



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

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

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| Atkinson, Pat | NDP | Saskatoon Nutana |
| Belanger, Buckley | NDP | Athabasca |
| Bjornerud, Hon. Bob | SP | Melville-Saltcoats |
| Boyd, Hon. Bill | SP | Kindersley |
| Bradshaw, Fred | SP | Carrot River Valley |
| Brkich, Greg | SP | Arm River-Watrous |
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| Hutchinson, Hon. Bill | SP | Regina South |
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| Lingenfelter, Dwain | NDP | Regina Douglas Park |
| McCall, Warren | NDP | Regina Elphinstone-Centre |
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| Michelson, Warren | SP | Moose Jaw North |
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| Morin, Sandra | NDP | Regina Walsh Acres |
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| Taylor, Len | NDP | The Battlefords |
| Tell, Christine | SP | Regina Wascana Plains |
| Toth, Hon. Don | SP | Moosomin |
| Trew, Kim | NDP | Regina Coronation Park |
| Vermette, Doyle | NDP | Cumberland |
| Wall, Hon. Brad | SP | Swift Current |
| Weekes, Randy | SP | Biggar |
| Wilson, Nadine | SP | Saskatchewan Rivers |
| Wotherspoon, Trent | NDP | Regina Rosemont |
| Wyant, Gordon | SP | Saskatoon Northwest |
| Yates, Kevin | NDP | Regina Dewdney |

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition today in support of eliminating poverty in Saskatchewan. And we know that freedom from poverty is an enshrined human right by the United Nations and all citizens are entitled to social and economic security. And we know the gap in Saskatchewan between the rich and poor continues to grow, and now one in five children in Saskatchewan live in deepening poverty. We also know citizens living in poverty have long identified affordable solutions, including the Saskatoon health disparities report and Canada Without Poverty report, Dignity for All campaign. It calls for a comprehensive poverty elimination strategy. I'd like to read the prayer:

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

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

And, Mr. Speaker, I do present. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of Northern Trappers Association Co-operative. The fur industry has so much potential for our northern trappers. It is a way to educate and empower our northern youth and to connect them with their culture. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the Sask Party government to recognize that Northern Trappers Association Co-operative maintains the traditional values of hunting and trapping and also brings in millions of dollars to the provincial economy every year from the proceeds of fur harvesting combined with the economic spinoff to the tourism sector and to the local economy; and in so doing, to cause the Sask Party government to immediately show their support for the Northern Trappers Association Co-operative, to provide additional funding to assist in developing a value-added and marketing strategy that will enhance the current income levels available to their members.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

It is signed by the good people of Sandy Bay, La Ronge, Buffalo Narrows, Prince Albert, Turnor Lake. I so present.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand today to present a petition concerning the need for a school in Hampton Village. The petition reads:

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the individuals who signed this petition are constituents of Saskatoon Massey Place and residents of Hampton Village. I so present.

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

Mr. Quennell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again with a petition of concern about the introduction of Bill 160 and signed by residents of the province of Saskatchewan concerned about the detrimental effects it will have on human rights law in the province. And the prayer reads as follows:

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

Today the petition is signed by residents of Moose Jaw and Regina, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise to present petitions on behalf of Saskatchewan residents as it relates to the mismanagement of our finances by the Sask Party. They allude specifically to the two consecutive deficit budgets and the two years of debt loading under the Sask Party, Mr. Speaker, this year increasing our debt by \$400 million at a time of record highs in revenues, Mr. Speaker, and in fact a plan to do so to the tune of \$4.2 billion by 2014, which represents 55 per cent of our total debt, 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 from Estevan. I so submit.

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

Mr. Trew: — I thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition today protecting tenants from unreasonable rent increases through rent controls. And this petition addresses the facts that rents have increased over 35 per cent on average in Saskatoon and Regina over the past four years, and it points out that Winnipeg has outstripped both those cities by far in the building of new rental accommodations.

And I'd like to read the prayer, Mr. Speaker:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: cause the government to immediately enact rent control legislation that protects Saskatchewan tenants from unreasonable increases in rent.

These petitions are predominantly from the constituency of Regina Coronation Park. It is my honour on behalf of my constituents to present them.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Regina Citizen of the Year

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, it was my honour to join with CTV [Canadian Television Network Ltd.] on Friday, March 18th, along with the member from Regina Elphinstone and dignitaries from across Regina, to honour a great friend, Ms. Renu Kapoor, as CTV Regina Citizen of the Year.

Renu has played a leading role in the treatment of osteoporosis, has served our library board, the United Way, and has been a leader in the India-Canada Association of Saskatchewan for many years, including organizing the hugely successful annual India Night Dinner that has raised many hundreds of thousands of dollars for local charities. Renu has been recognized previously with the YWCA [Young Women's Christian Association] Volunteer of the Year Award and the YWCA Woman of Distinction Lifetime Achievement Award. And Renu is showing no signs of slowing down as Renu is the 2011 Honorary Ambassador for Mosaic 2011 and will chair the Year of India celebrations here in Saskatchewan.

Renu's entire family has assisted and supported this volunteerism: her husband, Dr. Don Kapoor, there every step of the way, and it was a pleasure to be joined by their son and daughter for the great honour. Renu speaks of learning the value of giving back to her community as a young girl in India, following her parents around their community and their many volunteer pursuits. She has devoted her life to service in our province as a tireless and devoted leader. She is an extraordinary individual and is most deserving of this prestigious award. Our community is better as a result of her leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this Assembly to join with me to recognize and thank Ms. Renu Kapoor, 2011 CTV Citizen of the Year.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier, the member from Swift Current.

Cervical Screening Initiative in India

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. Dr. Lalita Malhotra immigrated to Canada in 1975. Her and her husband are respected doctors in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. She is focusing on women's health now, as she has been for a number of years in that community. She's a member of the India-Canada Association and a recipient of the Saskatchewan Order of Merit in 2001.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Malhotra recently travelled to India as part of a broader Saskatchewan delegation. She wanted to be a part of providing organized cervical screening for the women of India, especially women living in urban centres in India. Mr. Speaker, I had the chance to visit with Dr. Malhotra about her idea, and thanks to the Ministry of Health, Mr. Speaker, we were able to offer at least to cover the supplies for her work there.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to report to the House that the Ministry of Health has been supportive of her initiative and has supplied Dr. Malhotra with the necessary supplies to assist in the start up of the clinic. Mr. Speaker, the supplies will provide cervical screening to 2,000 women in India. Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency is also involved. They're supporting the doctor's efforts in terms of her desire to establish this clinic in India by providing guidance, support materials, and presentation materials. Mr. Speaker, our Cancer Agency's prevention program for cervical cancer is considered a national leader.

Mr. Speaker, we have a dynamic relationship with India, our province does, accounting for almost half of the trade with that country, that the country does with Canada. But it's more than just a trade relationship. It is a partnership and a friendship due to people like Dr. Malhotra and the great Indian community we have in this province, Mr. Speaker. We're pleased to support her in this initiative, and we wish her all the best in providing better women's health to the women of India.

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

Brighter Futures for Children

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Last Thursday evening, myself and the members of the Legislative Assembly from Rosemont and Coronation Park had the pleasure of joining hundreds of other citizens in attendance at the Brighter Futures for Children fundraiser held at the Casino Regina Show Lounge. The purpose of this event is to raise money for two Regina organizations that help very young children in difficult circumstances. The Regina Early Learning Centre and the Socialization, Communication, and Education Problems program, or SCEP, as it is known, are the beneficiaries of the fundraiser.

Brighter Futures for Children is spearheaded by Knight Archer Insurance, and Doug Archer and Gloria Knight have built a very strong volunteer organization for this event over the years, and its success grows every year. The event provides much needed funds for programs for kids who are in danger of falling through the cracks.

Last year the fundraiser brought in approximately \$25,000 for each organization, and organizers hope to improve on that total this year. The event included performances by Regina's Brandy Moore and Random Groove as well as Kal Hourd of Saskatoon.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in recognizing this event, the volunteers, and the sponsors who are truly doing their part to create Brighter Futures for Children.

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

World Water Day

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today is the 19th annual World Water Day. In 1992 the United Nations General Assembly designated March 22nd of each year as World Water Day. Today nations across the world join together to celebrate the importance of water in our everyday lives. Mr. Speaker, the theme of this year's World Water Day is Water For Cities.

Water is a basic requirement for all life, and protecting our clean and safe water supply is a priority for our government to meet the needs of our growing economy. Last spring the Government of Saskatchewan announced the contribution of \$10 million over seven years to the University of Saskatchewan for the Canada Excellence Research Chair in Water Security. The U of S [University of Saskatchewan] research Chair, Dr. Howard Wheeler, is one of the world's foremost hydrologists. He is responsible for establishing a world-leading research and training institute to solve water challenges and train the next generation of water scientists.

Mr. Speaker, the events celebrating World Water Day and the initiatives of Dr. Wheeler will advance Saskatchewan to the forefront in water science and contribute to our government's vision for a research and knowledge-driven . . . an innovation- and knowledge-driven economy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

2011 WorkSafe Saskatchewan Awards

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, in 2010 workers reported over 38,000 injuries to the Workers' Compensation Board. Workplace safety is a mammoth task, but we are all responsible and must play a role. WorkSafe Saskatchewan is a partnership between the Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board and the Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety.

Mr. Speaker, WorkSafe Saskatchewan presents yearly awards to workers and employers in our province. The Safe Worker Award is presented to workers who go beyond the expectations of their position to make their workplace safer and increase safety awareness for others. And the WorkSafe Saskatchewan Safe Employer Award is presented to the best practice employer who builds safety into every task.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday I was in Saskatoon as the WorkSafe Saskatchewan presented its 2011 awards. The employees nominated were Howard Jones of Morris Industries in Yorkton; Pat Willis, Sysco in Saskatoon; Andrea Crittenden of Asil Enterprises Ltd. from Prince Albert. Employer nominations were BMTR Ventures Ltd. from Meadow Lake; A.J. Harlick, contractor from Swift Current; and Eagle Drilling Services from Carlyle. The winners in the respective categories were Howard Jones and BMTR Ventures Ltd.

Mr. Speaker, these are important acknowledgments, and I ask all members to join me in not only congratulating the recipients of these awards but to promote daily safe work practices in our province. Thank you.

[13:45]

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

Wildwood School Diversity Dinner

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last night along with well over 100 people, I had the privilege to attend the annual diversity dinner held at Wildwood School. Wildwood School, which is located right in the heart of the constituency of Saskatoon Greystone, has a proud history of organizing community events such as the diversity dinner as well as other initiatives that help to promote global citizenship and, at the same time, commitments to our local communities.

This annual event celebrates the diversity and culture of our local community through both food and culture. The evening's events included a potluck dinner, stage performances, and artwork. Some of the performers included local groups such as the Norwegian youth dancers, Wildwood's own Bhangra dance group, the Saskatoon international folk dancers, and a remarkable drummer from Haiti. Local impressive artwork selected by the Multi-Faith Saskatchewan group also adorned the walls of the school, allowing a platform for up-and-coming artists to display their culturally rich artistry.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to acknowledge Justice David Arnot, Chief Commissioner of the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission, who was also in attendance. I would like to congratulate the Wildwood School for hosting this very

successful event and in particular the principal, David Katzman, along with his group of hard-working volunteers, students, staff, teachers, parents, and others that helped to make sure the evening was a success.

Local events such as the diversity dinner contribute greatly to the continued growth of our province's increasingly diverse, dynamic, and cosmopolitan communities, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

World Water Day

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, nations around the world observe today as World Water Day. This day reminds us that water is an essential substratum of human life. Without water, there is no life. Without access to affordable water, our quality of life is at risk. While many residents of our province are fortunate enough to have regular access to affordable water, a growing number of rural residents are forced to pay an exorbitant amount of water . . . exorbitant price for water because of the Sask Party government.

Residents of Duck Lake, a town of just over 600 people north of Saskatoon, know first-hand that the Sask Party government refused to provide any assistance to prevent skyrocketing water rates that went from \$32 a month to upwards of an average of \$165 a month. The member for Batoche and his Sask Party government sat silent as seniors, single mothers, and young families began to face water cut-offs in 2009 and continue to quietly struggle with the high cost of water.

Residents of the hamlet of Furdale and the area of Birchwood Heights — both just outside of Saskatoon — will be faced with the threat of water cut-offs after the November 2011 general election if the Sask Party is re-elected, unless they agree to pay thousands of dollars to hook up to a private supplier who cannot guarantee access, price, or water quality.

Mr. Speaker, on World Water Day let us recognize that there are even more rural residents that are being denied affordable water by the Sask Party government. New Democrats reaffirm our conviction that people have a right to affordable drinking water, and we'll continue to stand up for rural residents left without access to affordable water by the Sask Party government. Thank you.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

College Governance Issues

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Advanced Education told the media yesterday that he will take full responsibility on how the situation at Carlton Trail and St. Peter's has been handled. To the minister: what does it actually mean when he says that he will take full responsibility?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for

Advanced Education, Employment and Immigration.

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, over the course of the last several months, we've had a proposal handed in regarding a potential merger. We said that we would look into this. We used an independent process, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, what that process found was the colleges are not ready to actually merge, Mr. Speaker. And at the same time, a number of outstanding questions were raised. Mr. Speaker, those outstanding questions, those outstanding questions, Mr. Speaker, we referred to Justice. Mr. Speaker, Justice then came back to us and said, our recommendation is that you get Meyers Norris Penny out to do more work, Mr. Speaker. This would be consistent, Mr. Speaker, because what we saw from the Provincial Auditor previously is that in November 2010 the auditor said regarding Carlton Trail, "The Ministry and the above-listed agencies had adequate rules and procedures to safeguard public resources."

Mr. Speaker, there's just one example of the type of reference that we have. There are questions. We've said we would certainly work with Meyers Norris Penny; we'd work with the Provincial Auditor. And we've said all respective materials should be referred to Justice, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, I thought the minister might have come to his senses over the course of the night but it appears he continues to live in some parallel universe. Mr. Speaker, apparently for this minister, taking full responsibility simply means throwing everyone else under the bus. It's the board's fault. It's the political staff's fault. It's the ministry's fault. It's even the opposition's fault, Mr. Speaker, but nowhere in there does the minister realize that it's his fault.

Now the minister can claim he didn't see the emails from last May all he wants, but he can't pretend that he wasn't in committee or in question period when concerns were raised about this issue on May 11th, May 12th, May 13th, and May 17th.

To the minister: why did he ignore the concerns which were raised publicly in this Assembly last May, and when will he take full responsibility for his inaction?

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Certainly we were in committee and we were in this very Assembly, Mr. Speaker. I do take full responsibility, Mr. Speaker, in that we promised we would go forward, Mr. Speaker, with a proposal, with a proposal, Mr. Speaker, as it was submitted. From there we then ensured that we hired Meyers Norris Penny to undertake an independent overview, Mr. Speaker. That overview came back with the recommendations the mergers not go forward.

From that, Mr. Speaker, there were outstanding questions as I've said previously, Mr. Speaker. From there we were in touch with Justice. Justice said, please be in touch with Meyers Norris

Penny. Go and see if you can substantiate, Mr. Speaker. Go and substantiate, Mr. Speaker, some of these questions. Mr. Speaker . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. Minister Responsible for Advanced Education.

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. From that, Mr. Speaker, we not only are working with Meyers Norris Penny; we've subsequently said we're working with the Provincial Auditor. We've said any and all related materials should be related to Justice, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, this is part of taking responsibility, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, a very puzzling interpretation of ministerial accountability we just heard from the minister. The minister and the front bench there, they're more than happy, more than happy to collect the 1,000 bucks. They're more than happy to give the marching orders. But when the mess comes out, the people that are put under the bus are the people that the marching orders were given to as opposed to the minister who was fully responsible.

Yesterday the minister said that one of his many failures on this file was allowing the colleges to have a joint CEO [chief executive officer]. The minister acknowledged, "He was wearing too many hats." Well, Mr. Speaker, I raised that very concern with the minister last May 11th in committee when I said, "So do you think it presents a problem for the CEO, or a challenge for the CEO, the fact that he's the same individual wearing two hats and has distinct responsibilities to each group that he represents?" The minister replied, "I think that would be up to the boards." He endorsed the actions of the board, Mr. Speaker.

To the minister: when will he take full responsibility for ignoring the specific concerns raised in committee last May or for fully endorsing the actions of a board that he has now fired?

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, regarding this board, Mr. Speaker, what we've seen in the last few days is information come forward, Mr. Speaker, that was new information for me. As I reviewed that information, Mr. Speaker, as I reviewed that information, it was obvious that actions of the board were inappropriate, Mr. Speaker, and we have taken the appropriate action subsequently to that, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Broten: — It's always somebody else's fault with this minister. Oh, my staff didn't forward the email. Oh, the board didn't tell me this. Oh, I didn't have that meeting. Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister's fingerprints have been all over this from the very beginning.

Yesterday he was asked by media if he approved the transition board. He replied saying, "No, this is where Meyers Norris Penny's work will be very important." But in committee last May 12th, I asked the minister about the existence of the transition board and whether he knew that he had a representative on that board. He fully admitted that. I don't know how the minister can claim he didn't approve the board when he knew about it and he had a representative on it. But yesterday, with a straight face, he claimed that he never approved it and would ensure that Meyers Norris Penny looked into its existence.

To the minister: which story should we believe, the one that he told yesterday or the one that he told last May?

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, our position has been consistent. This is a grassroots, this is a grassroots initiative, Mr. Speaker, with meetings that began even before the last provincial election, Mr. Speaker. What we saw was a proposal come forward, Mr. Speaker. That proposal came forward last June, Mr. Speaker. We then initiated a review, Mr. Speaker. That review was undertaken by Meyers Norris Penny. Mr. Speaker, what we see is that the board did have a joint organization, Mr. Speaker, but at the same time they were operating independently as had been requested, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, are there questions? Are there questions regarding governance, Mr. Speaker? Yes, there are. These are some of the very questions that we've asked Meyers Norris Penny, now the Provincial Auditor and indeed Justice to help look into. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, one of the many meetings of the transition board — which the minister either knew about or didn't know about, depending on which day you ask him — occurred on May 27th of last year, a couple of weeks after the minister received emails and was questioned in this Assembly.

The minutes of that meeting show that the minister directed that the joint CEO receive a salary increase to the level of a regional college CEO and that St. Peter's bill the public regional college monthly for Glen Kobussen's salary, benefits, and expenses, the costs passed on to the regional college. Let me repeat that. The minister ordered that St. Peter's College, a private institution, would be permitted to off-load the full cost of its CEO onto the public regional college. Saskatchewan taxpayers picked up that bill, Mr. Speaker.

To the minister: this was his direction. It wasn't the board's decision. Will he take full responsibility for that ill-advised decision?

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as we've said very clearly, there was a proposal

submitted, Mr. Speaker. From that proposal, independent work was done by Meyers Norris Penny, Mr. Speaker. That was for the proposed merger, Mr. Speaker. We turned that down. We said quite simply, these institutions are not ready to move forward, Mr. Speaker. We stand by that. There were a number of outstanding questions, Mr. Speaker. There are a number of questions regarding, Mr. Speaker . . . And we saw this yesterday in the House from a variety of sources. What Justice has said, and others: go back, do more work to ensure that there's greater . . .

[Interjections]

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. What we've said is that we would get Meyers Norris Penny to go back in and address a number of questions that have come in. There have been a range of sources, Mr. Speaker. As members opposite said yesterday, and rightfully so, not all of them have been accurate, Mr. Speaker. We've said Meyers Norris Penny needs to go back in and do some work. We've done that in co-operation with Justice, Mr. Speaker, and obviously now with the auditor, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, the only thing that's been consistent in this story is the minister's suspension of reality. The only thing that has been consistent is the minister completely and always passing the buck on to others. The only thing consistent in this, Mr. Speaker, is the minister's involvement from the very, very beginning. He is responsible.

Had he paid attention to his emails last May, we wouldn't be in this mess. Had he listened to the concerns raised by the opposition last May instead of dismissing them, a whole lot of taxpayers' dollars would have been saved.

The CEO's salary, benefits, and expenses were off-loaded to the public regional college. \$273,000 was moved from Carlton Trail to St. Peter's for furnishings and equipment. \$60,000 was added to St. Peter's operating grant. \$75,000 for market research was paid by Carlton Trail, and \$100,000 was spent on the Meyers Norris Penny report. And we're not even into all the financial irregularities yet under this minister's watch.

To the minister: when will he live up to what he said yesterday? When will he take full responsibility for his involvement from the very beginning? When will he stop blaming everyone else and look in the mirror?

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, the reference, the reference to the very beginning, Mr. Speaker, we know that there were a number of meetings that took place even before the last provincial election, Mr. Speaker. We know that.

Along the way, we heard from grassroots groups, Mr. Speaker,

about moving forward with this proposal, and the value to it. Mr. Speaker, that proposal was submitted, Mr. Speaker. We then fulfilled our commitment in saying that we would use an independent entity, Meyers Norris Penny, to go forward. The result of that was a decision — a very clear decision, Mr. Speaker — not to move forward with the merger, Mr. Speaker. We know that's important.

Along the way, Meyers Norris Penny came back and said, there are a number of questions. We've worked with Justice. Justice recommended: go back into the field, get more information, see if you can discern what information actually has some empirical basis, Mr. Speaker. Since that time, we've said we'd co-operate with the auditor and, Mr. Speaker, obviously with Justice, Mr. Speaker. We're undertaking our due diligence to account for every cent of taxpayers' dollars, Mr. Speaker.

[14:00]

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, what we've seen from this minister from day one is a clear direction that he wanted this merger to go forward. What we've seen from this minister from day one is setting the people in place in order to ensure that this merger goes forward, Mr. Speaker.

What we have not seen from this minister from day one is transparency on this issue, and what we have not seen from this minister at all is a responsibility, an accountability that he is in fact responsible for the decisions because he has made the decisions.

My question to the minister: today he dismissed the members of the board of Carlton Trail Regional College. Will he simply admit and tell those members that he asked to serve on the board, Mr. Speaker, will he admit that he is the person responsible and that he should be wearing this and he shouldn't be off-loading it to Sask Party operatives?

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, last week, I want to be very clear that we came forward and we reported to the two respective college entities, Mr. Speaker. I did that in Humboldt. We said that the decision we were taking is that they were not ready, Mr. Speaker. We made sure that some due diligence was undertaken so that we could say that there needed to be a greater business case made, Mr. Speaker, a clearer implementation plan, obviously greater clarity regarding financial management and a human resource strategy, Mr. Speaker, obviously as a result of that decision which we made clearly and directly with stakeholders on the ground, Mr. Speaker. We also alerted them that there were a number of questions still outstanding, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we are working with Justice, we are working with Meyers Norris Penny, and we've certainly volunteered to work diligently with the auditor, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that all of taxpayers' dollars are accounted for, Mr. Speaker, because at this point, Mr. Speaker, there are a number of allegations. There

is more work to do. We're going to do that to ensure clear accountability for the taxpayers of this province.

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

Membership in the Enterprise Club

Mr. Quennell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Justice. The \$1,000 given by former Carlton Trail CEO Glen Kobussen — who is also the CEO of St. Peter's College but paid by Carlton Trail, Mr. Speaker, if you can follow that — that contribution to the Saskatchewan Party to join the so-called Enterprise Club in 2009 appears not to be disclosed in either 2009 or 2010 by the Saskatchewan Party. Mr. Kobussen was reimbursed \$1,000 by St. Peter's College. This is public funds and should have been disclosed pursuant to *The Election Act*.

To the minister: will the government provide a complete list of all Enterprise Club donations and memberships to the Acting Chief Electoral Officer for his review?

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The fact is that any contribution to any political party over a certain threshold, \$250, is publicly reported, Mr. Speaker, through Elections Saskatchewan.

With regard to accessibility, this government . . . The bottom line for this government is that, to have access to this government, you need only be a citizen of the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. That's something that all members on this side take very, very seriously. That's something that . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I recognize the Minister Responsible for Enterprise.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Enterprise Club has been around since 2002. It's a way where party members can show their support for the party, for the Premier, showing their activity politically by being, making a contribution to public life in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. We know that to the extent that anybody has a perception that by being a member of the Enterprise Club, there would be any different level of access than any other citizen, we discontinued meetings of the Enterprise Club, Mr. Speaker, of that sort.

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

Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, for this minister's benefit, the \$1,000 membership paid by Mr. Kobussen went into the Saskatchewan Party in 2009. It came out of St. Peter's College in 2009. The fact that it was paid to a political party has not come out by 2011, Mr. Speaker.

To the minister: knowing that this \$1,000 was public funds and

should have been disclosed in any case, Mr. Speaker, will the government agree to undertake an open and transparent review by the Acting Chief Electoral Officer of all Enterprise Club memberships, where they came in, and where they came out, Mr. Speaker?

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Well thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The fact is that any contribution to any political party is disclosed publicly, Mr. Speaker, by Elections Saskatchewan. Any . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I think the members should now allow the minister to respond to the question that the government members allowed the member to present. I recognize the Minister Responsible for Enterprise.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I had indicated in a previous response, any contribution over a certain threshold is reported publicly in documents made public by Elections Saskatchewan.

With regard to the Enterprise Club, Mr. Speaker, this is an organization where members of the Saskatchewan Party are able to show their support for the party, for the Premier, to have some interaction with MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly], be able to ask political questions of that sort. But to the extent that anybody has a perception that there was any differential access as to any other citizen of the province, we've taken decisive action, Mr. Speaker, and the meetings of that sort are no longer going to be taking place.

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

Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, \$1,000 a year gets people a membership in the Saskatchewan Enterprise Club. And the letter that goes to Enterprise Club members says it's "an excellent venue" to present views to MLAs and the Premier and "ensures" ideas are heard, Mr. Speaker.

To the minister: will the government agree to tell Saskatchewan people what it is the Enterprise Club does and, specifically, its relationship to access to ministers and government decision makers?

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I've said, the bottom line for this government is that any citizen who wishes access to the government need only be a

citizen of the province of Saskatchewan. That's something that members on this side of the House take very seriously, Mr. Speaker. With regard to the Enterprise Club, this is . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. I would think the opposition members would like to hear the response to the question presented. I recognize the Minister Responsible . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. The Minister of Enterprise.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I've indicated, the Enterprise Club has been around since 2002. It's a way for members of the party to show their support for the party, for members to participate in the political process, which a number have taken advantage of. Members are free to join, Mr. Speaker, many of whom wish to support the party in a more substantial way. Mr. Speaker, to the extent that there has been any perception, inappropriate perception, of access different than anybody else, we've taken decisive action, Mr. Speaker, and discontinued meetings of that sort.

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

Mr. Quennell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A \$1,000 membership to the Enterprise Club gets members meetings with cabinet ministers, with the Premier, and other government decision makers. We know emails don't get the attention of ministers, but a \$1,000 cheque clearly does, Mr. Speaker. To the minister: will he table the agenda for "meetings that Enterprise Club members have with ministers and other government decision makers" as referred to in the March 22nd press release by Sask Party lawyers?

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I've indicated, the Enterprise Club is a way for members of the party to show their support for the party, to participate in the political process. There obviously aren't agendas. It's a very informal sort of a meeting process, Mr. Speaker. But to the extent that there was any perception that anybody had the misconception that there was any different level of access than that enjoyed by any other . . .

[Interjections]

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I said, to the extent that there was a perception that there was any different level of access than that, than any other citizen would have, we've made the decisive decision to discontinue those meetings, Mr. Speaker. I would point out as well for the information of members opposite that there were over 47 individual donors last year who donated over \$1,000 to the NDP [New Democratic Party], including the largest donor, \$10,000 from Nexen, and we know who used to work there.

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

Mr. Quennell: — The minister knows that, the minister knows that because it was disclosed. But this 2009 membership contribution of \$1,000 appears not to be, Mr. Speaker. Now, Mr. Speaker, as to this misconception, Mr. Kobussen gives \$1,000 to the Saskatchewan Party and then gets, he gets appointed as CEO to three boards. He gets a salary for a private institution paid for by a public institution. Why would anybody in Saskatchewan have a misconception about that, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, there's at least one \$1,000 contribution made in 2009 that doesn't show up in the Sask Party financial disclosures for either 2009 or 2010. To the Minister of Justice: will he undertake to report where this Enterprise Club membership money is and what it is used for, Mr. Speaker?

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Well thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Of course all contributions to political parties of all stripes are disclosed publicly. There's requirements to do so. And that's of course what this party has done all through our history, Mr. Speaker. But as the member's talking about a disclosure, I wonder if he . . . the Leader of the Opposition disclosed to the 1,000 people that he fraudulently signed up in Meadow Lake that they were members of the New Democratic Party.

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I would ask the minister to be cautious in his remarks. I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — As I said, Mr. Speaker, there's a process whereby donations to political parties are disclosed. That's something that's been, in all cases, followed by this party, Mr. Speaker. The one party that we know that hasn't had a disclosure requirement has been the New Democratic Party, Mr. Speaker, who signed up 1,000 members without their knowledge in Meadow Lake and for which he is going to pay a very serious price, Mr. Speaker.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answers to questions 872 through 877.

The Speaker: — Questions 872 through 877 are tabled. Order. Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. Yates: — To raise a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I ask the member to state his point of order.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. During response to a question in this Assembly just minutes ago, Mr. Speaker, the member for Meadow Lake stood on his feet and

accused the Leader of the Opposition of fraudulent behaviour, Mr. Speaker. That is clearly, clearly a violation of the rules of this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, and I would ask you to deal with the issue expeditiously, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Mr. Speaker, I withdraw the comment.

The Speaker: — The apology is accepted.

[14:15]

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 149

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

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

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to rise to speak on Bill 149, *An Act to amend The Income Tax Act*. Mr. Speaker, this legislation is here to implement some changes that provide some substantial benefits for some parts of our community. And given the questions and no answers that we've heard in question period, my concern is that this policy that's set out in this Act comes from this so-called Enterprise Club in 2009 where people who have come forward with suggestions about how to change the law without having the public discussion about that. Because, Mr. Speaker, this is a targeted tax holiday for people who have done very well in their community.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's very interesting this afternoon that the member from Meadow Lake is discussing some things related to his previous career in the House of Commons where he was a specialist in taking federal money into his local constituency and spending it, and he's involved right in the middle of a whole number of very difficult issues. So we were very surprised, Mr. Speaker, in question period when this member . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. A couple of other members have a debate they want to pursue. If they want to pursue it, I'd ask them to go behind the bar or at another location so we can hear the member from Regina Lakeview. Order. Order. Order. The member from Regina Lakeview.

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, it's very clear that the member from Meadow Lake does not like his name as mister in and out. It's also clear, Mr. Speaker, that it's a great surprise to all the people of Saskatchewan that the Premier would allow that

member to respond to some of the questions that we heard today. So, Mr. Speaker, I think . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I'd ask members to . . . Order. Order. Order. I'd ask members to be mindful of the words they're using in the debate. And I'd ask the member from Regina Lakeview to address the debate. The question before the Assembly is *The Income Tax Amendment Act*. I recognize the member from Regina . . . Order.

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, this Bill about amendments to *The Income Tax Act* relates directly to one of the most challenging and difficult issues in Saskatchewan, which relates to the amount of money that we as the citizens of Saskatchewan receive from the resources which are part of Saskatchewan.

We know that the government, the present government backed off on standing up for Saskatchewan people and getting an appropriate arrangement with the federal government around our resource taxation and that we also have fairly clear evidence that that amounts to between 7 and \$800 million a year over 20 years. And so, Mr. Speaker, when they come forward with further changes which give up amounts of tax from resource, the revenue from the resource, it raises questions about how this policy was developed and where it came from.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the member from Meadow Lake today, both on the record and off the record, has been talking about some of the ways that the Saskatchewan Party has arranged to fund what they do as the Saskatchewan Party. Now from my perspective as member from Regina Lakeview, one of the things that I've noticed over the years is that when that particular member came to this legislature after serving in the federal parliament, he unfortunately brought many of the attitudes that we now see on the federal government side. And that's reflected in many things that have happened in the Board of Internal Economy and things that happen around this particular place. It also has affected certain things that we do as it relates to Bills like this income tax Act.

And, Mr. Speaker, what I'm especially concerned about is what I think all Canadians are concerned about as we look at our federal government and how they treat the people that provide them with advice by inserting words in documents, by doing things like that, that some of that same kind of rot, if I can put it that way, is showing up in democracy.

So, Mr. Speaker, my concern is that we're all enervated. We're at a point where we don't end up having the ability to respond and reflect and say that kind of attitude, that kind of perspective should not be people who are elected members from our society. Because when you run roughshod over the rules in parliament, when you run roughshod over the rules in the legislature, when you have total disdain for the very clear rules of *The Election Act* then, Mr. Speaker, those are the things that are wrong. And, Mr. Speaker, we cannot sit like many of the people across the world have and watch things happen that change our institutions, that change their accountability, and not speak out.

Mr. Speaker, we have seen some things the last couple of days

here in our Saskatchewan legislature of which we are very proud that have the feeling of being something bad. As some members might say, there's an odour. There's something that's wrong. And, Mr. Speaker, I hope that when we look at this income tax Act and some of the things that are being suggested here, that we are not seeing the result of some of that kind of inappropriate activity by the governing party, the Sask Party, as they've developed their policy. Because that's the last thing that we need in this legislature, is undue influence from people in various places that result in things that do not provide a benefit for all the people in the province.

So, Mr. Speaker, we end up with a fairly short Bill here, but it goes right to the heart of what this legislature's all about. It goes right to the heart of what parliament's all about, which is we rule ourselves through our elections which are fair. We rule ourselves through the procedures that we have in this particular place, and we rule ourselves through having very clear, hard discussions about those things which are wrong. And, Mr. Speaker, there are a number of things that we've heard in the last couple of days that go right to the top. They go right to the Premier, and they make us wonder what's going on in his office. They go right to the minister's office. Maybe the minister doesn't know about some of this stuff because it was done some other place but, Mr. Speaker, that is the wrong way to run a government. The people will figure it out and they will make sure that it's stopped.

Now when we have this particular Bill, it has a new targeted tax holiday brought forward by the Minister of Enterprise. So they announced this December 3rd, 2009. Now we're in 2011 trying to put together what the minister announced almost two years ago. And, Mr. Speaker, we've heard a fair bit about the year 2009 over the last 45 minutes because there were a lot of things that were not being sort of fully disclosed as to what happened, and that's why I raise that question as it relates to this particular issue.

And when this Bill was brought forward the question came as, well what is it, what is it for? And when you read the explanation, it says there's a new targeted tax incentive that would provide a five-year corporate income tax holiday for corporations that process mineral imported into the province.

Now I'm still not sure if there's an explanation. Is this tar sands? Is that the mineral they're talking about? Is it minerals from Manitoba that are going to be brought into to be processed somewhere in Saskatchewan? Are we bringing up some minerals from Wyoming or Montana? What, you know, what is it that's set out here?

Mr. Speaker, when you bring forward legislation, it's always important that you end up explaining why you want to do it and what the purpose is for doing that. And, Mr. Speaker, too many things that we have heard don't have a proper reason or there may be some ulterior motives which will come out later.

That's not how this legislature should work. That's not how a democracy should work. And, Mr. Speaker, it's our role to speak up very clearly and directly when we see those things happening. And I know that there's a lot of us in this room who are having some difficulty with some of the answers that we've received and some of the stories that we've received about

what's gone on on a whole number of issues. That makes us then suspicious of everything that we get. And that's not how it should be because we know — especially those of us who have been around this place for a long time — is that your word is important, that your word is the thing that is all you have left when you're done. And, Mr. Speaker, when we have members of this House — who we would all like to respect — not necessarily following or saying things that we can trust, then we're in a major difficulty.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think that this particular legislation also goes into another aspect in the second part which relates to allowing for the federal government to collect the tax. And basically the federal government does administer most of our income taxes for us, but in this particular Bill, there's one section that the provincial government wants to take back and administer themselves. So the question comes, why? Is there some other arrangement that applies? And given some of the questions that have been raised earlier today, does this relate to some of these breakfast meetings or lunches or whatever happened that, oh, it'd be much easier if you in the province administered this part of *The Income Tax Act*. Why don't you fix that? Well we can't tell from the document. We can't tell from the legislation whether that's part of what this whole Bill is about.

And, Mr. Speaker, the challenge that you end up having in opposition is that you want to trust what the government of the day is telling you, but unfortunately our trust is at a pretty low ebb. And so what is it that the province wants to do here in self-administering this particular part of *The Income Tax Act*? What is it about this particular part of *The Income Tax Act* that they want to manage? Is there something that this . . . Or is there some place that this comes from that is not appropriate? I don't know, Mr. Speaker. Just raising the question.

Now the other section in this Bill is the section 5, and it relates to a subsection which provides for retroactive regulations. And, Mr. Speaker, we know in this legislature that we're very hesitant to endorse retroactive laws or regulations. And so this particular one wants to make sure that any regulations that are passed under this particular Bill can be retroactive to January 1st, 2011. And it even has in its coming into force laws, section 6, a statement like this, it says:

(2) If the Act is assented to after January 1, 2011, this Act comes into force on assent but is retroactive and is deemed to have been in force on and from January 1, 2011.

[14:30]

So, Mr. Speaker, it's obvious that that clause is going to have to be used because we haven't even got the Bill to the committee stage yet. So my question once again is what is there about it? Where does it come from? What is it that forces a procedure that is delayed? The announcement was made in 2009. We had a lot of time last year to go through and try and deal with this Bill, but obviously it didn't seem to be that important then.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to conclude my remarks by saying that this Saskatchewan legislature is the legislature for the people of Saskatchewan. They need to have faith in all of the members who work here. They need to have faith in how this organization works, and they need to understand that it's going

to be fair and just for everyone. When we get some of the kinds of answers that we received today, that faith is sorely tested. I move to adjourn debate.

The Speaker: — The member for Regina Lakeview has moved adjournment of debate on Bill 149, *The Income Tax Amendment Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 150

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

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

Mr. Furber: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's indeed my pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill 150, the superannuation supplementary provisions Bill, for a couple of reasons.

But first I want to talk about the two main provisions of the Bill. The first is to clarify spousal survivor benefits and how they're calculated in the case of a person who may have been married more than once, and who may have both current and former spouses who might have claim and might be qualified to receive some type of survivor benefit.

Now on the face of it at first blush, it would appear that this is something that we could certainly agree with, Mr. Speaker. However there are, as I said, two provisions, and the second provision is a continuation of what we've seen in the past three and a half years and something that was highlighted today. It's a continued hiding of information from the public by the Saskatchewan Party government.

Now this government proposes in this Bill to remove from public reporting the amount of money in benefits paid out to individual superannuates. Well, Mr. Speaker, what we've learned today specifically is that they are attempting to hide money that is being given to their party by the people of Saskatchewan, money that has to be disclosed under *The Elections Act*. So, Mr. Speaker, the parallels between Bill 150 and what we talked about today and what was raised today in Question Period are staggering. The parallels are staggering. It is exactly what we were talking about in terms of transparency and accountability.

Now there are many examples unfortunately where transparency and accountability that was promised by the Saskatchewan Party government has not taken place. They promised in the last election . . . Their own platform document says that they're going to be a more accountable government, Mr. Speaker. But what do they do? They say that they're going to pay down . . . sorry, ensure the size of government doesn't grow faster than the population. That's how they're going to be accountable.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the size of the budget of the province of Saskatchewan has gone up 36 per cent — 36 per cent, Mr. Speaker. And at the same time that the province of Saskatchewan is taking in about \$11 billion a year this year, this Saskatchewan Party government is running a \$1 billion deficit. So when they say in their election document from 2007 that they're going to be more accountable by ensuring the size of government doesn't grow, they've grown the government by 36 per cent over three years.

They've also stated, Mr. Speaker, in an effort to be more accountable and transparent, as is suggested in Bill 150, that they would protect public servants through an integrity commissioner. Well, Mr. Speaker, they would need 10 integrity commissioners to keep up with the lack of transparency and accountability that's going on on that side of the Assembly. But worse than that, Mr. Speaker, they haven't hired one. They haven't even looked into providing one such commissioner to the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, in order to protect the public and public servants.

And in fact, Mr. Speaker, quite the opposite because I'm sure you will note that one member of the public, a civil servant, wanted to be transparent when a convicted felon was on the loose in Saskatchewan, and it was a dangerous sex offender, Mr. Speaker. And this person wanted to be open and accountable with the people of Saskatchewan and ensure that people were aware.

And what happened? What happened, Mr. Speaker? The Saskatchewan Party government started a witch hunt to find out which individual this was, who was, on behalf of the government, being open and accountable and transparent because they wouldn't, Mr. Speaker. What did they do after they found the person who they thought did this? They fired him. Mr. Speaker. They fired him. Open and accountability, openness and accountability is not something that they readily and ably understand, Mr. Speaker.

And so we have here Bill 150 where they are, through legislation, trying to hide money from the people of Saskatchewan and trying to hide disclosure of money spent by the Government of Saskatchewan. And it brings to mind, Mr. Speaker, it brings to mind another Bill that we've seen before this Assembly some years ago, Bill 9.

And what did Bill 9 attempt to do, Mr. Speaker? Bill 9 attempted to increase the amount that would be reported by the government that is spent on an individual for services or a company for services. The reporting mechanism is triggered, Mr. Speaker, at \$50,000 currently. That's the amount of money that an individual or company can get from the government before it has to be reported. Now what did Bill 9 attempt to do, Mr. Speaker? They attempted to raise that number to \$350,000.

So they talk about open and accountable and transparent in an election platform, but one of the first Bills they introduced in this legislature is something that does exactly the opposite of that. It tries to remove transparency from monetary expenditures of the government. And so again I spoke yesterday about what the motivation for bringing forward certain legislation is, and it's clear that Bill 9 was brought forward to find a way to hide money from the people of

Saskatchewan. Bill 150 does exactly the same thing. It's an attempt, in some way, to hide funds from the people of Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there are a number of other ways in which this government failed in an attempt to be open and accountable — if there was an attempt. We asked certain questions, Mr. Speaker, last fall in this legislature around Amicus, which is a deal that removed from the books \$27 million in expenditures in the same way that this Bill proposes to remove from the books money that is paid to individuals. And so what happened in that deal, Mr. Speaker? Well, we asked questions and found out that it was untendered, that the people that were getting contracts were directly related to the Saskatchewan Party cabinet members. And when we tried to find out more information, Mr. Speaker, through a freedom of information request, the document was almost entirely blacked out. So open, accountable, and transparent is something that the Saskatchewan Party government has absolutely no idea about.

We learned again today, Mr. Speaker, on the subject of accountability, on the subject of accountability, the member from Saskatoon Massey Place asked the minister responsible for post-secondary education in Saskatchewan about a merger, about a college merger, which he has known about and absolutely has been directing from the very beginning. He asked today for him to be accountable for the actions that he's taken and the actions that have been taken by the board on direction from the minister.

And what did he do, Mr. Speaker? He ran away. He denied it. He used the term "we" 700 times in answers, but not "I" once. He didn't take responsibility and refuses to be accountable for the actions of this government in trying to keep from the people of Saskatchewan money that was being given to the Saskatchewan Party and reimbursed by the people of Saskatchewan.

So as you will note, Mr. Speaker, a direct comparison to Bill 150. Because what this Bill aims to do is take money off the books for people who make more than \$50,000 a year and remove public disclosure from public accounts. And so, Mr. Speaker, it's a sad day in the legislature when we have the type of things that were going on here today, where you have ministers hiding from accountability, when you have the member from Meadow Lake who was responsible in some way and had been named in an issue related to electoral . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I am trying to determine how that has anything to do with the legislation we have . . . or the motion before us regarding *The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Amendment Act*. I would ask the member to, in his comments, to reflect and to speak to the specific piece of legislation. I recognize the member from Prince Albert Northcote.

Mr. Furber: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government knows full well that any amounts over \$50,000 paid to individuals or organizations in one year have to be publicly disclosed. So it's about public disclosure, Mr. Speaker, certainly. The salaries of anybody who works for the minister of a Crown or Exec Council who makes more than \$50,000 a year are publicly disclosed each year in public accounts. And

what has not been publicly disclosed, what has not been publicly disclosed . . .

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

Mr. Trew: — Mr. Speaker, to ask leave to introduce a guest.

The Speaker: — The member from Regina Coronation Park has asked leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. I recognize the member from Regina Coronation Park.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Trew: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I thank all members of the Assembly for granting the leave as I introduce a former seatmate of mine, someone who actually sat in this very chair while I sat in the chair that my current seatmate sits, enjoys — Harry Van Mulligen, the former MLA for Regina Victoria, who served this Assembly for 24 years with huge distinction, a former minister of Finance, a former minister of Social Services amongst other things. Harry has gone on to do other things since he's left this place.

One of the things that I'm very proud that my friend Harry Van Mulligen did was stop by to visit my wife, Lorna, and I about 10 days ago and shared a supper meal with us. So the friendship continues. I ask, Mr. Speaker, all members to join me in welcoming our friend Harry Van Mulligen, who is seated behind the bar.

[14:45]

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

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 150 — *The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Amendment Act, 2010* (continued)

Mr. Furber: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again the Bill 150 is about public accountability because it's an attempt to remove from the public accounts, from a public reporting, the people who make over \$50,000 and are paid over \$50,000 by this government, Mr. Speaker. And what we've seen today is money that was paid to a political party that was not reported. There is a direct parallel between the \$1,000 memberships that are paid for by Saskatchewan people and not reported in the public accounts of the Government of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. It's an absolutely direct parallel. So it is ironic that we're speaking to this Bill today when this comes up in the legislature this very day.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it's directly about accountability, Mr. Speaker, and transparency. Now another example of where this government is removing accountability and transparency is Bill

160, which I've spoken to earlier. Now Bill 160 is an attempt to remove the auditor's report from the Human Rights Commission. So it's another attempt by this government to remove accountability from the people of Saskatchewan. So what would they try to hide that the Human Rights Commission is doing from the people of Saskatchewan? So we have here a list of many examples where they're removing public accountability from the people of Saskatchewan.

Bill 150, I would argue, does exactly the same thing. It's an attempt to hide money that's paid to individuals or companies by the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And so while we may support, while we may support one of the provisions of this Bill, we certainly do not support the removal of the accountability to the people of Saskatchewan, the second provision in this Bill, Mr. Speaker. The first, I would argue, is a red herring; the second is trying to do what Bill 9 could not do, Mr. Speaker. And so we will not support that part of the Bill certainly. And with that, Mr. Speaker, I move to adjourn the debate.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 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 Saskatoon Eastview.

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy today to rise and speak to *The Natural Resources Act* and the amendments that are being proposed.

I want to, just before I start my remarks, comment on how much I enjoyed the speech from my colleague from Lakeview. And I think it says quite clearly what we have felt over the last few weeks and in particular over the last few days. Our trust and our faith in getting the exact answers to the questions we have been thoroughly shaken. And I think when we look at the intent of Bills, what it looks like on the face of the explanatory notes and the government's second reading speech, we don't have the faith in this that this is truly what the whole Bill will do or what it intends.

So I think my colleague from Lakeview's comment about when you run roughshod over the rules is pretty telling, I think, about how we feel, certainly in the opposition, when it is our job to do the scrutiny of Bills, of policies, of changes that the government is proposing. That is the job of the opposition. And when we don't get answers, it's the government in effect refusing to answer to the people of Saskatchewan.

So I think that that should say to people that there is a challenge

to democracy in this legislature by the Sask Party government. And I think that it does, the Sask Party government does take its direction from the Harper government federally because we see that very thing happening at the federal level where the government now is very close to being found in contempt of the parliament. And that is basically then in contempt of the people of the country.

So when we look at *The Natural Resources Act*, and I'm reading it and thinking, you know, there's just some very minor changes to be made — changing the word department to ministry and those sorts of things — those on the face of it look as if there would be nothing nefarious about this or anything that anybody should worry about.

But then, given the backdrop of what we've heard over the last few days in particular, and the feeling that we have got and I have got — particularly I can say that from my point of view — that we don't get the answers that we're asking for, and that there is then something to be hidden, if you can't give a direct answer then the first question is, what are you hiding? And so if that's, if that's the atmosphere that we're operating under in this legislature and in this Assembly, then I do think the people of Saskatchewan need to be worried.

So any Act that comes before this Assembly that the opposition looks at, we are now looking at with those eyes. We don't have any trust or any faith, and we are speaking on behalf of the people because we need to ask the pointed questions. And if we don't get the answers, then that is contempt for the people of Saskatchewan.

And so when the Act presumes to change by putting money in the hands of a council, then we wonder, how will that council be appointed? And I know there's mention of which groups should be on there. But there's a bit of a chill now when you think, does anybody have to come up with \$1,000 to be on, to be on any council or any group that this government is going to have managing money or managing programs or policies?

And I think we saw . . . This is now about natural resources. We saw in *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act* in this last session about what a fiasco that was with consultation of the public and totally running roughshod over any, any demonstration of real consultation. And people spoke out and against what was happening.

So we now have a government who of course has the majority, so can ram their agenda through. But that doesn't prevent us from providing some scrutiny on that agenda, and that people then can make up their own minds on what this government is about and what their agenda is. And is it to the benefit of the people? It begs the question. There is really no demonstration yet to me that this government has the benefit of the people in mind when any legislation has come forward.

I look at taking some of the things out about accountability, that I just don't know why. And then putting in things that allow the government to step back from the natural resources oversight here is another thing that makes me worry.

And specifically there is a comment in here that there is no public servant to serve on any of these councils that will in

effect be in charge of the money and in charge of the direction that our natural resources will be addressed. And I think that first of all it's an insult to the public service. It supposes that they don't have anything to contribute. But it speaks more to the fact that there is . . . Obviously this government, the Sask Party government, does not value the public service or the input that the public service has or the contribution that they make to the connection between the government and the public.

And for most committees that I think we have seen historically, there is a connection to the ministry, to the government by putting a public servant — a deputy, an associate deputy, an executive director — on these committees to keep that connection and to keep the public's, to keep the . . . Because the public money is being spent. So we need to have some accountability to the public through these councils and through these associations or whatever are being put in place by these amendments.

So on the face of it, Mr. Speaker, it does look like this is something that would be small and inconsequential, but given the fact that we have seen such a lack of respect and such a lack of accountability and really such a lack of transparency, nobody believes that any more. So our scrutiny is now, the intensity of our scrutiny has really ratcheted up. And I think that, as I said, the confidence of the public has been shaken, and that's reflected in the changes in our speeches to our legislation that we're reviewing and debating. We now are looking at everything with a different set of eyes because we don't have any faith or trust that this government doesn't have something that they want to put through that is not exactly in the best interests of the public.

And I know, Mr. Speaker, we have many Bills that people now will be speaking to at length because they're looking at them with different eyes. At this point I have nothing else to remark on this particular Bill, and I would move to adjourn debate.

The Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Eastview 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.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 153

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

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

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, once again it gives me a great deal of pleasure to have the opportunity to enter into this debate on behalf of the good folks of Regina Northeast and to have the opportunity to bring to this Assembly some of their thoughts and some of their suggestions as it pertains to this particular Bill, Bill 153, *The Provincial*

Court Amendment Act, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to start out by making absolutely clear I am not a lawyer and I don't have a great legal background, and so we will dispense with getting into any pros and cons over legal terminologies and opinions and precedents and etc., etc., Mr. Speaker. What we will try to do is to provide you the comments based on a layman's point of view in a very broad and a very superficial manner because of our lack of in-depth knowledge of the legal community and the process around it.

But, Mr. Speaker, as I've done some research on this Bill and read some information that's been provided by our caucus research staff to us, it appears that this Bill . . . [inaudible] . . . the civil division of the Provincial Court and appears to transfer the significant responsibilities currently held by Provincial Court judges to justices of the peace, or it has that that will be sort of the end result of this Bill once it does become proclaimed.

And, Mr. Speaker, this of course perhaps has some merit to it. I think there's some opportunity here. I think we can see where cases or instances where it could be applied would have a positive outcome or a positive effect because there are certainly situations which I think could probably be handled as adequately by a Justice of the Peace as well as a judge, and perhaps freeing up the judge and the judge's time and our court times to do more detailed or more important cases and to have the opportunity to hear those cases in a more timely fashion, and therefore take some of the burden off of our court system by having expanded authority and expanded roles of the justices of the peace. So I think it has merit, Mr. Speaker, and it's certainly worth looking into. And I think it's worth pursuing that avenue and that approach.

And as I said, Mr. Speaker, there may be some merit to doing this in some limited cases. However there are potentially some serious implications for the quality of service being provided to the people who are having hearings in court and for their rights to be fairly heard. And, Mr. Speaker, that is the concern and one of the concerns that comes to my attention and the attention of the good folks of Regina Northeast, is that, how is it going to be determined which cases are cases that can be heard by a Justice of the Peace and which cases are going to be heard in a court of law? And how is that determination going to be made? Who is going to be the decision maker in reviewing the cases and say, well okay, we'll put this one in the justices of the peace hopper, and this other one will go back into the court system?

What is going to be the criteria? What's going to be the outline of that criteria? What is going to be the significance of the cases that's going to identify them as cases that will be eligible to be heard under the Justice of the Peace system? And what will be the criteria that will make a case eligible to be continued down the court system and to be heard in court by a judge?

That, Mr. Speaker, certainly has not been made clear here anywhere that there will be a system that will be put into place to determine whether or not this particular case is weighty enough to continue down the normal process of going through a court system, or has it the ability to be heard under a Justice of

the Peace system where I would think, Mr. Speaker, there would certainly be limitations to the abilities of a Justice of the Peace to be able to hear sensitive cases and to be able to hear more weightier cases.

[15:00]

And it would be of great interest, not only to me personally and not only to the opposition but I think to the people of this great province, to know what's going to determine which case goes where and who is going to be doing this. What system will be put into place? Will it be a system of an individual only or will it be a more . . . a tribunal or some larger group that will be going through the cases and saying, okay this one goes to the Justice of the Peace; this one goes to the court system? That, Mr. Speaker, as I've indicated, certainly that information has not been made available to the opposition and/or to the great people of Saskatchewan.

And what functions are being transferred, Mr. Speaker, out of the Provincial Court? Exactly what functions are being removed from the Provincial Court system and now going to be under the umbrella of the justices of the peace system? Those, you know, that's the information, the detailed information I guess one may say, Mr. Speaker, but it's certainly the type of information that the general public should be made aware of. I know that's the kind of questions that come to the attention of the opposition members when the general public starts to ask those types of questions as to, you know, what functions are going to be removed from the court system that are presently in the court system? And there has been a long tradition of those functions being upheld and certainly addressed in the court system are now going to be removed and placed under the umbrella of the Justice of the Peace system. So, Mr. Speaker, that is once again another question that seems to be coming up on a regular basis when we are talking about this particular Bill.

And what types of cases are going to be heard in the Justice of the Peace system, Mr. Speaker? What types of cases? Will they be more civil cases? I would certainly assume, and again I'm assuming, Mr. Speaker, that the criminal cases wouldn't be. It would be civil matters that would be heard by the justices of the peace. But to what level and to what depth would those cases go that would still qualify to be heard under the Justice of the Peace system? And at what, you know, what criteria? Where is going to be the line saying, this case is over that line therefore it stays in our justice . . . in our court system. This case doesn't quite make the grade, therefore it goes in the Justice of the Peace system. That, Mr. Speaker, has never been made clear by this government in any information that I have seen that would indicate that that forethought has gone into the proposed amendments to *The Provincial Court Act*, Mr. Speaker.

What is the potential impact of the services to the people receiving these services presently in the court system and having these services removed from the court system and placed under the Justice of the Peace system? What would be the impact? How would this impact upon the people?

What would be the system that would be in place to ensure that the folks that have their cases heard under the Justice of the Peace system certainly have fair and reasonable treatment in their cases? What mechanisms would be in place to ensure that,

Mr. Speaker? What mechanisms would be in place to ensure that the people who are having their cases heard under the Justice of the Peace system would receive the same fair and equitable treatment as we have come to expect in our court system?

And would they have the ability to have a lawyer present to represent them? Would that representation be there? Would they have a lawyer, somebody who is knowledgeable of the law and have the ability to ensure that the process of hearing their case is a process that's fair and reflects the fairness of our court system that has been developed over decades — not only decades, over generations, Mr. Speaker — and that has been able to identify flaws and correct those flaws within the system to ensure that we have at the end of the day a fair hearing, and that the individual's rights are fairly upheld?

That, Mr. Speaker, certainly is I think the nub of the question here. And this is what we, I think, hopefully all desire — government and opposition members — desire to ensure that the amendments that are being proposed here to Bill 153, the amendments at the end of the day provide the opportunity for fair and reasonable outcomes to the cases that are being heard, whether it be heard in the court system, which has certainly been the tradition, but under the new proposal having some of the cases heard under a Justice of the Peace system, to ensure that the individual's rights are being upheld.

Mr. Speaker, how will their rights be impacted? How will the individual's rights be impacted if we move from the hearings under a court system to the hearings under the Justice of the Peace system? Will there be any impact on those rights? Has the government done their homework? And has the government come up with a system or a proposed system of ensuring that the cases that are heard under the Justice of the Peace, that there will be no negative impacts on the rights of individuals who have their situations heard under the Justice of the Peace system?

Mr. Speaker, that's I think very, very . . . The basics of democracy is the insurance that people have the rights, rights first of all to express themselves politically, to be able to have the rights to choose their representation, and to have the rights to ensure that when there's a dispute in place that they have their rights upheld as individuals, their rights upheld and protected on both sides, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that the outcome is a fair and reasonable outcome.

Mr. Speaker, what will be the benefits? What will be the benefits of this change? What will be the benefits and who will benefit? Will there be individuals benefit? Will the court system benefit? Will the people of this province benefit because of these changes?

Those are the questions, Mr. Speaker, that have been presented to us, the opposition, by the general public. And that is the questions that I have for the government. And so far, Mr. Speaker, the information I have been able to review here doesn't answer any of those particular questions. That's a void that's left by the government. And I think it's something that certainly needs to be addressed because that's . . . The fundamental principles of our court system is the insurance that justice will prevail and that fairness will be a part of that system

and that individuals being heard in our court system will be treated fairly and their rights will be fairly upheld.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill also allows for greater public disclosure of the results of investigations into the conduct of judges by a Judicial Council. I think that's a very important aspect of democracy. A very important aspect of our justice system is to ensure that there is full public disclosure of situations that reflect the public's involvement. Mr. Speaker, certainly when we have judges that are being investigated certainly, for whatever reason, certainly the results of that investigation needs to be made public so that the public continues to have the confidence in our justice system that they should have. There's no doubt, Mr. Speaker, that those investigations need to be done every once in a while to ensure that the guidelines are being met by all involved within the process.

On the face of it, Mr. Speaker, greater public transparency is a good thing and would increase public confidence in our justice system. And I think that's fair to say, that our system is only as strong as the people involved in it. I think our system is only as strong as people have the confidence in that system.

So I think what we need to, on an ongoing basis, to ensure that that confidence is held in a high esteem, I guess you would say, Mr. Speaker, so that the good folks of this province know that if they need to use that system — whether it be the court system or whether it be, as it's proposed here, the justices of the peace system — that at the end of the day they have a confidence in the system that justice will prevail and that they will be treated fairly and that their rights, their rights will be upheld and that they will be protected when it is necessary that they receive that protection.

Mr. Speaker, one of my colleagues earlier spoke on this particular Bill and I think made a very important point and I think one probably worth repeating. He suggested at that time that when the legislature or the executive branch of government deals with the Provincial Court or with anything related to any of the levels of the court, we have to especially be vigilant in what we're doing to make sure that there are no unintended consequences, or that the intentions are made sure that the intentions are entirely clear as we proceed.

And I think that's very important, Mr. Speaker, that when we as legislators make adjustments to the legal system, that we do so after a lot of forethought but, more importantly, a lot of consultation to ensure that there are no unintended consequences and that we have done our best job to ensure that that is the case. And we've done so by not only talking to the immediate stakeholders involved — which would certainly be our justice system and those who are immediately involved in that justice system — but also by, I would suggest, holding public hearings and having the general public having the opportunity or be given the opportunity to share their ideas and their thoughts as to the proposed changes.

But even broader than that, their thoughts and their ideas of how the changes should be brought in that would make our court system more reflective to the needs of the general public, the people who aren't from the legal background or aren't from the legal community but who, through whatever circumstances, find themselves in need of the use of our court system to settle a

dispute or to settle property or to whatever the reason may be, and that they have the confidence within that system that they know in their heart of hearts that they will be treated fairly, that justice will prevail, and that they will be able to enter into this system with the knowledge that their rights, they will be protected, and their rights as individuals will be upheld.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this Bill will also allow the government to appoint temporary judges currently serving on the bench in other provinces. And that, Mr. Speaker, I think is something certainly worth pursuing. Because we could find ourselves in a situation where we have a case, perhaps presented itself to the Saskatchewan Provincial Court, where the available judges find themselves in a conflict of interest with one party or the other. And without having some system to be able to address a circumstance like that, we would find a case that would simply sit in limbo for who knows how long until we're able to find a provincial judge who was free of any of that conflict and that would be able to then hear the case and would be able to do it in a fair and just manner.

And if we have the ability then, Mr. Speaker, to go outside of our jurisdiction here in the province of Saskatchewan to find an independent judge who would be able to sit in on the hearing and hear this particular case and be able to move the case forward, that would I think be beneficial to all, Mr. Speaker, because we wouldn't have a backup in our court system. We wouldn't have the backlog or perhaps wouldn't contribute to the backlog of cases within our justice system.

Mr. Speaker, I think there is merit to this Bill. I think there is parts of this Bill certainly worth considering. I think there is at the same time, Mr. Speaker, there is parts of this Bill that raise a lot of concern. And those concerns unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, haven't been properly addressed by the government. And unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, that's a sad statement to make because I think it would have been just so much easier, not only for the opposition, but so much easier for the general public to be able to grasp the impact of the changes and these proposed changes to our court system and the impact that it might have on individuals within this great province of ours.

So there are a number of changes here, Mr. Speaker, being proposed in this Bill. Some appear to be worthy of support, and others raise certainly serious questions and require more information from both the government and from the people outside of government before the opposition is ready to support this Bill.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, we will — we, when I say we, I mean the opposition members here — will need more time to have the ability to talk to those people who are outside of government who would have interest in this Bill and give them the opportunity to express their thoughts and share their opinions with us. And with that, Mr. Speaker, I would move adjournment of debate.

[15:15]

The Speaker: — The member from Regina Northeast has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 153, *The Provincial Court Amendment Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 164

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert that **Bill No. 164 — *The Police Amendment Act, 2011*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise in the debate on Bill 164, the Act to amend *The Police Act, 1990*, this afternoon in the Legislative Assembly. Again this Bill is relatively new to the Assembly. There have been a number of assurances given by the Minister Responsible for Policing when the Bill was introduced to the House as to consultations that have taken place and the process that sees this Bill coming forward in the legislature these past days.

Of course we as the opposition want to make sure that the undertakings that have been made around what consultations have taken place have in fact taken place, Mr. Speaker. And there's some work that we need to do in pursuit of that due diligence and are undertaking at present. So we're doing our own consultation on this, Mr. Speaker, and I'm sure that those consultations will inform further remarks on the part of my colleagues on this Bill in the days and weeks to come.

That being said, the government has stated they brought this Bill forward after consultation with various members of the police community and enumerate the following goals. First of all, heading this up is a largely procedural change to the legislation. But the changes in the Bill focus on the following: changes that relate to disciplinary procedures, and in particular moving the boards that are responsible for the cost of mediation and matters related to that, as well as protection for whistle-blowing police officers who accuse the police chiefs of different misdemeanours wherein whistle-blowing cannot be a disciplinary matter unless vexatious or in bad faith as outlined in section 11, Mr. Speaker.

There's another requirement in this legislation that calls for the training of members of municipal police boards. There are also changes that relate to the relationship between the Ministry of Justice and the Attorney General and the Public Complaints Commission. And again, Mr. Speaker, when governments move to make these kind of changes, we want to be very certain that the changes are as they seem and that . . . that the Deputy Speaker is not being called off to the races or anything like that. But I guess, I guess we'll find out what happens with the Deputy Speaker, Mr. Speaker, in the moments ahead. But apparently his starting trumpet has gone off.

According to the government, the financial implications of these changes are in the range of 55,000 to \$85,000 and are principally related to the costs surrounding disciplinary and oversight provisions. Again, Mr. Speaker, we'll see how the Bill really adds up here, but for the time being we'll take the minister at his word in that estimate.

One principal area of concern that has caught the attention of the official opposition as it relates to this legislation is the change in Section 23(1) of the current legislation wherein the cap on the size of communities that can ask the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to act as their municipal police force is taken off. And currently that cap is at 20,000, Mr. Speaker.

In theory the removal of the cap could permit cities that have their own police forces to ask the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] to act as their municipal force, possibly as a cost-saving measure, but also possibly as a threat to the municipal police forces during collective bargaining. So again I think it's very important that a lot of men and women that provide services currently throughout the province to communities of the size and that are anticipated in this cap removal, and of course we see no specific mention of them being consulted directly in the construction of this legislation. So that is something that we want to find out more about.

There's also a question around which municipalities were asked about the change. Does this come forward as a request from those municipalities? And certainly, Mr. Speaker, in that request, was the work done to ensure that not just the management side of the equation was involved, but also the rank and file police officers themselves, were they consulted in these changes? And what is the intent of this change more specifically?

Further changes in the Act include an amendment to section 17 where they change who's responsible for reimbursements for and expenses of hearing officers of the Public Complaints Commission, wherein the ministry assumes responsibility for paying hearing officers and reimbursing them for their expenses. Currently the boards handle these costs, and of course it represents an expenditure for the affected municipalities. And again we want to be very certain about what are the dollar figures involved there.

There are changes to section 43 wherein the same division of costs is made applicable to mediation processes involving mediations, with the ministry assuming responsibility to reimburse the mediator and cover his/her expenses. Again it's seeming to shift the burden of these expenditures from police boards and assuming that for the ministry.

And there's also the change to section 41 wherein they alter the way that complaints are received against police members and chiefs are handled. When a complaint is received about a member or chief, the receiver must notify the Public Complaints Commission, which will advise the complainant in writing of the status of the complaint. Currently it is the responsible of the receiver to notify the complainant and the one complained against. This measure seems aimed at requiring the involvement of the Public Complaints Commission when complaints arise so that the complainant knows this body has been informed of the complaint. Again if you've charges made against you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it would seem only fair to have knowledge of those complaints.

And I guess a final change in section 55 preventing whistle-blowing police officers from being disciplined for the whistle-blowing unless the matter has been found to be without foundation or vexatious, again there's a very distinct balance to

be struck here between the rights of the complainant and those being complained about. And it makes good sense to have that balance being struck to rule out things that are, again as is described in the law, being found without foundation or vexatious, but again still allowing that whistle-blowing to take place and those complaints to come forward.

So there's more work to be done on consultation on this legislation, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There's more work to be done to ensure that undertakings made by the Minister of Policing is as good as his word in terms of the parties involved in those consultations and to get a more precise understanding of the opinions of the affected parties.

So with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm sure that more of my colleagues will have more to say on this debate. Our work of consultation is ongoing with this proposed legislation and in that regard, I would now move to adjourn debate.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre has moved to adjourn debate on *The Police Amendment Act, 2011*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 165

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 165** — *The Adult Guardianship and Co-decision-making Amendment Act, 2011* be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Trew: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to speak not only on the heels of the hon. member from Regina Elphinstone who just spoke to Bill 164, but who spoke to this very Bill, Bill 165, *An Act to amend The Adult Guardianship and Co-decision-making Act and to make consequential amendments to The Public Guardian and Trustee Act and The Public Trustee Amendment Act, 2001*. And that hon. member spoke to this very Act just yesterday in the Assembly, and he had some very interesting comments to make, starting page 6806 and 6807 respecting this very Bill. I read his speech of yesterday with a great deal of interest, Mr. Speaker.

I recall in 2001 when the Act was passed, the previous iteration of the Act that we're now amending, and I want to say right off the hop the amendments by and large look to be positive amendments. They look to be ways of helping the legislation serve its proper function, its intended function, and enable things to work the way they should with respect to adult guardianship. And we welcome that about this very Act, Mr. Speaker.

Of course, any time you are dealing with adult guardianship . . . Let me put it this way. Every situation has some uniqueness to it. There is no cookie-cutter approach that can catch all, where

you could have, you know, one guardian that would just automatically make the proper decisions or the decisions that we would all want made given the circumstances.

So having said that, this Act, this Bill 165 seems to be helping address some of the nuances of public guardianship. Helps not only enable some things to be done with respect to the guardianship, but it also puts in place some controls and some oversight.

For example, if you were in a situation where you applied to be a public guardian or have guardianship responsibilities, previously you had six months to file a statement of assets, of property and so on, with the courts. That's now reduced to three months, and I view that quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, as a welcome change. I think this is a positive change. I don't think it's intended to be unduly hard on the guardians, but it is clearly something designed to help provide some assurance that the assets that the guardian will have huge control over are in fact somewhat protected or protected as far as the law can reasonably protect those assets.

I know that individuals who are selecting a guardian would be very well-advised to think, make their choice very, very carefully because not every guardian would necessarily be in tune with making the right choices. And in fact some guardians may see it as an opportunity to be handsomely remunerated for doing very little for the person that the guardianship was set up for.

In other words, in its crudest, there may be some — very limited, but if there's one, it's one too many — there may be some guardians that are more interested in their own pocket than in helping what the guardianship was set up for, and that is helping people who are unable to make all of the proper decisions or the decisions on their own.

[15:30]

So this Act also sets up a provision for a co-decision maker. You can have a personal or a property co-decision maker, and that's set for someone that may be on the right track in terms of their decision-making ability but may for some legitimate reason lack the ability to necessarily connect the dots right through if it gets very complex, if the issue becomes complex. And this enables some selective guidance that we welcome, quite frankly, because we would not want to see a situation where a parent or parents put together a significant asset, you know, maybe in some cases much of their life savings, to leave for a child of theirs and then have some bad decisions made that took that inheritance, if I can describe it, and squandered it where it wasn't intended to go. And you can just imagine all of the different ramifications of this. You might even have the parents passed on and in which case they would have absolutely zero ability to reach back from the grave and correct the situation for their loved son or daughter. And that would be tragic, Mr. Speaker.

The Act does things like it protects people by establishing criteria for persons applying for guardianship orders, and it protects adults by establishing duties for guardians, such as to account. And then in the regulations, there are specific tasks or details that the guardians have to look after. And again, Mr.

Speaker, we welcome that part in Bill 165, *An Act to amend The Adult Guardianship and Co-decision-making Act and to make consequential amendments to The Public Guardian and Trustee Act and The Public Trustee Amendment Act, 2001*.

The protection allows for quite a number of things, including it allows the court to recognize a foreign guardianship order — and by that, it's from jurisdictions that might be other provinces, or I'm not sure about states, but certainly other provinces — and it enables the court to recognize where that guardianship has been granted. So that's a positive part of this Act, Mr. Speaker.

There are amendments that clarify inventory and accounting provisions and make it clear when and what a property decision maker is required to provide. In other words, there's an accounting now that is outlined in greater detail. And again this would provide a level of security for the maker or makers of the trust in the first place, the maker or makers of the guardianship order. This would enable a further level of security.

On the downside and early in the Act, it's a necessary evil, but on the downside, the first part of the Act talks about the necessary fees for the guardianship and the prescribed fees. That's quite simply as long as they're reasonable. And we may well have some questions around that in committee — the establishment of the fees and what they might be — but as long as those fees are kept at a significantly low level, we see it as probably a necessary evil of doing business now in 2011 and beyond.

There didn't used to be a need for accounting in the event of death, and now there's a new provision under this Act that does provide for a final accounting upon the passing on of a person whom a guardianship order is in force. So that too is yet another level of security. And I'm sure that lawyers will be involved in helping create wills that will stand the test of time and will come into line with this so that what the creator of the estate intended, by and large, is what will happen with that estate, with their own estate. And that, I'm sure, is a welcome change. It adds a little twist, and it certainly means another level of thought needs to go into putting together a trusteeship. But that's, again probably on balance, it's a good thing.

There's a thorny question of gifts, Mr. Speaker. And I know that when someone is requiring a guardianship, in some instances, I suspect in a significant number of instances, Social Services is also involved. And I know that there is legislation in place, there's rules and regulations in place respecting use of one's own resources before one starts to utilize the Department of Social Services resources. And if only life were simply black and white, if only it was crystal clear and easy how that should work, we wouldn't even have this thorny question.

But the problem arises all too often when a parent or parents have been able to put together a relatively small estate. I'm reluctant to define relatively small. But let's assume in an example that a parent or parents had more than one child but one required a guardianship order, and yet the parent would want to provide potentially, in my example, equally for all of the children. Well you take a \$100,000 estate, and if you've got four children, there's \$25,000 each, which is a significant estate legacy.

But if you were to require the person, in this case their child that required a guardianship, to utilize the full \$25,000 instead of Social Services benefits . . . And some would argue that that's the proper way to go, Mr. Speaker. I grant that. But if you did, then there would be no ability for those parents to provide for birthday gifts or Christmas gifts, or maybe it's as simple as a warm parka every year or two or three; to see that as they need it, they have winter boots and mitts and some of the things that there's no provision in the Department of Social Services, no direct provision to provide that. Instead there's a lump of money that is altogether too small. But there's a lump of money, and out of that, the provisions are supposed to be purchased. But that doesn't allow for gifts to siblings. It doesn't allow to gifts, birthday gifts for, in this case, the individual requiring the guardianship. And maybe the parent, the deceased parent would want to be remembered annually . . . or would want to remember their son or daughter annually with a birthday gift.

So I don't know, Mr. Speaker, if 25,000 is the right example for me to use as a dollar amount, but clearly I'm trying to establish a principle of some amount of money could be, should be allowed to be set aside so that special gifts could be arranged for someone requiring a guardianship.

I don't want to beat that too hard because it is an issue that I suspect that the current government is dealing with. And I know that we were trying to deal with it when we were in office previously, and I know that we were making progress on that. And in fact indeed, Mr. Speaker, I think that these amendments are putting the wheels under our Act of 2001.

So we welcome all of that, Mr. Speaker. And we in fact are looking forward to having two things happen. One, I know that some of my colleagues have yet to speak to this recently introduced Bill, and I know that they will want to speak to Bill 165, *An Act to amend The Adult Guardianship and Co-decision-making Act and to make consequential amendments to The Public Guardian and Trustee Act and The Public Trustee Amendment Act, 2001*. I know colleagues want to speak to that, and I'll look forward to some of my colleagues' comments on it. And I look forward to ultimately us getting this Bill into committee so that we can ask some of the questions that I think are necessary on what, on the surface of it, appears to be a welcome Bill. Mr. Speaker, with that, I move to adjourn debate on Bill 165.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Regina Coronation Park has moved to adjourn debate on Bill 165, *The Adult Guardianship and Co-decision-making Amendment Act, 2011*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Battlefords.

Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased today to rise to enter into the debate at second reading of Bill No. 161, *An Act to amend The Election Act, 1996*. Mr. Speaker, to be very clear for those who are watching today, this is the legislation that introduces photo ID [identification] for voting in provincial elections in the province of Saskatchewan.

A number of provisions, Mr. Speaker, that appear in this legislation. But since this Bill was introduced in December, Mr. Speaker — it was prefaced by remarks in the Throne Speech last fall, then the legislation was introduced in December, Mr. Speaker — there's been a tremendous response from the Saskatchewan public opposed to the introduction of photo ID in Saskatchewan. So, Mr. Speaker, I will focus much of my remarks with regards to Bill 161 on the issue of photo identification.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when the government introduced this legislation, it also introduced a companion Bill, and that was Bill No. 162, *The Local Government Election Amendment Act, 2010*. And amongst other things, Mr. Speaker, Bill 162 introduced photo ID provisions for municipal governments. You will notice, Mr. Speaker, the elections Act is Bill 161. The municipal elections Act or local elections Act is 162. The introduction of photo ID for provincial elections, and then the introduction of photo ID for municipal elections.

Mr. Speaker, I don't want to repeat comments that I made previously. Members of the public should be aware that Bill 162, that local government elections Act, was also introduced on December 1st of 2010, and I had the opportunity to speak at second reading on that legislation, Mr. Speaker. My remarks appear in *Hansard*, on page 6322 of *Hansard* from December 1st, 2010. And, Mr. Speaker, I have fairly extensive comments about the application of photo ID at the municipal level, but, Mr. Speaker, this piece of legislation in front of us today is about the introduction of photo ID at the provincial level.

[15:45]

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice was kind enough to make extensive remarks prior to his moving the motion to introduce at second reading the Bill. And, Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to make a comment or two with regards to the Minister of Justice's second reading comments. Mr. Speaker, I will quote directly from the Minister of Justice his comments made on December the 1st at page 6317 of *Hansard*. The Minister of Justice says, and I quote:

Mr. Speaker, members will know that *The Local Government Election Act* is to be amended this session to require voters at local government elections to produce approved identification such as government-issued photo ID [identification]. The Bill will follow the municipal initiative to result in similar ID requirements being authorized for voters at municipal, provincial, and federal elections in Saskatchewan.

And then he goes on to say a paragraph or two later, Mr. Speaker, and I quote again:

... voters will now be required to show identification prior to voting. Those with approved government-issued photo ID and who have been enumerated will only need to show that ID in order to get a ballot. Those who cannot meet this requirement will be required to show additional forms of identification or have another voter with such ID vouch for them. A voter may vouch for only one other person.

And then the paragraph that follows that, Mr. Speaker, and again I quote:

Mr. Speaker, there's been some suggestion that this process will prevent people who want to vote from being able to do so. That is not the intention and in our view that will not ... result.

So, Mr. Speaker, the minister is clearly stating in his remarks that it is not the intention of government to disenfranchise anyone by the introduction of photo ID. And again I'll quote. The Minister of Justice said:

... there's some suggestion that this process will prevent people who want to vote from being able to do so. That is not our intention and in our view that will not be the result.

Mr. Speaker, very clear that it is not their intention. So, Mr. Speaker, if the public of Saskatchewan or the public in any other province, for that matter, Mr. Speaker, or a court adjudicating legislation like this in any other province, if it can be established that even one person is disenfranchised by that legislation, this legislation, Mr. Speaker, by the Minister of Justice's own words since that's not their intention, indeed this legislation should be rethought and perhaps even, Mr. Speaker, I would go so far as to say this legislation should be pulled.

Now lest members think that it's only the Minister of Justice who's interpreting the Bill in this way, Mr. Speaker, let's go to a debate that occurred in this legislature just a couple of days ago, Mr. Speaker. March the 17th, the private members' day debate, something we in the legislature refer to as the 75-minute debate, a motion from the government, Mr. Speaker, brought forward a number of speakers on this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, an interesting tactic of government. No members of government have spoken to the legislation itself, but they introduce a motion so they can speak to the legislation, Mr. Speaker. Odd circumstance. Absolutely odd. I've never seen anything like this in any other legislature in Canada. If members of the legislature want to speak to the Bill, they stand in their place, get recognized by the Speaker, and they speak to the Bill. But no, government members have not spoken to this legislation, but they introduce a motion so that they can speak to the legislation. Very odd. Very odd, Mr. Speaker.

But the member who moved the motion is the member from Cannington, the Government House Leader, Mr. Speaker. And his remarks indicate quite clearly that he certainly shares the, he shares the interpretation of the Minister of Justice. The member from Cannington says on page 6771 of *Hansard*, and I quote:

And the reason, Mr. Speaker, that these changes are taking

place across the country and in Saskatchewan . . . is to protect democracy, to maintain the integrity of our democratic process.

That's a quote, Mr. Speaker, from the member of Cannington, ". . . to maintain the integrity of our democratic process." In other words, the intent is not to disenfranchise anyone but to make the system stronger, Mr. Speaker.

And then the member from Cannington says the following, later on that same page, Mr. Speaker, in that same debate. The member from Cannington says, and again I quote, "And, Mr. Speaker, I would find it highly unlikely . . ."

I should preface this first, Mr. Speaker, before I do the quote. There's been some concern that new Canadians may not have photo ID, Mr. Speaker. We have a lot of new Canadians in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. The work that began prior to 2007 about immigration in Saskatchewan and carried forward over the last couple of years has resulted in a large number of new citizens in the province of Saskatchewan, first as immigrants, Mr. Speaker, and then later as Canadian citizens.

I was very fortunate in North Battleford just a few weeks ago, Mr. Speaker, to attend a new citizenship ceremony in which 52 individuals were made new Canadians, Mr. Speaker, residents of northwest Saskatchewan. We're very, very, very pleased to have these new Canadians, Mr. Speaker. But in terms of photo ID and voting, when you're a new citizen in a country, you respect the right to be able to vote, Mr. Speaker. It's one of the values of citizenship, is the ability to vote. So, Mr. Speaker, new citizens take this very seriously.

But, Mr. Speaker, every family is different. Every family circumstance is different. And what is the norm in a community, Mr. Speaker, may not be the norm in every household, and those new Canadian households are no different. But the member from Cannington in his speech in regards to the fact that some new Canadians may not have photo ID on election day, Mr. Speaker, the member from Cannington says and I quote, "I would find it highly unlikely that any new Canadian citizen would not have a passport or some other form of photo ID such as a driver's licence." Mr. Speaker, he's making a blanket statement here that says he doesn't understand that every family situation is different, doesn't fully understand the nature of what's going on in our communities — more importantly, Mr. Speaker, doesn't fully understand the nature of the legislation in front of us.

Mr. Speaker, also in that debate on March the 17th here in the legislature, the member from Yorkton had the following to say. This is a quote from page 6778 of *Hansard* and he says, and I quote, "Disenfranchising people is not the intent of this government, nor do I think this legislation would do that." Pretty much a direct quote from the Minister of Justice, Mr. Speaker. And the member from Yorkton goes on to say:

And now, Mr. Speaker, I want to refer to a comment made by the member from Dewdney: everyone has a right to vote. And I couldn't agree with him more, Mr. Speaker. I agree that everybody should be able to vote once and in their own constituency and have that opportunity to do that. And this legislation clearly would help that happen.

Well, Mr. Speaker, certainly interesting comments to say that the government members, through the Minister of Justice and through independent speeches in the legislature, indicate quite clearly there's universal acceptance across the way that if the intent of this legislation is not to disenfranchise anyone, then it follows that if it does disenfranchise anyone, it should be withdrawn, Mr. Speaker. And I would assume that the member from Cannington, the member from Yorkton would agree with that conclusion, and the Minister of Justice would have no alternative but also to do that, to withdraw, to agree, Mr. Speaker, that the Bill should be withdrawn.

So, Mr. Speaker, the government has said that since this legislation is in place in Canada, the federal system, that it's in place in British Columbia and Ontario, Mr. Speaker, that therefore there's no problems here. But, Mr. Speaker, it is interesting, and I think this is one of the key points in all of this, is that the legislation that exists elsewhere has been challenged to the Supreme Court of Canada. It's been challenged, Mr. Speaker. There are groups across Canada who have made a case. They've built a presentation that's now gone to the Supreme Court of Canada to say that there are individuals who are disenfranchised by photo ID.

Some provinces like Ontario, Mr. Speaker, have mitigated this circumstance to some extent, and the Government of Ontario has made it very clear that if you don't have photo ID, photo ID will be provided to you, Mr. Speaker, free of charge. The Government of Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan Party government says, anybody doesn't have it, we'll provide it, but at a cost, Mr. Speaker. So whether you are a student at a college or a university, whether you are a northern resident, whether you are a First Nations person, whether you are a person with disabilities, whether you are an individual that has matured in years, Mr. Speaker, a senior who has never had a driver's licence, every person currently that does not have photo ID, this government is saying, for only a certain amount of money, we'll take care of you.

Mr. Speaker, there will be some people in Saskatchewan, somewhere in this province, who on election day, November the 7th, 2011, will go to the polls, will not have identification, will turn around and go home, and they will not have been allowed to vote, Mr. Speaker. They will not have been allowed to vote. If the intention of this legislation is not to send that person home, then this legislation should be withdrawn. It's very clear members of government agree with that position, Mr. Speaker. So let's ensure the legislation does what the members opposite want it to do — improve the system.

The British Columbia Civil Liberties Association does not believe in British Columbia that photo ID improves the system. They argue it makes it worse, Mr. Speaker. Granted in Vancouver, in British Columbia there are an awful lot of vulnerable people, Mr. Speaker, on the streets of Vancouver, some of whom may want to vote, some of who have voted all their lives, Mr. Speaker, some of whom participate in the economy but from a position of vulnerability and, Mr. Speaker, from a position of non-participation in our economy. Mr. Speaker, those people have a right to participate in the choosing of elected representatives at the provincial, municipal, and federal systems.

These are important matters that we've all got to take into account when we think about what it is that we want to do with our electoral system.

The legislation, as I read from the minister's second reading speech, also indicates that if somebody vouches for you and they have photo ID, Mr. Speaker, then that's going to be okay. But only one person can vouch for one other person. If for example, Mr. Speaker, you are in a seniors' home and you perhaps are an employee who wants to assist people with voting in the home . . . Very few of them have got photo ID. They've been unable to go out to the local SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] office because of some physical incapacities, Mr. Speaker. They've been unable to go out to get their photo IDs, Mr. Speaker. There's one staff person who helps these people get to the polling station. It might be a mobile poll that's in their building, Mr. Speaker. Once one person has been vouched for by that one staff person, nobody else in the building can be vouched for. This is unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, and in rural Saskatchewan that's more likely to happen than not.

[16:00]

This government has forgotten on numerous occasions some of the people in rural Saskatchewan. This is one piece of legislation that I think targets individuals in rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and says, we don't really care if you can't vote. You have to get your affairs in order.

That takes me back to that second reading speech of the minister, the Minister of Justice, because I thought it was very interesting that he made it very clear in his remarks that the government doesn't take responsibility for an individual's participation. They simply want to ensure that the process exists, and then it's up to people to make it work. Mr. Speaker, in the second reading speech of the Minister of Justice he said it's imperative . . . And I quote. This is a direct quote: ". . . it is imperative that people get their affairs in order so that they are able to have the proper paperwork when they present themselves at the polling station." Get your affairs in order, is what the minister says you have to do.

Not a very astute comment when you think about the vulnerabilities that a lot of people within our economy have, Mr. Speaker. This is the same government that doesn't understand that affordable housing is important in our communities, Mr. Speaker. The same government that doesn't understand that roads to rural First Nations communities are important, Mr. Speaker. This is the same government that seems to have abandoned safety on secondary roads in a lot of rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, because it's up to everybody to look after themselves. But, Mr. Speaker, these are people who for years have been voting. They've gone to the poll. The polling clerk knows who they are. Everything is great. Now they've got to drive to the city, find some photo ID, get their affairs in order just so that they can do what they've always done all their lives, and that's to vote for members of the legislature, Mr. Speaker.

I want everybody to have an opportunity to vote for their Member of the Legislative Assembly, not just those who have "got their affairs in order," Mr. Speaker. This is a clear, clear

fundamental right that Saskatchewan residents have, Mr. Speaker. So we've got to ensure that the pieces all fit together, that they work for everybody. And that's the intention of the Minister of Justice. It's the intention of the member from Yorkton. It's the intention of the member from Cannington that this Bill not disenfranchise anybody. They said it. It's clear. It's very clear, Mr. Speaker.

One other thing, Mr. Speaker, that I wanted to refer to with regards to the ability of the members opposite to understand what it is that they are asking Saskatchewan people to do, Mr. Speaker. We're back to the debate on March the 17th, the private members' day debate, Mr. Speaker. There was one other Saskatchewan Party member who entered into that debate. That was the member from Regina Wascana Plains, Mr. Speaker. Interesting comment. She says, and I quote . . . This is just to give an indication of how the Saskatchewan Party understands the ability of Saskatchewan people to have their affairs in order. I quote the member from Regina Wascana Plains:

Mr. Speaker, when you go to return an item at a big box store in this province, you have to show photo ID. We're talking about returning products, and yet the members opposite don't think it's right to have to prove residency, prove identification when you're voting.

Mr. Speaker, the member from Wascana Plains, and members opposite supporting her in those comments, seem to equate shopping with voting. Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of vulnerable people in our province who don't shop. They don't have the ability to shop, Mr. Speaker. They get their food from the food bank, Mr. Speaker. They couch surf from one house to the next because they have no capacity to earn a living in our economy, Mr. Speaker. They're raising children with very few dollars available to them.

Mr. Speaker, there are, there are people who will be disenfranchised. Every member of the Saskatchewan Party needs to understand that every family is different. And if one person is disenfranchised, this legislation does not improve the circumstances for voting in this province. Therefore we have no alternative, Mr. Speaker, but, as the intention of the Minister of Justice becomes very clear, the government has to withdraw the Bill.

Last point before I leave the legislation and adjourn debate on the Bill for today, Mr. Speaker, last point, and this has been raised before, Mr. Speaker, but I want to make this very clear that I support the question that's being asked. Who asked for this legislation, Mr. Speaker? Who asked for this provision?

The member from Cannington talks about a single incident in Wood Mountain where there was a discrepancy in ballots being cast, Mr. Speaker. The fact of the matter is that in that specific case the system worked to catch the errors that were made and, Mr. Speaker, the system worked to correct them. So in fact to say there are incidences that would indicate that people are choosing to vote irregularly, Mr. Speaker, there isn't a lot of evidence that says that we need to do something to fix the problem. We don't.

What's the problem, Mr. Speaker, and who specifically is asking that we have photo ID in the province of Saskatchewan?

Some are suggesting that it's individuals within the Saskatchewan Party who don't want vulnerable people to vote, Mr. Speaker, that are asking for this legislation to be brought forward. I can't substantiate matters like that, Mr. Speaker, but it sure rings true when you listen to the fact that members of the Saskatchewan Party don't understand the vulnerabilities that exist in this province, don't understand the nature of our province.

Bottom line, Mr. Speaker, no one is asking for this change to be made. There's no evidence that anyone outside of the Sask Party is asking for this change to be made. The government says their intention is not to disenfranchise anybody. There are court cases, Mr. Speaker, in this country that are saying that this legislation will disenfranchise individuals. And, Mr. Speaker, there's a challenge from the British Columbia Civil Liberties Association in the province of British Columbia on very similar legislation. And other provinces who have dealt with this have brought in mitigating legislation to correct some of the deficiencies that the Saskatchewan Party, Saskatchewan legislation continues to have.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think that on the evidence that's in front of us, there's no alternative but for the government to withdraw this legislation. I know that other members of the New Democratic Party will have similar arguments to make. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I would ask that the debate on Bill 161 be now adjourned.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 162

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

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's good to see you're back from your federal run. I hope you're not going to be announcing anything further during my remarks, but it's a pleasure to join in the debate here today on Bill No. 162. In many ways a companion piece with the legislation that my colleague from The Battlefords has just concluded his remarks upon, but in many ways it provides a very interesting comparison to the piece that the member's just finished speaking about.

I guess the, you know, the two main measures as we can see in this legislation are the changes to *The Local Government Election Act* are (a) moving to the four-year terms — and I'll have more to say about that, Mr. Deputy Speaker — and the . . . And this is how it started out in the Throne Speech, Mr.

Speaker, and I quote from the Throne Speech of this past October: “. . . giving municipalities the authority to require photo ID when conducting local elections.”

Well, Mr. Speaker, the way that that lines up alongside the requirement that is made under the legislation that the member from Battlefords has just been speaking about is that on the one hand, it's a regime where they're going to force the uses of photo identification, whereas on the other hand with the local elections governance, the local government elections Act, where it will be one of a number of options.

And that is interesting, Mr. Speaker, because we saw from the Throne Speech to when *The Local Government Election Act* was finally introduced that changed to be more flexible, that changed to be more inclusive. And even then, Mr. Speaker, we've seen the Minister for Municipal Affairs attend meetings of the New North, and when the criticism of this legislation was levelled fairly extensively in that session, the Minister of Municipal Affairs sort of throwing his hands up and saying, well don't worry. We'll work with you even further to ensure that people aren't disenfranchised.

And of course New North, Mr. Speaker, was one of the organizations that was stated as having been consulted with when this legislation was brought forward in the first place. So, I guess, again it's an all-too-common occurrence with this government where they'll say yes, yes, consultation's been undertaken, but when you talk to the people that have been so-called consulted with, sometimes you find out that the story is not quite as been related back in the legislature, and the way that impacts things like the introduction of legislation, the measures in that legislation, and then the way that it's attributed in second reading speeches by the ministers opposite.

So again the move to the four-year term giving municipalities the opportunity to go in that direction, we think that's fine. You know, it's called for by the stakeholders. It's been brought forward. We think, fine, that's as it should be. There's certainly a lot to recommend a four-year term. And certainly the way that going through the greater number of the budget cycles and the governance cycles of a given organization over a year, we think that that four years strikes a pretty fair balance in terms of not too long, but it's long enough for folks to get their feet under them and provide the benefit of that experience that is gained over that period of time.

But the thing that we find interesting in particular about this legislation is the move to provide the option to go to photo identification, and of course in the legislation, Mr. Speaker, it's an option. And I refer to, of course, section 76.2 of the proposed legislation headed “Evidence of identity and residence”. 76.2 reads:

An elector shall:

(a) provide to the deputy returning officer and the poll clerk the following evidence to . . . [provide] his or her identity and residence:

(i) one piece of identification issued by a Canadian government, whether federal, provincial or local, or an agency of that government, that contains a photograph

of the elector and his or her name and address; or

“Or.” And that’s a very important “or,” Mr. Speaker:

(ii) two pieces of information prescribed in the regulations, each of which establishes the elector’s name and at least one of which establishes the elector’s address; or

(b) establish his or her identity and residence in accordance with the procedures as prescribed in the regulations”.

So again even there, Mr. Speaker, we see that in terms of actually listening to the local governments and then the way that this legislation was introduced in the Throne Speech, the way that in turn evolves in the actual legislation that was brought to this House, and then the further undertakings that have been made by ministers on that side of the chamber with regards to listening to concerns that have been raised around this legislation and its potential impact on voter turnout and the potential to disenfranchise individuals at the polls, it’s a fairly interesting evolution.

[16:15]

And when you stack that up alongside what happened with the changes brought to *The Election Act* and the long-established practice of having an all-party meeting after the election and then that report coming forward to Elections Saskatchewan and that as a general rule informing the changes that are brought to *The Election Act*, the fact that the concern around photo identification was nowhere near the recommendations of that all-party body, and then the way that this is seized upon, it’s fairly clear to see, Mr. Speaker, the influence of the Harper Conservatives at hand and the way that this is being brought into this House.

And it’s hard not to distinguish or to discern the intent that is, I think, contrary to the spirit of democracy. Certainly you want to be able to have people that prove their residency, that prove their citizenship, that prove their ability to participate in the elections. But the idea that you would game the process so that you dissuade people from going to the polls or that you set the bar in a place where it’s difficult for people that don’t have photo identification, that don’t have the proper means by which to meet a narrowly prescribed criteria for getting to make their mark at the ballot box, it’s hard not to look at those kind of efforts and wonder what the heck is going on.

So again this is very much a companion piece to other legislation that has been brought to this Chamber. It’s quite instructive, I think, to see the way that the evolution of this has taken place in terms of trying to respond to concerns of those that were supposedly consulted with in the first place, and the way that this government refuses to move on legislation that my colleague from The Battlefords, just previous to my intervention this afternoon, spoke very eloquently about, the anti-democratic nature of it and the fact that it should be withdrawn.

I guess I don’t have much more to add than that, Mr. Speaker. We’ll be watching with vigilance and diligence as the

opposition to ensure that again the intent of this legislation is lived up to, to make sure that those who have supposedly been consulted with are actually in agreement with the way that this government interprets the tenor of those consultations. And we’ll certainly be watching with vigilance to ensure that undertakings made by ministers on that side of the House in bodies such as the meeting of the New North leadership are lived up to.

But with that, Mr. Speaker, I would anticipate that a great number of my other colleagues wish to participate in the debate and as such would move to adjourn debate.

The Speaker: — The member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 162, *The Local Government Election Amendment Act, 2010*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 160

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

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to join in the debate on Bill 160, *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code Amendment Act, 2010*. I guess there’s been a lot of concern and I guess expressed by the members of the official opposition. And many other organizations are trying to bring their voice and very concerned about Bill 160 coming forward, and I guess the timing of it, Mr. Speaker.

And I got a chance, you know, to talk a little bit yesterday about why was a certain Bill brought forward. And there are certain Bills that get brought forward here. And the reasons why, and people are wondering why certain Bills are coming here. And Bill 160, there’s a lot of concern. And through the notes and conversations having with different organizations, individuals, human rights . . . And I mean, if you look at where it came from and how we accepted this as a province, you know, it’s very interesting.

And you listen to some of the concerns out there and why we have human right protection for Saskatchewan residents, but not only Saskatchewan residents, but all of Canada. And why so many countries out there that don’t have human right protection, the way their citizens are treated and attacked by their governments, it’s scary. But here we have some protections in the province of Saskatchewan. We should have, Mr. Speaker, protection for Saskatchewan residents. And it doesn’t matter what background they come from — their heritage, what ethnic group they belong to, what their views are — their views should be protected.

You know, it’s interesting and I’m going to get into a few examples that, I think, would be appropriate on this Bill, Mr.

Speaker, that I have witnessed myself over my years out there and seeing how people have been treated and mistreated. And then to see a Bill come forward and again the Justice minister brings this Bill forward, and I made comments yesterday using examples of Bill 160. There's different Bills, you know, that concern individuals, Bill 161.

And I know we have an opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to debate them and to voice our concerns which there's 58 members elected and you try to do what's best for Saskatchewan residents. But I don't feel that the Sask Party government is truly . . . brought this Bill forward, I don't know on what grounds. And if they're trying to improve something then, if there's problems with the system, then maybe it's time to review it.

And there's nothing wrong with doing a review. And I see that the current government does not want to do a review. It just wants to eliminate certain things out of it and wants to actually get rid of the tribunal decision, that that group would have access to making decisions. Maybe it's not the quickest way, but you know what? Putting it down to a commissioner, and we see that and some people have expressed that — one individual making a decision. And maybe that commissioner will make the best decision at the time, but is that a safe way? Is that the best way? Without looking, and I don't believe that the government has consulted anyone. You know, at least I haven't seen that. I haven't heard that. And I don't why this Bill's coming forward.

Many of my colleagues have expressed their concern. We have individuals out there very concerned about these groups. But, you know, Mr. Speaker, when they're scared to come here and express themselves and their view — scared. And I mean that of their . . . To come here and express themselves to the Sask Party government because they're failed that their programs will get cut. Their funding will be cut. It's a sad day. And we wonder why we need human rights protection for individuals, organizations. This was a tool. And, you know, and I talked, Mr. Speaker, about my grandfather being a war veteran. And he fought hard and his brothers did for the democratic process, for freedoms for all of us that we have.

You are the only provincial government that I'm aware of that's even looking at this. You're not moving forward; you're going backwards. You're not consulting the people. You didn't go out and talk. Where's all the meetings you had with the public? They didn't do that, Mr. Speaker, because they come up with laws and they want to amend things and they want to change things. It doesn't matter if it's right and the people agree with it. Their philosophy is, this is what we're going to do, and that's the way we're going to do it.

It's a sad day, Mr. Speaker, when a group will take away from another group rights. And when you see, you know, Canada and the way we came to have the human rights that we have, Bill of Rights. And then when we look at 1947, and we know who brought it in and the reason why before United Nations did agree to it. A year previous, there must have been some wisdom in our province, in the leadership, in the government of the day to say, we need a bill of rights. We have to have this to protect our citizens whether they're immigrants, whether they're people with disabilities.

And you know it's a sad day. People have many disabilities and they have challenges, but they try their best in this world. And they do a good job because I've witnessed many of them trying. And the struggle, I'm telling you, Mr. Speaker, you look at them and you see their struggle, and your heart has to go out to them because they're trying their best. But to have a society or have individuals mock them and make fun of them, it's embarrassing. That is wrong. And in our hearts we know it's not right, but people will still do it. They will mock people. They will laugh.

To have a disability and to move forward in life, I commend those individuals the challenges that they have to go through. Some people might think it's easy, but I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, for the individuals that I know . . . And you see them out there. They have different disabilities. Some of them might be missing limbs but they work hard. They do all they can. There's all types of disabilities — whether it's learning, whether it's physical, emotional — we have to support those individuals. They have a right to be heard, and they have a right to be heard, and they have a right to show up and have a place of employment and to be protected. And we give them that right with human rights and that process.

And when you start interfering in that process and whether they're Aboriginal people . . . You have Aboriginal people and you look at them and what they've gone through as a people, as a nation. Hasn't been easy. Have they been discriminated against? I think the stories and the outcomes of human right trials will be very clear. Cases that have been heard before the tribunal and the rulings that that group has made, it has given protection. It has made sure that individuals have rights and they're protected and they don't have to fear their government. That to me says something very clearly. And to see a government wanting to take that away without looking at it and saying, have a review. There's nothing wrong with making some changes, but make sure you consult people, the people that have a right to use the Human Rights Commission.

And when you see the individuals speaking against this and bringing information forward, and I think about one. And he shared some information, very concerned where we're going, you know. Secretary-general of Amnesty International Canada, an individual, very concerned. Sees this as going backwards, not forward. Very concerned where are we going as a province when we take away the rights of individuals to a process, and they have a right to that process.

Is it a perfect process? There's some challenges; we hear that. And maybe the government feels that's the reason they want to look at this and they want to go to the process they want to use — a judge to hear human right cases. I don't know if that's the right process or the wrong process . . . [inaudible] . . . but I know the process we have in place, it may be lengthy. May take a long time to get through it. But there was individuals with their experience that heard those cases.

The cost, I'm hearing different people talk about the different costs. And individuals, can they afford . . . And if it's at the cost of the individual to bring this forward, to hire a lawyer to go to court?

What's in it for that individual who is probably one of the

poorest individuals that may be bring forward a claim? To have a government telling them, well you know what, you might have a sad case and, you know, you might have a human rights complaint; we'll investigate it. And the commissioner may . . . [inaudible] . . . yes I believe there's something here and it should go forward and has a right to be heard by a judge. Or the commissioner may say, I don't feel there's grounds to have this case heard, so that case I guess doesn't get to go forward. It stops at the commissioner's discretion. And I'm not saying that this individual . . . He might be a wonderful person. He might understand a lot of things. But I think when you're leaving it to one individual, I'm very concerned, and I think people have expressed that concern.

[16:30]

You know, at the end of the day people want to feel like they can come and they can approach their government. And we've seen examples, Mr. Speaker, of different Bills that have taken away rights from Saskatchewan people: Bill 5, Bill 6, Bill 43, Bill 80. Where are we going? Bill 161. People look at the government for leadership. And I said this yesterday and I'll say this again. The members, there's 58 of us elected here representing Saskatchewan people. Many of you represent First Nations, Métis people, immigrants. There's many different nationalities. They have a right to be protected.

Stand up for . . . The backbenchers of the government, speak up for the people that can't be here to speak for themselves. You owe them that. You don't have to always agree. You get a chance to share with your colleagues. Ask them, is this right? Search it out. And if you think at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, if they really think that this is the way to go, then at least they've looked at it. And that's all I'm asking them, to look at it.

Because I'm telling you, once this Bill is passed and it goes into legislation and it's our law, I realize that you can change it, but you can also withdraw this Bill. You can also say, you know, we're going to take time out. We're going to do a review. We're going to make sure we consult people, Mr. Speaker. They can do that. The government has the power. I don't think they have the will. I hope some of their members will find that will to say, many people gave up lots so we could have these rights. Don't take those rights for granted. Don't take those rights for granted because we are going backwards, not forward.

In 1947, when Saskatchewan chose to move forward, it was a step forward. Many looked at us. Every other Canadian province followed, Mr. Speaker, followed and today have human right Bills. We are going backwards. We're a leader and now we're going to lead, but we're going in the wrong direction to lead. I don't think this Bill is going to protect people's rights the way it has been in place.

And, Mr. Speaker, like I've said, it might not be the perfect system, and there might have to be changes. Maybe we have to provide more financing. Maybe we have to make sure we do all we can that cases are heard sooner and get through that system to be heard. But it's been interesting to see some of the cases that the tribunal has to deal with and had made rulings on. And maybe some of those decisions didn't favour the current

government. The Sask Party government didn't like that.

Interesting how now this Bill comes forward and the changes they want to make. Right now you have a commissioner, and I realize those individuals might be doing what's best for our province, but if the government gets to appoint the commissioner, who will they appoint? We've unfortunately seen some of the interesting things this current government will try to do.

And a system that has worked for years and years in this House for both sides of government, they don't like sometimes to play the same way when they have the decision to make. They want to change the rules. That's a scary scenario to put out there to the public, who are very concerned. They're wondering, where is the Sask Party government going, and what are their motives? You don't bring in legislation the way you are and Bills you want to change. I mean review them.

But some of the stuff that has come forward, and you know what? They may not agree, Mr. Speaker. Some will shake their heads, and that's fine. But I tell you, Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, people's rights, people's rights, human rights protection, whether they're Aboriginal, First Nations, Métis, Inuit, immigrants, whether they're people with disabilities, minorities, have a right to be protected. And they have that right, Mr. Speaker, and should be protected. And if you take a Bill like this and you move forward on it and you try to push it, at the end of day you're the government. And we know the process. We're learning. You will move this Bill forward. It will get through the process. It will become law. I hope at the end of the day it doesn't come back to haunt some of you. Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, did you do the right thing when you look back on this?

Some of the Bills and the decisions you guys are making as a government, the Sask Party government, is affecting a lot of people. And I talked about photo ID for elections. And I'm going to go back and refer to different Bills: Bill 5, Bill 6, Bill 43, Bill 80. These are taking away from individuals. These are taking away from individuals. And individuals have rights — the right to be protected, the right to be heard.

And many of those individuals right now, they're scared, scared to send letters. And I'm encouraging chiefs, Métis leaders, presidents, citizens of our province, don't be scared. Don't let them intimidate you. Send your letters forward. I know some of you are scared about your funding because if you say too much, the Sask Party government will come after you. We know that. People are scared out there.

They can sit here, Mr. Speaker, say what they want. People are scared. They feel intimidated. They don't want to bring letters. Say what they want, at the end of the day, there's individuals that don't want to support . . . Even though they don't support this, they're concerned for the clients, the people they serve. They don't want to come here, fear of losing their funding. They don't want to send letters, delegations.

Mr. Speaker, it goes to show you . . . Laugh, laugh, there you go. Members on the opposite side of this House think it's funny, the members of the government. I don't find it funny. It's a sad day when you have individuals, Mr. Speaker, that

don't take this serious, that people don't have rights to be heard. They have a right, Mr. Speaker, to be here. They have a right to be heard. They have a right to come in this legislature and protest. They have a right to come on the steps. And we say to them, when you come into the House, you have to follow certain rules and show respect. And most people do that. But they're frustrated. Many people are frustrated, Mr. Speaker, the process.

Well you can make fun all you want. You can make fun all you want. The end of the day, you will wake up the people and they'll speak. And you might talk about, oh well, nobody, whatever, this and that with the polls. And you can say what you want, but you keep doing what you're doing, you keep treating the people the way you're treating them, trust me, they will wake up. They will send you a message. You can't ignore northern people, rural people, Aboriginal people. They have a right to be heard and they will be heard. You cannot, you can't keep them quiet any more. They're scared and then they wonder why, why, why they're afraid to come forward and voice their concern and to hear their concern.

I hear it so many places. Well you've got to be careful. You've got to be careful with the government. You've got to tiptoe around them because if you don't, they'll come after you. And the member can say all they want over there. You're in charge. These are your amendments you're trying to make with our Bills, with our protection of the human rights. It's Bills that you have passed — Bill 5, Bill 6, 43, Bill 80. Bill 161 that you want to bring forward.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, I hope individuals out there will bring the message forward to the government. Approach your MLAs, any individual out there. And many are watching this program, and they watch it and they watch the House. You know, Mr. Speaker, the individuals out there, they're concerned about this Bill. I encourage them — the leader, individuals — you have MLAs representing you. Send them a letter. Send them an email. Tell them the concerns. Don't fear them. But at the end of the day, if you still feel that you're fearing them and you can't bring your voice forward, at election time do your evaluation. Follow your heart and do the right thing. Make sure you do the right thing.

So when I look at the different individuals . . . And I have to give a compliment to my colleagues who have argued this and have got into the debate and expressed themselves really well. And I think of the member from North Battleford. He expressed it really well. He went on yesterday and he talked from the heart about the challenges.

You know, that's all right if you didn't believe him. That's okay. Tim, that's okay. Yes, yes. The member opposite, that's okay. You know, Mr. Speaker, you know, I shouldn't have mentioned an individual's name. I apologize.

Mr. Speaker, you know, individuals can say what they want. And you know what? I understand. They want to be heard too, and they'll get their chance. And maybe they'll speak against this Bill. Because, you know, I encourage those members on the opposite side, speak your mind. When you get together in your caucus and you have opportunities to talk to one another, citizens, express your concern about the Bill. But give me this

chance to express my views in the debate.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to go back to it. And almost like, you know, they start bothering me, and I forget. And I want to go over again because I know they want to hear it again because I want make sure I didn't miss anything. So I want to go back and say there are Bills that give individuals protection.

And you know, when you have United Nations and you have different bodies, you know, you have a secretary general of Amnesty International Canada voicing his concerns, meeting with individuals, expressing his concern for the direction the Sask Party government's going. But we've had other individuals, United Nations comment on the road that the Sask Party government's going, advising them to withdraw certain Bills, that you're going down a scary road. They don't care. Mr. Speaker, they go ahead anyway. We're going with it. It's what we want, and we're going to do it. Doesn't matter what the public thinks, what organizations think, what United Nations thinks, what Amnesty International thinks. It doesn't matter. They're going to do what they're going to do, Mr. Speaker, because they are the government. And they'll give you the cheering, and they give you that old, oh the people elected us and they want us to do this.

Well you know what? Remember one thing, Mr. Speaker, that at the end of the day, individuals that voted for you expect you to listen to the people. All of us elected are supposed to represent the people, do the best job we can, and fight, fight for low-income people, fight for the individuals who live in poverty, who don't have the same level playing field.

So, Mr. Speaker, again I go back to this. We are going backwards, not forward, with trying to change Bill 161, or Bill 160, Bill 5, Bill 6, Bill 43, Bill 80. We're going backwards not forward. We're not giving citizens protection, the rights they have. But I remind you that the people have a right, and they will do an evaluation, Mr. Speaker, of all 58 MLAs, and they will. Did you bring their concerns forward? Did you fight for the people? Did you hear the concerns of the organizations? Did you listen to the First Nations, the Métis? And when they find out that you haven't, they will do the evaluation. They will send you a message, a clear message. And maybe they'll elect a government that will repeal some of the Bills and damage you have done to their human rights, to their bargaining.

[16:45]

And you know, you think about it, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, you think about it. There's so many challenges out there for Saskatchewan residents now as it is. They're struggling some of them, very proud people, working hard, trying. But you know, Mr. Speaker, they're seeing things not being done for them. And that's challenging for individuals who just want the best for their families, want the best for their children, the best education. They want the best health care, roads.

There's a lot of different things that they want and expect from a government, a government that has record revenue, record revenue. The expectations out there are unbelievable because of the record revenue. And people expect things, Mr. Speaker. They expect good health care. They expect good education, whether it's post-secondary, whether it's K to 12 [kindergarten

to grade 12] system. They expect certain things, roads, a quality of life that they expect, and they expect a government to provide that to them.

But they also expect a government to provide leadership and right now with bringing Bills forward, you are not. This Sask Party government is not showing leadership. That's a sad day. They are not showing leadership. And they can cheerlead all they want, and they can say all the good things they're going to do, but at the end of the day, they're affecting individual's rights.

And I say this, those individuals will let their voice be heard. And it may not be because of they're scared to send letters, and they may not come to this legislature to voice their concern. But I hope at the voting time, if they're allowed to vote should Bill 161 pass, and should they be allowed to vote — and we know we've talked about that Bill; it's another thing taking away people's rights — should they get a chance to vote, Mr. Speaker, should they get a chance to vote, that they'll vote against the current government for bringing in Bills like this, not respecting the people of our province, not following the duty to consult. That is very clear. Not talking with the public, not meeting, not holding public meetings, making sure that the public and all individuals are heard and have a right to be heard.

So, Mr. Speaker, I know there's many individuals want to speak on this, and we are still getting information. And like I said, I encourage organizations out there, as hard as it is, send your letters, send them to the opposition. If you're worried about sending them to your MLA, send them to the official opposition. If you're a member out there and you're thinking, well you know, my rights may be affected. I'm not sure what this Bill is going to do. How will I be affected? How will Bill 160, how will it affect me? What is it going to take away? And if those individuals out there feel that way, you can contact the official opposition to be your voice because you're scared to share it with your MLA. And we'll do all we can to express their concerns and bring them forward.

We've heard lots. We've had emails. I know there's been all types of phone calls, letters. People are concerned, very concerned about where we're going. Meetings being set up. So if that's happening, Mr. Speaker, this government, the Sask Party government can't tell me that it's not hearing what individual members of this House are saying and the message we're trying to bring to them. And different organizations, whether it's United Nations, Amnesty International Canada, we've heard.

There's groups out there that are very concerned, whether they're funded by the government. Individuals are nervous. And I don't know why they should have to be scared to express themselves. You know, we're supposed to have a Bill, a human rights Bill that protects them.

But then we look at individuals that have disclosed and brought information forward, and we've seen how some of the government members and ministers have dealt with that. Some of the ministers have gone out . . . And you know, I think of one — Corrections, Public Safety and Policing — how they've handled that individual and what they've done when information that was released to the public. You know, it's very

concerning when you see the way they handled that file.

And then they want to bring in legislation to protect the whistle-blowers. And you look at that legislation and you wonder, what's behind that? So did they hear the people? But it's interesting the process that they want to use and how they want to set up the opportunity to protect whistle-blowers or people who want to provide the official opposition or the public with the information.

It's very clear. It's very clear, Mr. Speaker. People are very concerned, and they should be. By the action of the Sask Party government, they should be very concerned. Because you know, Mr. Speaker, they figure their government is supposed to protect them.

And we've seen in some of the laws that have come in that when individuals want to have . . . And I think about, you know, some of these laws might be good and some of the changes . . . Bill 144, you look at that Bill and you look at different Bills coming forward, the legislation that this government will pass, and you look at why they're passing them. What's the reason? Who brought these complaints forward? Who asked the government to do these? What's the reason?

And you know, I go back and I think of the Justice minister. And you know, I made comments about the Justice minister and different debates we've had. And bringing a Bill like this forward, it's very concerning. You would have thought he would have used other methods to deal with this and an opportunity for him to say, let's have a review of this. He has a ministry. He has officials who could have assisted in going out and doing a proper process of consulting, finding out, is there a better way? Are there some better options to look at? Did they look at any options?

I don't believe they looked at any options. They just want to go ahead with what they believe. Maybe the tribunal has made decisions that are not favourable to their liking, Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party didn't like that. So you know, maybe they want to say, well no, we're going to get rid of them. We're the government. We're going to get rid of them.

But I think a lot of different organizations, I hope, will bring their concern forward before this Bill passes. And the government has the opportunity at any time to withdraw it and actually go through a proper process to make sure that people feel heard, and do a review, and give some options for all members of this House to vote on and talk about.

But I look at protecting individuals' rights. Individual rights, that's where it's at, Mr. Speaker. The individuals' rights are being taken away. And this government seems to want to do that more and more as they bring Bills forward. We see a pattern — control, intimidation. Sure, why not? People are scared. They're nervous. Why should people be afraid of their government, that they represented them, that they elected? They elected them. Why should they fear them? But they do, Mr. Speaker. They're scared for their funding. They're scared for their livelihood for their families. There's challenges, Mr. Speaker, but we'll continue to do the, I guess, to bring their message forward as they'll contact us, and their concerns.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, you know, I think of the children out there. And you think about children with, you think about children with disabilities, and you think about individuals, and you think about their rights. They have a right to certain quality of life, education. And when you have that right, the family knew that they could go to the human rights and they could hear their case. And they could bring their case before the Human Rights Tribunal and be heard. And when that tribunal made a decision — and sometime it was a lengthy decision — but when it made a decision based on the information it had heard, that decision was final. That was important.

But you know what? I think the Sask Party doesn't like that that decision's final. And they want to be able to have a little more influence on who would hear those individual rights. Who will move cases forward? Who will say that this one has a right to be heard, this one doesn't have a right to be heard?

I think individuals want to make sure that they have that right. They want to make sure, the end of the day, the cost. Will they have to provide legal counsel? Who will provide their legal counsel should they need a lawyer? Who will provide their accommodations if they need to be at a place where there's going to be a trial before a judge? And they're concerned about this, that it's going in the wrong direction for them. Tribunal had an opportunity, different people with experience. They went through a process. They had the experience that we needed for them to go forward.

An Hon. Member: — You have to adjourn or we're coming back tonight.

Mr. Vermette: — Okay. Now? At this time, Mr. Speaker, I know other individuals would like to get in on the debate. So at this time, I'm prepared to adjourn debate.

The Speaker: — The member from Cumberland has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 160, *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code Amendment Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move the House do now adjourn.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has moved this House do now adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. This Assembly stands adjourned until tomorrow afternoon at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 16:57.]

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GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

CABINET MINISTERS

Hon. Brad Wall
Premier of Saskatchewan
President of the Executive Council

Hon. Bob Bjornerud
Minister of Agriculture
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Crop Insurance Corporation

Hon. Bill Boyd
Minister of Energy and Resources
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Telecommunications

Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff
Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations
Minister Responsible for Northern Affairs
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Gaming Corporation

Hon. June Draude
Minister of Social Services
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women
Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission

Hon. Dustin Duncan
Minister of Environment
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Water Corporation
Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated

Hon. Donna Harpauer
Minister of Education
Provincial Secretary

Hon. Jeremy Harrison
Minister of Enterprise
Minister Responsible for Trade

Hon. Darryl Hickie
Minister of Municipal Affairs

Hon. Bill Hutchinson
Minister of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport
Minister Responsible for the Provincial
Capital Commission

Hon. D.F. (Yogi) Huyghebaert
Minister of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing

Hon. Ken Krawetz
Deputy Premier
Minister of Finance

Hon. Tim McMillan
Minister Responsible for Crown
Investments Corporation
Minister Responsible for Information
Technology Office
Minister Responsible for Information
Services Corporation
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Government Insurance
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Liquor and
Gaming Authority

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Minister of Health

Hon. Don Morgan
Minister of Justice and Attorney General
Minister of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety
Minister Responsible for the Saskatchewan Workers'
Compensation Board

Hon. Rob Norris
Minister of Advanced Education,
Employment and Immigration
Minister Responsible for Innovation
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Power Corporation
Minister Responsible for Uranium
Development Partnership

Hon. Jim Reiter
Minister of Highways and Infrastructure
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Transportation Company
Minister Responsible for The Global
Transportation Hub Authority

Hon. Laura Ross
Minister of Government Services