as is the case with any piece of legislation dealing with a number of changes, there are some that are minor, perhaps more of a housekeeping or routine business nature. And there are others that are more significant and require a bit more scrutiny and careful consideration as to whether or not it is the appropriate course of action to pursue.

Mr. Speaker, we see in Bill No. 153 one change that changes the nature of the Law Society representation on the Judicial Council. As has been the current practice, the president of the Law Society serves on the council. And certainly that individual as president of the Law Society, he or she is a very highly skilled lawyer who has the respect of his or her colleagues and has been chosen or selected as the president. So certainly that would be an appropriate person to fulfill that role on the Judicial Council.

The catch is, Mr. Speaker, as the position of president changes for the Law Society, there's also a change for who would be a representative on the Judicial Council. And as I understand it, based on the comments from the minister and the suggestions in the legislation, that this Bill proposes that an individual be able to serve for a longer period of time and prevent some of the frequent turnover. As is the case when someone is involved in serving on a council or a board or committee, there's expertise that is gained and as someone serves in that position longer, they're in a better position to provide helpful contributions to the process.

For that reason, Mr. Speaker, if we think of other legislation that this House has considered that change the duration of the elected terms for city and town councils from three years to four years, sort of a similar argument, Mr. Speaker, that there is a level of expertise that is gained and allowing individuals to serve a longer period of time can be beneficial for the process. So as long as there is appropriate considerations for how the turnover rate should occur and that there is new individuals participating, Mr. Speaker, in my opinion that would seem like a reasonable change as proposed in this legislation.

[16:00]

Another change, Mr. Speaker, that in my opinion I would not object to, is changes in the disability benefits so that the same standard would apply as to that of other provincial employees. Anyone who is serving the public as a public servant, whether it's in the civil service or whether it's an elected office or whether it is as a judge, Mr. Speaker, you know, we wish the

best for those people and everyone in those . . . The vast majority of people in those positions take great pride in the work that they do and want to serve to the best of their ability. When illness does strike or an accident of some type and there's a change in one's ability to provide that service, it's only fair that there's appropriate benefits available to those individuals. So in my opinion, that doesn't seem like an overly controversial change to the legislation, in my opinion.

Another aspect that is suggested as a change in Bill 153, *An Act to amend the Provincial Court Act*, is the issue of allowing temporary judges from other jurisdictions to come into Saskatchewan to practise. And the rationale for this change, Mr. Speaker, is that if a situation arises where the judge in Saskatchewan has a conflict of interest with a particular matter, this would allow someone from outside of our provincial jurisdiction to come and provide judicial services in order that a case or a matter can be dealt with.

Mr. Speaker, that too in my opinion, so long as there's not more to this story that I'm not aware of or that the minister has failed to share, if that is the basis for the request, it would seem reasonable to me. While Saskatchewan is a very diverse place with many different types of people, sometimes the degrees of separation in this province aren't always as high as it could be. So if there is an instance where there is a conflict of interest and an outside judge is more suitable, more appropriate to handle a particular matter, this proposed change in Bill No. 153 would allow that out-of-province judge to come in and provide services. So again, so long as that is the intent and the reason for this proposed change, Mr. Speaker, to me that makes reasonable sense.

The next component, Mr. Speaker, that I would like to address in Bill No. 153 is what I see as perhaps a more significant change that is proposed in this amendment. And, Mr. Speaker, this has to do with the structure of the court system and some changes that have some implications for who provides services and how individuals in society may be able to access services. And I think when we're looking at these types of changes, Mr. Speaker, it's important to do so with close scrutiny and with thoughtful consideration in order to ensure that the decisions being made are not short-sighted, but that the decisions being made serve the long-term best interests of Saskatchewan people.

The change being suggested, Mr. Speaker, in Bill No. 153 is to repeal the civil division of the Provincial Court, Mr. Speaker, to collapse that category within the current court structure. In so doing, Mr. Speaker, that would free up the classification of the judges currently serving in that role to provide judicial services in another aspect, in criminal cases for example. What this does, Mr. Speaker, is takes the judges who have been providing services in the civil division, dealing with certain matters that are more defined in their nature, and this would end that particular classification and allow those judges to handle matters of another nature, such as matters of a criminal nature.

And then, Mr. Speaker, what is proposed is that the change in the civil division, with judges no longer providing services in that area, justices of the peace would then provide many of the services and fulfill the role that judges had currently been serving or judges are currently serving in the civil division.

As I understand it, Mr. Speaker, and if I'm guessing as to what is the motivation for this change, though not explicitly said in the minister's second reading remarks as I recall, it would be, Mr. Speaker, to free up capacity, having judges who practised in one area being able to take cases of a wider variety addressing wait times for handling criminal matters through the court system.

So, Mr. Speaker, you can see that that is a fairly significant change when we're dealing with the structure of the courts and when we're making a decision with respect to which judges can handle matters in which area. And then if we're removing judges from handling one type of case in the civil division, the use of justices of the peace to fulfill that role is certainly a fairly significant change which could have some implications.

If we think of, Mr. Speaker, the expertise that the judges would have who are currently operating within the civil division, the experience that they have with those types of cases, and the role that they've been serving for some time, that's something that is not acquired immediately, and it's something that is built up over time. Those individuals who have been serving in that position have the background knowledge and the experience to handle those matters well.

So if we're no longer having judges do that, but having a different type of person fulfill that role, it does raise questions about whether or not the best person is perhaps doing the job. And I'm not making negative comments about justices of the peace — certainly not. But it's a question about whether or not the system is designed in such a way that the best and most qualified individuals and the individuals with the most experience are handling the matters that need to be dealt with.

So as I'm aware, Mr. Speaker, this also ties into pressures through a case in the Supreme Court that requires criminal cases to be dealt with within a certain period of time. So this, Mr. Speaker, allows the Justice minister, instead of hiring new judges to address the increased need for judges in the criminal system, it allows him to reallocate resources, I suppose, from the civil division into the criminal. So that is a significant change. And I think, Mr. Speaker, it also has to be done within an understanding of workloads, what is an appropriate level for judges, and whether or not we're matching one type of person with a particular type of work that he or she is best suited to carry out.

It's interesting, Mr. Speaker, while some people might not see how this piece of legislation ties into larger changes that are occurring within the judicial system and the laws that exist within Canada, there is a connection, Mr. Speaker, with much of the crime legislation that we've seen introduced by the federal Conservative Party. I believe there is about 18 crime Bills. And for members, or individuals at home and members in the Chamber who are listening, I think in the news today there is a discussion about the point of privilege that the federal Conservative Party is involved in, where the Speaker has made a ruling about the federal Conservative government not being upfront or fully disclosing the costs associated with the 18 crime Bills and that there's a point of privilege that the federal Conservative Party has not been upfront with the people of Canada about the true costs associated with those crime Bills.

Mr. Speaker, within those 18 crime Bills, Mr. Speaker, if that is increasing the demands placed on criminal courts and the need for judges to be serving those courts, that is a cost, Mr. Speaker, from a change occurring at the federal level, that the province is picking up. And I think that's not immediately apparent in the minister's second reading remarks and it's not something that's immediately apparent to everyone in the province. But the changes that the federal Conservatives are bringing in with respect to the 18 crime Bills that they have not been upfront with the people of Canada in disclosing the true costs associated with those pieces of legislation, that's having a bearing here in the province. And whether we look at the national jail policy and the huge expansion of jails within Canada and then what the implications are for a province with respect to picking up the tab for increased costs associated with those new crime Bills.

And it was yesterday actually, I think, the member from Saskatoon Centre made a comment that the federal Conservatives have a national jail strategy, but they don't have a national housing strategy. And Bill No. 153 actually provides an interesting glimpse into how changes suggested at the federal level through the crime legislation have a negative effect on the financial position of the province here in Saskatchewan.

So I think that's an important thing to consider, Mr. Speaker. If the changes of the federal level with the new crime legislation are placing increased demands on the criminal court system, if more judges are needed, Mr. Speaker, to deal with the changed legislation on a federal level, if that's having an effect on judges here in Saskatchewan who handle criminal matters, instead of collapsing the civil division perhaps it's more appropriate, Mr. Speaker, to have discussions with the federal government about who actually should be picking up the tab for the changes that they are bringing in.

And so I mean that can apply to the corrections system, but it also applies to the court system. So I didn't hear comments by the minister about that relationship. We know the relationship between the province and the federal government, we know on a personal level it's very intimate, with many of the individuals on the opposite side in the federal Conservative Party.

But, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to Saskatchewan people being treated well and properly and fairly by the federal government, that's a completely different story. And despite the very intimate relationship between members on the government side and the federal Conservative Party, despite the very close relationship that exists and the close discussions on a variety of topics, we've seen the 13 or so federal MPs [Member of Parliament] here in Saskatchewan really fail to deliver to Saskatchewan people time and time again.

And I'm worried that in Bill No. 153, *The Provincial Court Amendment Act*, this is yet another example where we have pieces of legislation being brought in at the federal level, the 18 crime Bills that the Speaker has ruled that the federal Conservative Party has not been upfront with the people of Canada with respect to the true costs associated with those Bills. And that's going through the House of Commons now and is a matter of debate in the public realm on the TV stations just this afternoon.

Well this is another example where, despite the very cosy relationship between the government and the federal Conservative Party, there really is a failure for the federal Conservative Party to deliver the benefits to Saskatchewan people, instead making decisions that have an effect on our provincial situation financially but not backing up those decisions or being upfront with the true facts of how much changes cost at the federal level.

So I think that's a very important point to make, Mr. Speaker. If the changes that are being proposed in 153 are a result of actions by the federal government and changes that they've made in their crime Bills, if there is an increased demand for judges in the criminal system here in the province, it's only appropriate that the proper resources would be made available in order to provide enough judges to handle the caseload that is involved with that.

And the approach that the Sask Party government is taking at this time is to collapse the civil division within the court system, allowing those judges to handle matters on the criminal side. And then the next step, which I'll be speaking to in the next Bill, Mr. Speaker, which is tied to this one, allows the backfilling of the judges in the civil division by justices of the peace.

So it's a question, Mr. Speaker, that really drives home the message that there needs to be a proper relationship of communication between the federal government and the provincial government and that when decisions are made at the federal government, the province ought to be treated fairly and properly to respond to the decisions that are made there.

[16:15]

And when the province is reacting to a need, for example the need for more judges to handle matters on the criminal side, we have to ask whether or not the approach that they've taken is the wisest one, whether it is smart, and whether it's long-term thinking to collapse the civil division, freeing up those judges to work on the criminal side and then using other individuals to fill, to fulfill the role that the judges in the civil division once served in.

So based on the minister's remarks on this item, I'm not convinced that all that information has been shared with the people of Saskatchewan in connecting how the decisions from the federal government are affecting us here on our provincial level.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think it causes me to wonder. If that improper relationship, that asymmetrical relationship exists on this particular issue, what are the many other issues that are occurring where the province is being asked to pick up the tab for something, where the province has been asked to change what it is doing or the province has to react and adapt to a given reality here on the ground, but then we're being hung out to dry, left out in the cold by the federal Conservatives? And I think this is one example. But since it's such an example that not everyone in Saskatchewan may be talking about on any given day, you have to be somewhat involved either in the court system or talking about it in this Assembly to have it as a top-of-mind issue.

But it worries me that that approach of covering up for the failure of the federal Conservatives and that approach of a failure to deliver on this supposedly intimate relationship that members opposite have with the federal Conservative party with respect to the imagined benefits that were supposed to be realized by this reality of having federal Conservatives in Ottawa and having a small “c” conservative government here at the provincial level, Saskatchewan people, the stars are supposed to be aligned and that everything would be great for us.

But what we've seen on issue after issue here in the province — whether it's the failure for the federal government to chip in for the dome dreams or whether it's carbon capture and sequestration, whatever the project may be — they'll have the odd smaller project where they'll trot out the horse-and-pony show and have a news release and some event of where there is co-operation. But on the huge, the huge, big plans where co-operation was supposed to occur between the federal government and the provincial government, we simply are not seeing that.

Well members opposite are remarking on my use of the horse-and-pony show. Perhaps is it the dog-and-pony show? Is that the correct expression?

But I'm very happy, Mr. Speaker, that members opposite are listening to these remarks because so often they're zoned out and not paying attention. And I'm happy, Mr. Speaker, that they're hanging on every word that I am speaking to you with respect to Bill 153 because the remarks that I have been making speak to the failed relationship that this government has with the federal Conservatives and, Mr. Speaker, it speaks to what we've seen in some instances as very short-sighted decisions by this provincial government in dealing with the concerns of Saskatchewan people.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude my remarks on Bill No. 153. As I stated at the beginning, there is a number of aspects to this Bill. In some instances the changes seem to make quite good sense and are of a more modernization approach or an approach of, a commonsense approach, I will say.

In other changes suggested in Bill No. 153, I think the story goes deeper. I think there is more to the story than what the minister is sharing with Saskatchewan people. And I think there are significant implications for Saskatchewan people on a financial side with respect to how much it costs to deliver judicial services here in the province, but also from a perspective of efficiency and effectiveness, whether or not the most appropriate people are delivering the services in the most appropriate way and manner.

So those are my concerns, Mr. Speaker, about 153. I'm not convinced that members opposite fully grasp some of the problems associated with this piece of legislation, but I look forward to continued debate on Bill No. 153. I look forward to continued comments from opposition members. And with that, Mr. Speaker, I will move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 153. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Massey Place has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 153. Is it the

pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 154

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

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand today to join in on the discussion on Bill No. 154, the provincial court amendment, consequential amendments. Mr. Speaker, this peace of legislation has to be viewed in the context of the piece of legislation that I just spoke to for some time, Bill No. 153, *The Provincial Court Amendment Act*. As I explained, Mr. Speaker, in Bill No. 153, I will restate it for the public record because it has a relevance for Bill No. 154.

What we see is that the members opposite are proposing a change to the structure of the court system. They are proposing a change that would collapse the civil division of the Provincial Court. And so judges who are currently serving within that division, the civil division, would no longer be classified or restricted to working in that particular division, thereby freeing them up to work in other areas of the law in dealing with criminal matters and criminal cases in the court system.

The idea, Mr. Speaker, as I expressed in Bill No. 153 remarks, is that with increased demand for judicial services on the criminal side, this is an attempt by the government to reallocate the services of judges from one area to another in order to address concerns around wait times for handling criminal cases, and as I would imagine, Mr. Speaker, a reluctance by the minister to bring on more judges to handle these cases.

So what's being proposed in Bill No. 153 and also in 154, which has the consequential amendments, is that the judges who served in the civil division would be freed up to be reallocated to a different area. And then the services that the judges once provided in the civil division would be served by justices of the peace in providing the enforcement and the decisions being made by what was provincial judges. So it's a shift, Mr. Speaker. What's occurring is a reclassification, allowing judges to work in another area, taking judges out of the one area and then making legislative provisions to allow justices of the peace to serve in the role that judges once served.

So it's an important change to note because certainly the services that are provided in the civil division are important ones, services that many people in Saskatchewan rely on from a justice perspective, services that people have been accustomed to having fulfilled here in the province. And they're services that one group of individuals, the judges, have been providing for some period of time.

Obviously when one serves in a particular role expertise is gained. Knowledge is gained, experience is gained. And looking at all those aspects that are gained over a course of time allows one to fulfill their job in the best possible manner. Of course there are benefits and advantages that people have when they're new to a job, as in any profession or any occupation, but there's also something to be said for experience and having a strong track record of providing services.

So I think that's an important consideration when looking at these two pieces of legislation. It's an important consideration to examine as to whether or not the most appropriate profession or most appropriate individuals are providing services in a particular area. And it's my hope, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister of Justice has taken the time to carefully consider and ponder whether or not that is suggested to occur through these proposed amendments.

My fear, Mr. Speaker, as I stated in Bill No. 153 that my fear is that the decision made by the minister to collapse the civil division and allow those judges to handle criminal matters, and then use justices of the peace to fulfill the role that the judges once served in, it's my hope, Mr. Speaker, that the approach of the minister is not simply one of covering up for federal Conservative cousins for changes that they've introduced with the criminal Bills that are before the House of Commons.

As we've seen in the news, there's a point of privilege that the Speaker has ruled on in the House of Commons stating that the Conservative government has not been upfront and clear with the people of Canada with respect to the associated costs of its Bills that it has brought forward before the Canadian public in Parliament.

And, Mr. Speaker, I hope that the approach that we're seeing by the Justice minister in this instance is not one of a continuing track record, a continuing pattern of simply . . . of Saskatchewan people not receiving our due benefits from the federal government, of Saskatchewan people being taken for granted by the federal Conservative MPs, of Saskatchewan people not being treated with respect, or really dealt with in an appropriate manner by their elected representatives on the federal level in the Conservative Party. And it's my fear that this legislation that the Justice minister is bringing forward is yet another example of the failed relationship between the federal Conservatives and the provincial government.

Mr. Speaker, so I've been quite clear in my remarks on Bill No. 153 and Bill 154 that I have some concerns about these changes because I don't think all of the information about the significance of these changes has been provided by the minister, and I don't think that the minister is necessarily responding in a way to federal crime Bills that would serve the best interests of Saskatchewan people. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm not totally convinced that the minister has thoroughly thought out the approach of collapsing the civil division and allowing judges in one area, reassigning them to another, and then using other individuals to serve the role that the Provincial Court judges once served.

So I certainly have some concerns about these two pieces of legislation. I have concerns because they speak volumes about the failed relationship that the federal Conservative MPs have

with the province of Saskatchewan. And I think they also speak volumes about the tendency of the Sask Party government to make short-sighted decisions to respond to an immediate concern or need — or a predicted concern or need — but not taking in the long-term considerations of what the consequences may be for their actions. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I would move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 154. Thank you.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 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: — I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to weigh in on debate as it relates to Bill No. 161, *The Election Amendment Act*, Mr. Speaker.

And this Bill, Mr. Speaker, is of great concern to Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker, and not just the individuals whom it affects. It relates specifically to the right to vote, Mr. Speaker. And when we think about that, all the different decisions and policies that have an impact on the lives of Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker, depriving or taking away or reducing the ability to vote, Mr. Speaker, is certainly a step in the wrong direction, Mr. Speaker. The ability to exercise one's franchise, Mr. Speaker, is fundamental to a healthy and well-functioning democracy, Mr. Speaker.

We put this in context. This Bill was introduced in the fall, Mr. Speaker, and if we put it in context of what we've watched from a global perspective over that past few months, Mr. Speaker, we've witnessed this uprising from a global perspective in many nations, Mr. Speaker, where individuals are fighting for and, in many cases and sadly, losing their lives, Mr. Speaker, to fight for the right to vote and to be able to shape the society and the jurisdiction and the country for which they live in, Mr. Speaker.

And at the same time as we watch and turn on our TV and watch these horrendous battles and the subsequent violence, Mr. Speaker — in places such as Libya or recently Egypt, Mr. Speaker, many of these North African nations, Mr. Speaker — we here in Saskatchewan have a government, the Sask Party government that's taking us in the wrong direction here in our own jurisdiction, Mr. Speaker, that's reducing the ability for many people to vote, Mr. Speaker, depriving many people of that right to exercise their franchise, Mr. Speaker. And that's something that we're going to stand strongly opposed to, Mr. Speaker.

[16:30]

And we see it from a very self-serving, as a real self-serving policy of this government, Mr. Speaker, that is there to disenfranchise many individuals, Mr. Speaker, who have been alienated and hurt and affected by this government. And the members opposite can laugh all they want, Mr. Speaker, but the fact remains that as we turn on the news here tonight I suspect we'll see an update of people fighting in Libya for that ability to have an opinion, have their say, and have a democratic state, Mr. Speaker, where here in Saskatchewan we now have a debate on the floor where we're going to be moving backwards on that front, Mr. Speaker.

I would suspect, Mr. Speaker, that many individuals, certainly myself included, on both sides of this Assembly would have individuals in their family who have served, Mr. Speaker, in the Armed Forces or in a capacity, Mr. Speaker, to go and fight for democratic freedoms around our world, Mr. Speaker, and that have put their lives on the line or have paid the ultimate sacrifice, Mr. Speaker, to uphold democratic freedoms — the right to vote, Mr. Speaker, and to ensure that that franchise is provided to individuals to have a say in their democracy, Mr. Speaker, in their state.

And when we think of all those veterans, Mr. Speaker, and all those individuals currently serving in these sorts of capacities to bring these sorts of freedoms and uphold these sorts of freedoms from a global perspective, it's unfortunate to realize that this Sask Party government is driving us backwards on our own home front here, Mr. Speaker, as it relates to our democratic rights, the ability to exercise one's franchise, Mr. Speaker, and to simply vote in elections and to shape the province and jurisdiction for which they live in, Mr. Speaker.

And to see this Bill come to the legislature one simply has to ask, what is it that this government is trying to fix, and what is the motivation, Mr. Speaker? And the answer is simple on the motivation side, Mr. Speaker. This is a government that has boasted and spun numbers and misled, Mr. Speaker, on so many occasions, Mr. Speaker, and they have failed Saskatchewan people on so many fronts, Mr. Speaker. And when we look specifically . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And the members can heckle from their seat all they want, Mr. Speaker. I say bring it on, Mr. Speaker, because I welcome that discussion, Mr. Speaker.

But when you look at the failure of this government in leaving so many people behind, Mr. Speaker, as it relates specifically to seniors, Mr. Speaker, in all of our constituencies and in many cases in the rural constituencies across Saskatchewan certainly many, many seniors, Mr. Speaker, that have been failed by the policies of this government — in Regina Rosemont as well, Mr. Speaker — that will be disenfranchised and deprived of their ability to vote in the next election by way of this Bill, Mr. Speaker, and this anti-democratic government. Those individuals have done the heavy lifting within our economy and built our fine province, Mr. Speaker, and defined us as who we are and our respective communities are to the world, Mr. Speaker, and who certainly at this stage of their life should have the right and opportunity to continue to have a say, have a voice and shape the policies that build our new Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

So when we look specifically at seniors and the failures of this government, the list is long. And it's understandable from a shrewd political perspective why this government is trying to eliminate that vote. But it's utterly wrong, Mr. Speaker, and it's the kind of behaviour that should be fought within this legislature and certainly raised with hot debate across this province, Mr. Speaker.

We see individuals in so many constituencies that have been failed, specifically seniors, as it relates to the health care that they are being provided by this government, Mr. Speaker, the inadequate access to vital services, Mr. Speaker, that in many cases they had played a vital role in laying out and building within their communities. We look to long-term care, Mr. Speaker, specifically and the challenges that exist: the cuts to so many beds, Mr. Speaker, by this government, and the lack of accountability shown by members opposite in their response to their own respective constituents and the constituents of all of us, Mr. Speaker.

So it's understandable from a very shrewd political aspect why this government would want to eliminate seniors from voting in the next election, Mr. Speaker. But I say the consequences of that are far too grave and should go beyond any sort of political cycle considerations, Mr. Speaker. It's the kind of thing that many of those seniors or the spouses of those seniors either lost their lives for fighting and protecting democratic freedoms around the world, Mr. Speaker, and the many veterans that have served so proudly from Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

What we're hearing from these seniors across Saskatchewan is not only that they recognize the failed actions of this government, Mr. Speaker, the wrong-headed direction of this government, but they feel betrayed. When they recognize that they will not have the ability to exercise their vote or that many of their friends, Mr. Speaker, many from their own demographic may not have the ability to exercise their vote, they see it as something that's wrong, and we see it as something that's wrong, Mr. Speaker. And we're more than willing to support the thousands of seniors across this province that are feeling betrayed and that are angry at the Wall government for trying to eliminate their voice and remove their ability to vote in the next election, Mr. Speaker.

And I can think just specifically of many seniors, Mr. Speaker, who are still participating fully, Mr. Speaker — and you would know this wholeheartedly — in the communities of their respective communities and the decisions that are impacting them right now.

I think of the number of seniors, Mr. Speaker, that have gotten involved in a community such as Wawota, Mr. Speaker, who are so outraged by the actions of this government and their local MLA, Mr. Speaker, this Premier, this Sask Party Premier, to close down beds within a facility and to fail to provide the health services that they deserve, Mr. Speaker.

And these seniors, Mr. Speaker, are coming out and they're having their say, Mr. Speaker, and certainly individuals in this Assembly have seen them come to action. And this government, this Premier, Mr. Speaker, this Sask Party government thinks these very same people that are leading the debate in community halls, Mr. Speaker, community forums,

that are leading the activity within their newspapers, this government, this Premier, the MLA I suspect from Cannington and all of the rest of them, Mr. Speaker, would like to see these individuals not be able to exercise their vote come November 7th, Mr. Speaker. We think this is wrong. We think it's a shame and we think it's something that we need to fight incredibly hard, Mr. Speaker.

When we look at the broken promises and the failures, Mr. Speaker, the list goes on. And we can think of individuals it affects, individuals from all walks of life, Mr. Speaker, all demographics. But I think specifically to students, Mr. Speaker. Students that are at, let's say, our universities here right now or our post-secondary institutions, who are facing relentless increases to their tuitions, Mr. Speaker, under this government, a government that preaches on one side about its resource riches, its prosperities, its record revenues, but yet is burdening these students with higher tuitions and exorbitant rental increases, Mr. Speaker, that in the end has the end game of reducing accessibility to post-secondary education in this province in a significant way.

Mr. Speaker, this is something that doesn't . . . that not only is difficult for those students that are aspiring to move on and build their lives and their careers in this province, Mr. Speaker, but it's something that hurts Saskatchewan when we don't allow our individuals to be able to go out and build their education and build their lives in our province. It's what builds us socially and economically, Mr. Speaker. And so students are certainly upset with this government, Mr. Speaker. And we see this measure as a way, as a very blunt instrument to be able to deprive many from their ability to vote, Mr. Speaker. And we won't stand for that.

And we see, Mr. Speaker, we see that across young people as an entire generation, Mr. Speaker, that are burdened by this legislation and that will be limited by their ability to exercise their franchise, Mr. Speaker, be able to cast their vote. And these young people, Mr. Speaker, are the very young people that we should be cranking up their involvement and interest in politics, Mr. Speaker, cranking up their involvement and their interest in casting a vote and determining the future of their province.

And, Mr. Speaker, I hear from individuals that youth are apathetic, and I've heard people say that they don't care about politics or casting that vote, Mr. Speaker. Nothing could be further from the truth. Now while youth vote generally in a lower turnout than the general population, what I know about young people is that they're more ready than any generation before them to cast their vote and have a say in building the policies that determine our shared future, Mr. Speaker. To see these kinds of actions, Mr. Speaker, that deprive them of that ability, deprive them of the ability to shape policies that build the future of their province, Mr. Speaker, our province as it relates to their own respective futures and their families and their planning, Mr. Speaker, is simply wrong.

And we see this vote as something that's targeted specifically to limit the ability of many First Nations and Métis people to vote, Mr. Speaker, individuals that have been concerned with this government on so many fronts, that have been let down on so many fronts, Mr. Speaker. I can highlight when the habitat

lands were sold off without any consultation or just that entire concept of duty to consult, Mr. Speaker, and the breach of treaty rights that this government continues to conduct itself with, Mr. Speaker. It's a disrespect to the treaty rights that are in place, a disrespect to our treaty people. And in fact we are all treaty people, Mr. Speaker.

And we see specifically the failure on the job front, Mr. Speaker, as it relates to First Nations and Métis people, with a significant and a shameful reduction in employment over the last two years under this Sask Party government that has cut many of the vital policies and programs that were building that participation, Mr. Speaker, and putting us in better stead tomorrow, Mr. Speaker, and 10 years from now and 20 years from now than if we don't have those sorts of measures.

And the member from Cannington heckles from his seat. It's noted that he barely says boo in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. Of course we know that he's not a minister of the Crown. And in fact, Mr. Speaker, I know even in the very seniors that he's cutting services in within his own constituency, Mr. Speaker, we know he has trouble providing the answers to those individuals. I would reference just a couple weeks ago in Wawota, Mr. Speaker, at a community hall, Mr. Speaker.

So the member from Cannington, I'm willing to take up this debate with him any day of the week. But it would be a pleasure — if he actually has something to say, Mr. Speaker, and if his caucus will let him — to rise in this Assembly and to make the statements that he feels he should make, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: — What did they say about him?

Mr. Wotherspoon: — And, Mr. Speaker, I hear, what did they say about him at the community? They're feeling betrayed, Mr. Speaker, feeling betrayed, Mr. Speaker, by the cuts to services that they helped build, Mr. Speaker, the dollars that they had put in place. And now they see not only the cuts to those services but taking away the ability to cast their vote and determine who's going to be representing them, Mr. Speaker, and that's fundamentally wrong. Individuals and seniors, Mr. Speaker, who in many cases either fought, themselves, to fight for democracy and promote those sorts of freedoms, Mr. Speaker, or spouses of those individuals that have done that, Mr. Speaker.

And we see this as a major step backwards. So we see that with renters. We see it with young people. We see it with seniors. We see the concerns with First Nations and Métis people — a broad base of individuals who have been hurt by the deliberate actions of this Sask Party Premier and government, Mr. Speaker.

We see this government try to fool around with democratic processes on many other levels as well, Mr. Speaker. We see them meddle, this Premier and this government meddle in the hiring of a Chief Electoral Officer, Mr. Speaker, somebody who is fundamental in ensuring the health and well-being of our democracy, Mr. Speaker.

This is the wrong-headed direction of this government, Mr. Speaker, and it isn't in the best interests of all Saskatchewan people, not just the Saskatchewan people for whom it

disenfranchises, Mr. Speaker. Because when we have a less participatory democracy, Mr. Speaker, we all lose from that, Mr. Speaker, because all of the individuals we just spoke of should have their democratic right to come forward and to cast their ballot and build the policies that will shape our tomorrow, Mr. Speaker.

We see this government eliminating the voice of individuals across this province, specifically as it relates to victims, Mr. Speaker, of human rights abuses or harassments, Mr. Speaker. We see a government, Mr. Speaker, that has been condemned by Amnesty International, Mr. Speaker, an organization that doesn't weigh in on political matters, Mr. Speaker, an organization that has won a Nobel Peace Prize, Mr. Speaker.

[16:45]

And we see a government that is moving forward with legislation to take away the voice of individuals who have been harassed, Mr. Speaker, that have been abused, Mr. Speaker, and that have had their human rights compromised. And those individuals will want to have a say in the next election, Mr. Speaker, and this government is taking away the right for many of those individuals to do so, Mr. Speaker. We see that as wrong. We believe those people should be fully participatory and making decisions as to the future of our Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

And we see this on many other fronts. We see this hiding of important voices, Mr. Speaker, such as individuals that have been marginalized, Mr. Speaker, by way of poverty, Mr. Speaker, that can't make ends meet. And we see specifically the cut, Mr. Speaker, to the Welfare Rights Centre, Mr. Speaker, with nothing to replace it to provide an independent and external voice for the many individuals, Mr. Speaker, who don't have a voice otherwise, Mr. Speaker. We see a deliberate action of this government to take away that voice, to take away the stories that need to be heard, the injustices that need to drive and shape public policy, Mr. Speaker. This is a shameful time in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And a government that has a record of being anti-democratic, and it's unfortunate.

We see many individuals for whom it's harder for them to vote than it would have been otherwise under this government and the legislation that's been brought forward. But what we don't hear from this government is anything to encourage participation in elections, Mr. Speaker, to encourage participation in democracy and to make it easier to vote, Mr. Speaker. And frankly I think this is the direction we need to go, Mr. Speaker, because I'm a believer that we're best served, Mr. Speaker, when our young people who are incredibly prepared to have their say in shaping our future Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, have that ability.

I think we're better served . . . We have seniors, Mr. Speaker, who have built the communities across Saskatchewan and built this fine province and the institutions that we're proud of, Mr. Speaker. I think we're better served when they have the ability to exercise their franchise.

And I think we're better served, Mr. Speaker, when First Nations and Métis people, the first people of this province, Mr. Speaker, have the ability to exercise their franchise, Mr.

Speaker.

To see this Sask Party government, this Sask Party Premier move in a direction that deprives many of that right, and not to try to dream and to look at policies that promote participation, that fight against potential apathy and bring more people out to the polls, is appalling. And I see many members on both sides of this Assembly that have constituents that have been deprived and that have been disenfranchised by way of this legislation, Mr. Speaker. We need to stand up and speak out, Mr. Speaker, when we have policies like these brought forward.

And I reference again, Mr. Speaker, that we will likely go home from this debate here today and over the supper news, the dinner news, we'll catch stories of the fight in many other nations — Libya, and there's northern African nations — that are fighting for the right to shape their jurisdictions, their nations, Mr. Speaker. And then here in Saskatchewan, a place that's been a proud democracy is taking steps backwards, Mr. Speaker. That's not how it should be, Mr. Speaker. We should be taking steps forward and proving ourselves as a model to the rest of the world, Mr. Speaker.

Individuals in these other nations that are putting their lives on the line and losing lives, Mr. Speaker, to fight for something that we have and something we should cherish, Mr. Speaker, not something that we should simply let slide by in the debates of spring of 2011 because we've got a right wing, anti-democratic, Sask Party Premier and government in power, Mr. Speaker. Wrong way to go, Mr. Speaker.

Now this government has put forward as justification that this brings us in line with other jurisdictions somehow is a harmonization, Mr. Speaker. What we would suggest, Mr. Speaker, is that they reference what's going on in British Columbia right now with a Supreme Court challenge that's in place of the federal legislation, Mr. Speaker, and recognize the legal challenge that's in place there. And let's observe what occurs there, Mr. Speaker, and let's also recognize that we should never be afraid as a province to lead, Mr. Speaker, and at times to be able to hold ourselves up as a model to other jurisdictions.

There's a very real danger that the clear preference for photo ID [identification] could lead to some people and many people being disenfranchised, Mr. Speaker. We are worried about this. We're going to fight against this, Mr. Speaker, and we see it as wrong-headed. We recognize that with the legislation that's put forward, it's going to be difficult for many to comply with the legislation. Thus it's going to be difficult for them to cast that vote, Mr. Speaker, and that's wrong, Mr. Speaker. It's simply, simply wrong.

I think of, Mr. Speaker, the institute that your office holds, Mr. Speaker, as it relates to parliamentary democracy and the purpose of that to promote learning of our parliamentary democracy both to educators, but then also to be instilled back into the classroom, Mr. Speaker. The purpose of that is to create a broader participation in the policy making and decision making of the day, Mr. Speaker. This runs completely counter to the purpose of that institute, Mr. Speaker, that I think we should be proud of the institute, Mr. Speaker, that you lead and that you run, Mr. Speaker, something that should be serving a

public good. This takes us in the wrong direction, Mr. Speaker.

Many renters specifically highlight the challenge, Mr. Speaker, of the ability to even comply with . . . just in a very practical nature, Mr. Speaker. And that many of them are moving from location to location by way of the fact that there's such a tight supply and such a difficult opportunity for renters to find adequate space that's also affordable, Mr. Speaker. Those individuals may not have the required documents to allow them to vote, Mr. Speaker. But these very individuals who have been hit, in many ways the hardest, by the policies of this right wing Sask Party government, Mr. Speaker, have the right and should demand the right to be able to cast their ballot, Mr. Speaker. We'll do that for them here in this legislature in their absence, Mr. Speaker.

So as we look at this, it disenfranchises renters. It disenfranchises seniors, disenfranchises First Nations and Métis people, disenfranchises young people and seniors, Mr. Speaker. All groups, Mr. Speaker, that have been deliberately attacked, Mr. Speaker, by this government on so many fronts, or that the policies of this government have failed the needs of those different groups, Mr. Speaker.

We highlight specifically that we should be focused — and I'm a big believer we should be focused not on how to make it harder to vote; we shouldn't be focused on how we reduce the number of people that vote, Mr. Speaker — we should be focused on how we get more people involved, Mr. Speaker. I don't care who somebody votes for, which party they vote for. Somebody needs to have the right and privilege and ability to come out and cast their vote, Mr. Speaker. It's their democratic right, Mr. Speaker, and moving away from that deprives them of democratic freedoms.

It's inappropriate for us to be moving in the direction that we're moving. It's disappointing, Mr. Speaker. It's anti-democratic, and it's something we've seen from this anti-democratic government on so many levels, whether that be the elimination of human rights cases being brought forward, Mr. Speaker, whether we see that as meddling in the hiring of a Chief Electoral Officer, Mr. Speaker, who upholds our democracy, Mr. Speaker. But we see it as something that is of significant concern and that should be certainly aggressively debated and fought by Saskatchewan people.

We continue to hear concern across Saskatchewan as it relates to this Bill. And many individuals aren't even aware of it, Mr. Speaker, and won't be aware of it until they show up the night to vote on November 7th, and they realize that they've had their democratic right eliminated, that they've been disenfranchised, and that they aren't going to be able to cast their ballot, Mr. Speaker, on that evening.

We need to get this right now. We need to have this Bill repealed immediately, retracted immediately. And we need to look at ways to move forward, involving all Saskatchewan people in making the decisions and shaping our Saskatchewan. Anything less is unacceptable and anything less is something that we'll certainly oppose, Mr. Speaker.

At this point in time, Mr. Speaker, I've said enough on this Bill. Certainly we're going to continue to hold meetings around

Saskatchewan here and join the many rallies, Mr. Speaker, that individuals are wanting to hold with respect to this Bill, Mr. Speaker, who are feeling as though their democratic rights have been impinged, that their ability to vote has been eliminated for many, Mr. Speaker, and that see this is the wrong way to go for a civil society and one that we should be proud of, Mr. Speaker.

At this point in time I would adjourn debate. And thank you for allowing me to speak to this very important Bill, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The member from Regina Rosemont 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 Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Being very mindful of the time, I want to certainly preface my comments on Bill 162 to point out that the short time I have to speak on this Bill, obviously we will be back. The short four-minute time frame that we have to discuss this Bill, we certainly will take full advantage of that. And prior to the time of 5 o'clock, I'll move to adjourn this discussion.

But, Mr. Speaker, what amazes me on this particular Bill 162, and it's really amazing to me that why this party, this Saskatchewan Party would come along and under the guise of trying to have the municipalities of Saskatchewan go to a four-year term, all of a sudden slips under the radar a provision that you have to have a photo ID in order for you to vote, not just in local elections but also in provincial elections as well, Mr. Speaker.

Now I'm trying to find out for the life of me where did that motion and where did that notion come from, that the fact that these guys had to have the provision under Bill 162 that requires people that want to come and vote that you've got to have photo ID. I'm not sure, Mr. Speaker, who specifically asked for that provision in this Bill, Mr. Speaker. And I'm trying to find the different groups that said, oh there's a lot of problems with the election because people who are coming there, they don't have no ID. And we want to make sure that we do it properly. And last time there was a whole bunch of problems with 10, 15 different elections that were massively confusing because nobody knew where these people came from.

There's no examples anywhere in any election that I've taken part of where there's confusion over who was allowed to vote and who wasn't allowed to vote. But the Sask Party comes along and they put a provision in this Bill, Bill 162 that says that you must have photo ID in order for you to vote. And, Mr.

Speaker, that is absolutely shameful, Mr. Speaker, absolutely shameful. And the only thing I can see that this Bill, the provision in this Bill 162 would serve is the Sask Party interest, Mr. Speaker.

They're there to promote democracy, to promote participation by the immigrant community, by the elderly people, by the Aboriginal community and, Mr. Speaker, this Bill does nothing to help foster that particular participation by those groups. All this is going to do is going to turn people away from the polling booths and turn people away from participating in a democracy. And that's exactly what that minister and that party want to see happen.

And the message we're going to have is, we're going to fight this Bill through and through, Mr. Speaker. And given the short time I have, we have a lot more to say on this particular Bill, Mr. Speaker. And we're going to come here with guns ablazing, and we're going to tell people exactly what they got to do to defeat that government that wants to take away their right to vote. That's what they want to do, Mr. Speaker. They want to take their right away, the right to vote that people have fought many, many years for, Mr. Speaker. And that time is coming.

And why they would that, Mr. Speaker? I could tell you right now. The reason they want to do that is they want to stop the immigrant community from voting. They want to stop the elderly from voting, they want to stop the Aboriginal community from voting because those people don't vote for them.

And what better way to get an election is we don't let those people that don't vote for you, let's cancel their right to vote. And that's exactly what this Bill does, Mr. Speaker. And we're going to tell people far and wide — in the North, in the South, in the East, and the West — that this Bill was intended to not have you vote. And that's exactly why this Bill is being presented today where you have to have photo ID to vote in any election in Saskatchewan. And that is shameful. That is very shameful.

So right from the Meadow Lake Tribal Council to the P.A. [Prince Albert] Grand Council, we're going to tell people in northern Saskatchewan, they've done this to circumvent your opportunity to elect the government and to vote. And you need to stand up and be counted and fight right back.

So on that notion, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to make that one point today. There's much more coming their way about this Bill, Mr. Speaker. So at this time, I'd like to take the opportunity to adjourn debate on this particular Bill, Bill 162. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: — The member from Athabasca has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 162. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adjourn the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. Being now 5 o'clock, the Assembly will adjourn until tomorrow morning at 10 a.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 17:00.]

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