



FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

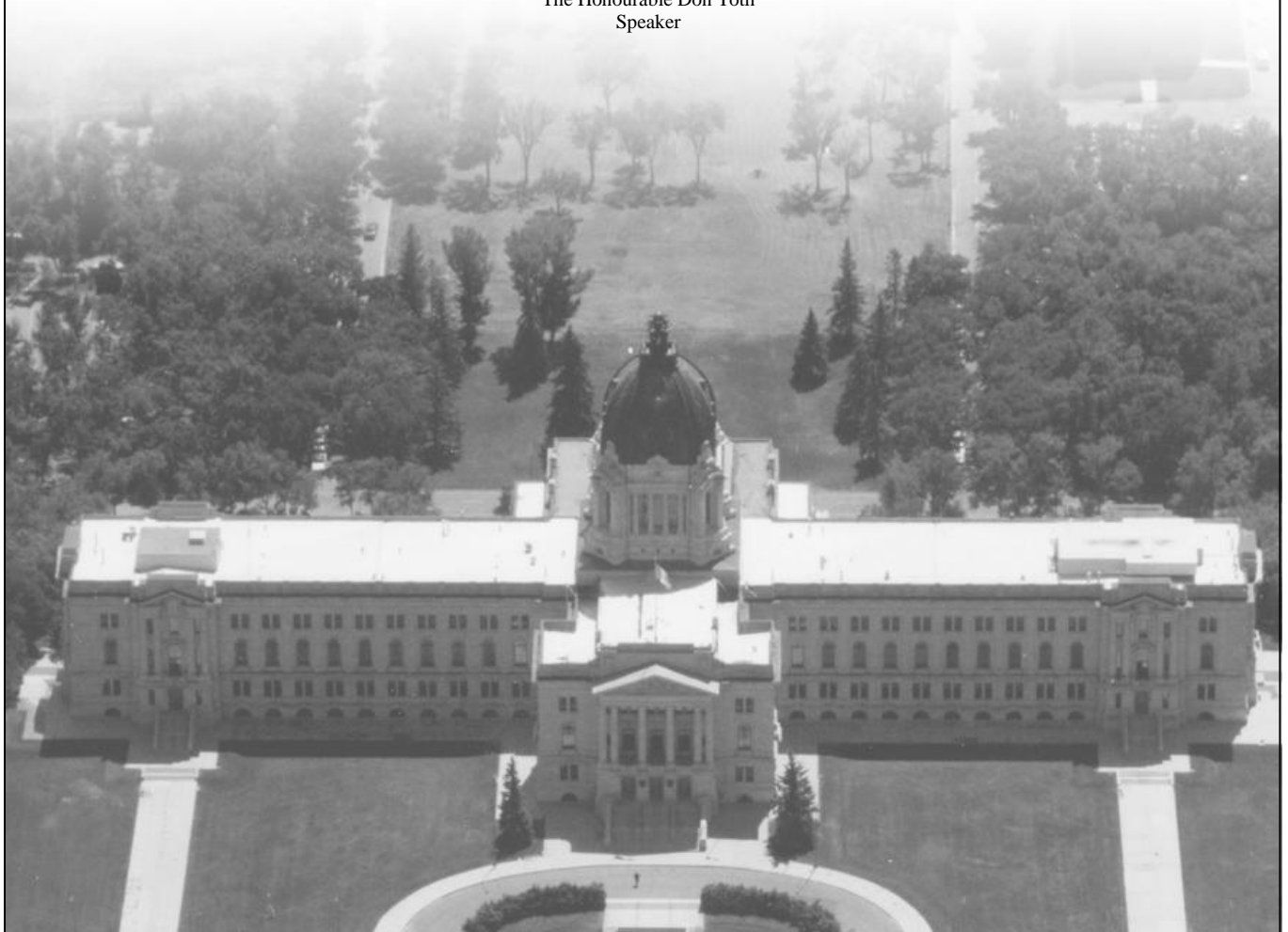
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Don Toth
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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

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

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, it's an honour for me to be able to introduce some very, very special guests that have joined us in the Assembly today, significantly on the floor of the Assembly, but I notice some of their friends and family members and support networks are seated in the galleries.

Mr. Speaker, one of the rites of spring in this particular institution is the presentation, the vesting of the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal. This is what we celebrate today.

Earlier today there was the investiture of nine Saskatchewan heroes at Government House with the Volunteer Medal. Mr. Speaker, we talk a lot in this place about our natural resources, and so we should. They are plenty, and we produce them in prolific quantities to a world that needs them. But of course our best resource has always been, and remains today and will be in the future, our people.

In Saskatchewan we have the highest rate of volunteerism in the country, and that builds communities and improves quality of life. And we honour those who do that each and every day, significantly with the nine that are representing the rest of the volunteers across the province and who themselves are leaders in terms of volunteerism in the province.

So it was an honour to join the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the Provincial Secretary. I know we're going to be able to meet each one individually with the help of individual members of the House. We welcome them today to their Legislative Assembly, and in so welcoming them we say, on behalf of a grateful province, thank you for all you do.

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

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I want to join with the Premier in welcoming all of the recipients of the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal and their family and friends that have joined us here in the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, this ceremony not only recognizes these nine individuals this year for all the work that they have contributed, but I think it also reminds us — each and every one of us — just how much our province appreciates and relies on, in many cases, the work of volunteers throughout the communities. And while none of these volunteers took on the projects, or in some cases the many projects that they've been involved in over the years, they didn't take them on for accolades or appreciation of a community. It was a job that they felt needed to be done and they just went ahead with that wonderful Saskatchewan spirit and took on the role and got the job done. And I would like to

join with the Premier and all of my colleagues and say a sincere thank you, because each and every one of us have benefited from the work that you have done in improving your community and the province as a whole. So thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cypress Hills.

Mr. Elhard: — Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to introduce Mrs. Lexie Culham from the constituency of Cypress Hills, who today received the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Kindersley.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to introduce Mr. David Delday from the constituency of Kindersley, who today received the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal.

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

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to introduce Mr. Maurice Filson from the constituency of Regina South, who today received the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Canora-Pelly.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to introduce Helen Hellegards-MacFarlane from the constituency of Canora-Pelly, who today received the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Humboldt.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my privilege to introduce Mr. Krishan Kapila from the constituency of Regina Wascana Plains, who today received the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Indian Head-Milestone.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to introduce Mr. Emil Leibel from the constituency of Indian Head-Milestone, who today received the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal.

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

Ms. Higgins: — Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to introduce Mrs. Jean Mahoney from the constituency of Regina Douglas Park, who today received the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal.

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

Mr. Bradshaw: — Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to introduce Mrs. Betty Lou Palko from the constituency of Carrot River Valley, who today received the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cypress Hills.

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you once again, Mr. Speaker. It's my

privilege to introduce Mr. Albin Zubot from the constituency of Cypress Hills, who today received the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Kelvington-Wadena.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you I am proud to welcome the members of the Saskatchewan Association for Community Living Sibling Network to their legislature. Will you give us a wave? The Sibling Network is a program offered by the Association for Community Living to provide support to teens and young adults who have a brother or a sister with an intellectual disability.

Many of the MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] had an opportunity to have breakfast with these young people this morning, and I thank you very much for sharing your personal stories with us. I know you've made a big impact on us, and I know you called us MLAs which is fine — the other word for MLA, but that's great.

And I would like to introduce those in attendance. We have Lexie Busse from Simpson, Megan Rutherford from Saskatoon, Allie Sheldon from Saskatoon, Emily Schaan from Saskatoon, Luke Zakretski from Alvena, Nic Willoby from White City, Alexis Bennett from Delisle, and Feather McKee. All of these young people are between the ages of 12 and 18 and all of them are leaders in their family and in their community.

I also want to welcome two more people accompanying the Sibling Network. We have Judy Hannah, who is the Chair of the Disability Income Support Coalition, and Lynn Schaan, who is the Association for Community Living Family Network coordinator. Judy and Lynn have done a great deal of work on behalf of the people with disabilities in this province and their advocacy is crucial to our efforts to promote the equality of people.

So I'd ask everyone in this legislature to please welcome these people to their legislature.

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

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join the minister in welcoming the group here today who presented so touchingly their stories this morning to the MLAs and brought all of us into their experiences. I welcome them here to the legislature and ask that members join me in doing that.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Wood River.

Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to the Assembly, I'd like to introduce some grade 10 students from Collège Mathieu in Gravelbourg. They're visiting today, accompanied by their teacher, Raymond Michaud, and I'd like to introduce the four students that are here, Mr. Speaker. There's Jessica Auger, McKayla Bevans, Renée Punga, and Natasha Reimer.

I will be meeting with these students after, and I'm sure they'll

have some pretty good questions for me after question period. So I'd like to ask all members of the Assembly to please join me in welcoming them to their Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Indian Head-Milestone, the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to the rest of the Assembly, I'd like to introduce a group from the Lajord Colony School from Lajord, Saskatchewan.

I don't get a lot of visitors from Lajord, maybe because there's not a lot of people in Lajord. But I would like to introduce 27 kindergarten to grade 10 students. They're accompanied by their teacher, Samantha McIntosh, and also an assistant, educational assistant Chea Henderson. Adult leaders — which I think they're so well behaved they don't need these many adult leaders; I'm sure they're very well behaved — but also with them is Diane Hofer, Abigail Hofer, Naomi Hofer, Marilyn Hofer, and Cheryl Hofer.

Mr. Speaker, I hope to meet with them later on after question period. I don't always have a lot of time after question period. There's other people want to ask me questions. But if we have the time today, Mr. Speaker, I hope to be able to have a quick visit with them and explain perhaps what they saw in this Legislative Assembly. So I'd like all members to welcome them here today.

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

Mr. Trew: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour today to introduce to you and through you to members of the Legislative Assembly a couple of constituents of mine seated in your gallery. They are Fred Kress who is a long-time constituency assistant of mine and an even longer time friend of mine, so I want to welcome Fred. With Fred today is another constituent of mine, Charlene Sullivan. And I look forward to seeing both of these two fine people right after question period. So please help me welcome Fred and Charlene.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Greystone, the Minister Responsible for Advanced Ed.

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Great. Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the Assembly, I'd like to have two sets of welcome.

The first set to students, graduate students at the Johnson-Shoyama school who are here for a lecture that'll be held later tonight. And in no particular order from both the University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan: Jessica Miazzyk, Nick Dubé, Kacey Keene, Kristen Ward Diaz, Diana Payton, Azhar Zhumatayeva, Sara McPhee-Knowles, Jordan Teichgrab, Dustin Rodgers, Nyankomo Marwa, Lucy Zhang, Linda Chemmettut, Wainewright Noble, Obeyaa Ampofo-Addo, Jeff Martin, Carla Leuschen, Andrew Coffin, and Justin Redekop.

Again they're here for the Tansley Lecture that will be held later tonight, where Mr. Mel Cappe is going to be speaking here

in Regina. We're delighted to have these students not just simply studying in Saskatchewan but hoping that they'll aim their careers in Saskatchewan because we know through them that we will have a very bright future indeed. I wonder if everyone would join me in welcoming these graduate students to their legislature.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As well I'd like to welcome Dr. Arvind Gupta and his team from MITACS, that is the Mathematics of Information Technology and Complex Systems. These are partners that we have and have worked together for some time to help focus on graduate students combining and collecting their efforts in helping small- and medium-sized businesses across Saskatchewan help to thrive and prosper in these increasingly competitive times.

Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all members of the Assembly to join me in welcoming Dr. Gupta and his team here to the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with the minister in welcoming the guests that the minister had mentioned, to Dr. Gupta and the individuals with him. We do want to say a special thank you to the Assembly and to the grad students in the Johnson-Shoyama school. We do thank them that they are here today, and we look forward to the contributions they will make to Saskatchewan and to Canada in the years to come. And we know that they will be very well prepared through the grad studies that they are pursuing at this time. And I look forward to meeting with some of them tonight at the lecture. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to join me in welcoming these guests as well. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Meadow Lake, the Minister Responsible for Enterprise.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to recognize today my godmother, Peggy Klassen, joining us today from Regina, and her mother, Jean Stimpson, a long-time friend of my grandparents in Hudson Bay. So thank you so much for being here and look forward to seeing you after.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition on behalf of Saskatchewan residents who are facing concerns and the issues of surging rents that are simply making living in Saskatchewan unaffordable. And the petition also recognizes that a majority of Canadians now live in provinces with rent control guidelines, including Manitoba, British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec, and Prince Edward Island.

Mr. Speaker, it also refers to a report that was put out by the Calgary School of Public Policy with a quote included that says, and I quote:

The greatest attraction of second-generation rent control is the protection it offers sitting tenants against a severe deterioration of housing affordability caused by high rent increases. In effect it protects against economic eviction.

Mr. Speaker, and the prayer reads:

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

Mr. Speaker, these petitions are signed by citizens in Pilot Butte, Regina, Saskatoon, and Moose Jaw. I so present.

[13:45]

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

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today to present a petition in support of maintaining quality health care services:

The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Saskatchewan humbly showeth that the Government of Saskatchewan ought to recognize the need for timely access to comprehensive and quality health care services for all communities within the province, including Wakaw and surrounding areas, and that the disruption of emergency services and in-patient services at Wakaw Hospital will not serve the needs of the residents in this community and surrounding areas; and

That the cuts in access to timely and accurate diagnostic and laboratory tests within the community of Wakaw and surrounding areas will also not serve the needs of the residents; and

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to commit to maintain quality health care services through the commitment of necessary funding to address critical retention and recruitment issues.

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

The signatures on these petitions, Mr. Speaker, are from the communities of Tisdale, Domremy, Wakaw, Saskatoon, Vanscoy, Crystal Springs, Cudworth, Osler, Clavet, and Prince Albert. I so present.

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 much potential for our northern trappers. It is a way to educate and empower our northern youth and to connect them with their culture. 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 Saskatchewan Trappers Association Co-operative maintains the traditional values of hunting, trapping, and also brings in millions of dollars to the provincial economy every year from the proceeds of fur harvesting combined with the economic spinoffs 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 Saskatchewan Trappers Association Co-operative by providing 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 Stanley Mission. I so present.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am here to present a petition concerning the need for hospice and palliative care here in Saskatchewan:

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the individuals who signed this petition are from Saskatoon and Regina. I so present.

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

Mr. Furber: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today again to present a petition in support of a potash royalty review because the residents of Saskatchewan are owners of a 1,000-year supply of this strategic resource and that those owners deserve to receive the maximum benefit of that resource. Mr. Speaker, additionally, the CEO [chief executive officer] of one of the major potash companies in the province said that there is a new norm for potash and for the shareholders of the potash company moving forward.

The prayer reads:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: cause the government to begin a comprehensive, transparent, and public review of Saskatchewan's potash royalty system with a view to maximizing the return from this strategic resource for its owners, the people of Saskatchewan, who wish to use those resources and additional potash royalty revenues for needed investments in health care, child care, education, affordable housing, infrastructure, and other social programs as well as public initiatives such as debt repayment.

Mr. Speaker, the names on the petition today are signed by good folks from Woleseley, Moosomin, Balcarres, Whitewood, and the city of Regina. I so present.

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

Mr. Quennell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again to present a petition signed by citizens of Saskatchewan concerned about the detrimental effect that Bill 160 would have on human rights law if enacted. The petition reads as follows:

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

Today the petition is signed by residents of Regina, Moose Jaw, Swift Current, and Saskatoon. I so present.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I rise to present petitions on behalf of concerned residents from across Saskatchewan as it relates to the mismanagement of our finances by the Sask Party. They allude to the record that includes an increasing of debt and running of deficits at times of record highs in revenues. They note that we are the only province not to comply with public sector accounting standards and out of line with the rest of Canada in doing so. They note that we've increased debt in this province under the Sask Party for three consecutive years to the tune of over \$1.3 billion and this year alone, Mr. Speaker, with a debt increase of \$548 million, Mr. Speaker. And the prayer reads as follows:

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

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

These petitions, Mr. Speaker, are signed by concerned residents

of Humboldt and Saskatoon. I so submit.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Siblings Connect Through Association of Community Living

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This morning I had the honour of attending the Saskatchewan Association for Community Living MLA breakfast here at the legislature along with many of our colleagues here in the legislature. This year's theme was about siblings between the ages of 11 and 17 who have a brother or sister with a disability. The message offered by these young people is one of inclusion and relationship building. Events and the programming provided by SACL [Saskatchewan Association of Community Living] provide helpful opportunities for young people to connect with those who understand what they are going through with a sibling with a disability.

In Adam Schaan's story in the book *Life Landscapes*, Adam writes about his brother Daniel, their experiences together, and how connective groups like SACL are important. I quote Adam:

It's a common experience that links us, something a bit different than the experience of our friends and other people who don't know someone with a disability. Regardless of our other differences like where we live, our culture, how old we are, or the education we have, we are all sharing the same bond of having a sibling with a disability.

At this morning's breakfast, a young girl mentioned how upset she gets when another child uses the R word. Mr. Speaker, there was legislation brought forward by the member from Saskatoon Centre yesterday to remove this type of hurtful language from government usage. I know all those who attended this morning's breakfast would approve.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in celebrating this wonderful event and all of these inspiring brothers and sisters who are in the gallery today, who shared their experiences with us in such a touching manner. Congratulations to Lynn Schaan, the puppeteers, and SACL for bringing us into their experience.

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

Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal Recipients

Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today Lieutenant Governor Dr. Gordon Barnhart presented nine citizens with the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal at Government House in Regina. This medal recognizes outstanding volunteer service or exceptional community involvement throughout the province.

These nine extraordinary citizens are to be celebrated for their service and leadership. Mr. Speaker, this House congratulates these nine volunteers on this well-deserved honour, and we

thank them for their remarkable contributions to our province and our communities.

The 2010 recipients of the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal are Lexie Culham from Cabri, David Delday from Kindersley, Maurice Filson from Regina, Helen Hellegards-MacFarlane from Kamsack, Krishan Kapila from Regina, Emil Leibel from Balgonie, Jean Mahoney from Regina, Betty Lou Palko from Hudson Bay, Albin Zubot from Burstall.

Mr. Speaker, recipients are selected by the Saskatchewan Honours Advisory Council from nominations submitted by the public. Including these nine new recipients, the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal has been presented to 139 outstanding individuals since 1995.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan continues to have the highest rate of volunteerism in Canada. These nine exceptional individuals should inspire us all to become more involved in our communities. Volunteerism is truly the backbone of a benevolent society where people care for each other and who work together toward the common good. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Jane Roberts Celebrates 103rd Birthday

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, on April the 14th I attended the 103rd birthday celebrations for Ms. Jane A. Roberts of Stanley Mission. The ceremonies were also attended by Prince Albert Grand Council Grand Chief Ron Michel, Vice-chief Brian Hardlotte, and along with Chief Tammy Cook-Searson of Lac La Ronge Indian Band, FSIN [Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations] Chief Guy Lonechild, and past chief of FSIN Lawrence Joseph. These and other dignitaries joined in singing "Happy Birthday" to Ms. Roberts.

Ms. Jane A. Roberts speaks and understands the Woodland Cree language only, for she never went to school. She never married, she never smoked or chewed tobacco, she never consumed alcohol. She lived a traditional Woodland Cree lifestyle for most of her life, lived off the land. Living the traditional lifestyle probably contributed to her long life. Before she was 95 years old, Mr. Speaker, Ms. Roberts was never sick nor ever saw the inside of a hospital. Due to the recent health conditions however, Mr. Speaker, she now resides at Stanley Mission Elders Haven.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in wishing a happy birthday to Ms. Jane A. Roberts, and many, many more years to come.

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

Child Abuse Prevention Month

Ms. Schriemer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. April is Child Abuse Prevention Month in Canada. Mr. Speaker, regardless of race, culture, or country, children are viewed as sacrosanct. Children are the future of our world. On the Serengeti in Africa, tribesmen greet one another by asking, how are the children?

To most of us the idea of abusing a child emotionally, physically, or sexually causes our stomachs to turn. We would rather not hear the realities of the darkness that exists on our Earth. One of the most common . . . One of my first encounters with child abuse as a police officer was attending a call where a violent fight had occurred. After defusing the situation, I found a two-year-old girl clad only in a very soiled diaper cowering and shaking in a dark corner of the basement. When I picked her up, she reminded me of a kitten that clings to you when you hold it.

Mr. Speaker, other victims include the 11-year-old girl that's sent out to be victimized by prostitution to support her mother's drug habit, the 10-year-old that is victimized online by sexual predators. Mr. Speaker, there are many organizations that work to protect our children, both volunteer organizations and professionals. Mr. Speaker, I thank them for their steadfast work. As legislators we owe it to the children of this province to protect them and to keep their rights upheld. Thank you.

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

Poetry is Dangerous Stuff

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, April is National Poetry Month in Canada and is a time when publishers, booksellers, literary organizations, libraries, schools, poets, and readers around the country band together to celebrate poetry and its vital place in Canadian culture. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, this April we lost award-winning Saskatchewan poet, arts advocate, and passionate volunteer Gary Hyland of Moose Jaw. On his website, Hyland advised young, aspiring writers to read poetry: "Poetry is dangerous stuff. It's designed to shake up your mind. Read enough of it and you will become that dangerous entity, the thinking individual."

Mr. Speaker, I will do just that. *The Work of Snow* by Gary Hyland.

Forgetting is folded into snow,
the letting go of chronicles.
In the heaping whiteness,
flake by flake, faces grow pale
the way these plains forget
trees, or the old woman
her first lover. The sights of crimes
trampled black, are cleaned.
Blood flows onto snow, fades under
glaze and wanes in May to water.
There is always a last bout of sleet
then sun and once again
she begins to garden.

Mr. Speaker, poetry and politics are about hope for the future. Let us celebrate poetry in April and all year long. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Humboldt.

Railcar Staging Facility Planned Near Lanigan

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker,

I rise today to congratulate Canpotex for their tremendous announcement to develop a new railcar maintenance and staging facility here in Saskatchewan. Construction of this facility is expected to start next month with completion around fall of 2012. Mr. Speaker, Canpotex is the exclusive international marketing agency of Saskatchewan's three potash companies which are Agrium, Mosaic, and the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan.

Canpotex operates approximately 5,000 railcars, and with these railcars, they export to terminals on the West Coast approximately 1600 kilometres away. The location of this facility will be 12 kilometres southwest of Lanigan in the rural municipality of Osborne and will cost approximately \$55 million.

Mr. Speaker, the announcement of this facility will bring with it 20 great new permanent jobs as well as 40 new jobs during the construction phase. Mr. Speaker, potash is a key component to the success of Saskatchewan's growing economy, contributing thousands of jobs to our province. This announcement shows that the government's potash policies are working to move the industry forward.

The Government of Saskatchewan is thrilled with Canpotex's plans to build a new railcar maintenance and staging facility by the town of Lanigan. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating Canpotex. Thank you.

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

[14:00]

Day Programs and Assisted Living Housing

Mr. Taylor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to emphasize the need for provincial support for new day programming facilities for people with intellectual and physical challenges in The Battlefords.

A proposal put together jointly by the Battlefords Trade and Education Centre and the Battlefords Residential Services Inc. when fully implemented would see a single facility become the home to two day programs and the development of much-needed additional assisted living housing.

Mr. Speaker, currently BTEC [Battlefords Trade and Education Centre] operates its day programming out of the old Armoury Building built almost 100 years ago in 1912. Additional programming is done at the Vida McDonald Centre which opened in 1981, and neither facility fully supports the needs of BTEC clients. BRSI [Battlefords Residential Services Inc.] operates its day program out of Innovation House, one of the organization's residential homes in the city.

The joint study suggests a new building could be built to better meet the needs of both operating day programs, and Innovation House could be renovated or replaced to provide additional housing to meet BRSI client needs. The joint study is extensive. There was considerable consultation throughout The Battlefords with families, agencies, and supportive organizations.

Mr. Speaker, the community is watching closely for provincial recognition that these programs are beneficial, have value, and deserve to move forward at this time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Security of Health Information

Mr. Yates: — Last month thousands of health files were found in a Regina dumpster, Mr. Speaker. People's private medical information was on display for anybody who wanted to look at it, Mr. Speaker. Now we find out from the Privacy Commissioner that there have been four similar breaches in the last month, Mr. Speaker. The Government of Saskatchewan has a responsibility to protect the private health information of Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker. They are failing, Mr. Speaker, when there have been five breaches in less than one month.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: what is he doing to protect people's private health information from these abuses?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this situation is absolutely unacceptable. I said that the last time we saw a breach. It's absolutely unacceptable, Mr. Speaker. We have been working closely with the College of Physicians and Surgeons, with the Saskatchewan Medical Association to make sure that this doesn't continue on.

Mr. Speaker, the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner has sent a letter to all trustees to make sure that they understand the legislation, they understand the penalties, Mr. Speaker. I myself have sent a letter through the SMA [Saskatchewan Medical Association] to all physicians, Mr. Speaker, to make sure they know the magnitude of this offence . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. The minister is trying to respond to the question that was presented. Allow the minister to give his answer.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, I've sent a letter to the SMA and to all physicians to make sure that they know the magnitude of this offence. Mr. Speaker, investigations are ongoing into these breaches. Mr. Speaker, we want to get to the bottom of it. We want to find the trustee that breached this legislation. The legislation is very clear, Mr. Speaker, and once we are able to determine who would be responsible, the corrective measures, the corrective penalties will be enforced, Mr. Speaker. First we have to find the guilty party and, Mr. Speaker, measures will be taken.

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

Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, less than a month ago, we had this

minister say the exact same answer in this Assembly. And since he so eloquently told everybody they couldn't do it, we've have four more breaches, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, words are not good enough. The words of this minister have not stopped the breaches, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Privacy Commissioner has said, and I quote, "It's important that there be serious consequences for those who breach the Act." There needs to be more than words, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister tell us what his government is doing to prevent this from ever happening again in the province of Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, first of all we want to ensure and make sure that all trustees that are in possession of personal medical records understand the legislation and understand the proper disposal of personal information. Obviously that hasn't been the case. There have been breaches, Mr. Speaker. Because of those breaches, we are investigating, and if and when we find the guilty party that breached the legislation, corrective punishment will be taken, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, they holler from the other side, if and when. Breaches took place under that government and not a charge was ever laid, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when we find the guilty party, Mr. Speaker, corrective measures will be taken.

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

Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, the real problem is this government doesn't back up the concerns they indicate are important. A month ago or less than a month ago, Mr. Speaker, the Premier said that it was totally unacceptable for people to face up to 100 per cent rent increases. What did he do? He had the power to do something. He did nothing.

A month ago, Mr. Speaker, a month ago, Mr. Speaker, we heard from this very minister that it was totally unacceptable for people's health files to be dealt with in this manner. Mr. Speaker, what's he done? Since then, there've been four more breaches. Mr. Speaker, why is the minister not willing to take the steps necessary to ensure the protection of people's personal health information in this province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, there are really two issues here. First of all, we want to make sure that all trustees that are in possession of personal information, health information, Mr. Speaker, know the legislation. Mr. Speaker, they need to understand the legislation. That's why the Privacy Commissioner has sent a letter, and that's why we, through the Ministry of Health, as the Minister of Health, have sent a letter, Mr. Speaker. We need to make sure they understand the legislation. If they breach that legislation, they also need to know the punishments that lay in front of them. Mr. Speaker, that is clearly defined in both the Privacy Commissioner and my letter, Mr. Speaker.

I find it curious though, Mr. Speaker, they're so inflamed about

these breaches now. When they were in government, the same breaches happened, and not one charge laid under that government, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as I said in my last answer, we are doing everything in our power to get to the bottom of this, including the last one that happened on budget day, when the member opposite was inside the dumpster himself handling the evidence, Mr. Speaker. How concerned was he at that point, Mr. Speaker? We'll get to the bottom of this and, Mr. Speaker, when we find the guilty party, Mr. Speaker, punishment will be laid.

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

Mr. Yates: — Yes, Mr. Speaker, I was helping the Privacy Commissioner clean up their mess. But, Mr. Speaker, it's because the government didn't respond when they were called, Mr. Speaker. They didn't respond.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite can talk about they'll do everything they can to deal with this issue. The Privacy Commissioner has asked many times for additional funding for his office, Mr. Speaker. The Privacy Commissioner's asked for additional funding. It hasn't got it from this government, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there needs to be adequate funding. Mr. Speaker, there needs to be adequate resources put in place, and there needs to be penalties, Mr. Speaker, for those who violate these rules.

Mr. Speaker, this government is long on talk and short on doing anything about it, Mr. Speaker. Will the government commit today for additional resources for the Office of the Privacy Commissioner, Mr. Speaker? And will they commit to prosecute those who are responsible for these violations of these breaches?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, the sense of outrage that we all felt when we saw the member opposite from Dewdney climbing in and out of a dumpster was something that was felt all away across the province. Absolutely unacceptable to have members of the public, members of the legislature climbing in and out, handling people's most confidential files. Mr. Speaker, something that was absolutely unacceptable. Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that we have on a term basis, supplied to the Privacy Commissioner two extra term positions . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, the practice of this government is to take this type of thing serious. Nothing happened when those members are in opposition. In addition to the two members that we have, two additional people that we have provided for that office, we have in addition to that made an arrangement through the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Health to ensure that investigative and prosecutorial resources are supplied.

It is absolutely unacceptable to have this type of thing take place. The fines for this involve periods of incarceration and fines that are in the tens of thousands of dollars, Mr. Speaker. Under their administration, there was never a prosecution. We will ensure that where a prosecution is appropriate, that a prosecution will take place.

But the sense of outrage that the public felt when they saw the member opposite climbing in and out of a dumpster is something that is shared by each and every member in this House, Mr. Speaker. We will continue to ensure that we take every adequate and appropriate step.

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

Coverage for Dental Surgery

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Charlene Sullivan is in the gallery today looking for the help that the Minister of Health promised her a year ago. She's unable to wear any type of dentures due to multiple allergies. According to her dentist, "The only treatment possible to restore masticular function is implant-retained prosthesis."

In 2009 I wrote the minister on Charlene's behalf. I raised the issue in the House with the Premier on March 24th, 2010 and my colleague raised it again May 11th, 2010 to the minister. Correspondence, questions in the House, and a subsequent meeting in the minister's office led to the minister promising Charlene to change the dental policy so Charlene and others would get the coverage and surgery needed.

To the Minister of Health: when will you honour your promise to Charlene and cover the dental surgery she so desperately needs?

The Speaker: — I just ask the member to direct the questions through the Chair. I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm aware of the case that the member opposite mentioned. In fact I did meet with that person and the individual in my office. We looked at the dental implant program, what we cover through the Ministry of Health. There were some adjustments made, Mr. Speaker. Those adjustments came into force. We looked at, you know, what was done in other provinces. We feel that we're positioned very well when we compare it to other provinces, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, these changes were never made under a previous government. We've made the changes to compensate those, Mr. Speaker, that have had surgery done. And in the case, the one that I remember, was due to cancer, and implants were covered in that case, Mr. Speaker. So we have changed the policy to suit those individuals, Mr. Speaker. It falls in line with other provinces.

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

Mr. Trew: — Mr. Speaker, on July 16th, 2010, Charlene received a letter from the minister explaining the minister's

decision to cover the dental implants in exceptional circumstances. The letter described what was needed for coverage and how to apply for the coverage.

Mr. Speaker, Charlene was so sure she was getting her needed dental surgery, she wrote thank you letters — one to the minister and one to me. Mine says, “I don’t have my implants yet, but I’m on the list!!” Two exclamation marks behind it, Mr. Speaker. The minister promised in his own office in front of witnesses, plural, and again in a letter to Charlene to pay for the dental implant surgery. To the minister: when will you honour your promise to Charlene?

[14:15]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, we changed the policy to cover certain categories, certain circumstances, Mr. Speaker. We also knew that it didn’t cover all, Mr. Speaker. It didn’t cover all as far as there are many different examples of why people would need dental implants, Mr. Speaker, and we realized that the changes that we made would not cover all of those circumstances. But what we did do was look at what is covered in other provinces. We’ve strengthened the policy that the Ministry of Health works under. We’ve strengthened it severely, Mr. Speaker, compared to what was left under the NDP [New Democratic Party] government, Mr. Speaker.

I understand that for some of them, it’s not good enough. We’ve improved it, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in this particular case, I’m not familiar right now with all the particulars, Mr. Speaker. I do remember meeting with them. We’ll look into the case again, Mr. Speaker, but we have changed the policy to make it far more inclusive than any policy ever was under the NDP.

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

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So my question to the minister is, why would he on May 11th, in his own office in front of witnesses, promise Charlene Sullivan she would get her coverage for her dental surgery? And why would one of his staff members call Charlene on June 24th, in her house, excited because Charlene was going to qualify under the new policy? Why did the minister lie to Charlene Sullivan?

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. The member is well aware of the rules, long-standing rules, and I ask the member to withdraw that comment about the minister lying and apologize to the Assembly.

I ask the member to withdraw and apologize. I ask the member to, final time, to withdraw and apologize. I recognize the member from Regina Coronation Park.

Mr. Trew: — Mr. Speaker, when Charlene Sullivan gets her surgery . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. I ask the member to

withdraw the comment and apologize. I ask the member to withdraw and apologize.

I name you, Kim Trew, and ask you to leave.

Next question. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Eastview.

Provision of Health Care

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The people in Kamsack and area are angry. They want answers and they want them now. They’re being told that they are losing their emergency room, their emergency room services and in-patient services. Mr. Speaker, they’re being told it’s “a temporary service interruption” that is supposedly going to last only six months until September. But, Mr. Speaker, we are already being told that beds, equipment, and staff are soon to be moved out of the hospital.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: will he guarantee today that emergency room services and in-patient services will be back in the Kamsack Hospital?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we’re certainly aware of the situation in Kamsack. It definitely concerns us. We have been talking with the Sunrise Health Region, Mr. Speaker. The Sunrise Health Region has been talking to the community of Kamsack. Mr. Speaker, we have, we know that . . .

[Interjections]

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

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, we know that there are a couple of positions that have been recruited that will be here in the fall, Mr. Speaker. In the interim, the health region is working very closely with the community and the SMA to try and have locums that will be there sooner so that the service can be up and running sooner, Mr. Speaker.

But I can guarantee you that this facility is important within the Sunrise Health Region, within this province. When the physicians are, Mr. Speaker, brought on board, the services, emergency services, in-patient services will be restored.

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

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, Albert Konowalchuk, his wife Cheryl, and their son Edward are here in the Assembly today because they want answers from the minister and the Premier. They want to know what’s going to happen to their hospital. Mr. Speaker, Edward has acquired brain injury and is on a number of medications. He needs access to a hospital and a doctor on a regular basis. Mr. Speaker, to the minister: what does he have to say to the Konowalchuks? Where are they supposed to take Edward when he needs health care now?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, as I said, we're working hard to make sure that we have the proper complements across this province and in Kamsack as well. In the interim, when the locum is trying to be recruited into that area, Mr. Speaker, it is the responsibility for the health region to look at where services can be provided in other jurisdictions. Mr. Speaker, they checked into Canora, also into Yorkton, Mr. Speaker, so those services that members around the Kamsack area need will be provided, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, but it seems awfully curious that the members opposite are so concerned about the Kamsack closure when in 2001; 2005, December 6th; January 2007; 2006, June 5th, 2006; November 9th, 2006; December 6th, 2006; and March 1st, 2007, all under their watch, services were discontinued, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Junor: — So, Mr. Speaker, that exempts the minister from taking responsibility for what's happening today in Kamsack? Nobody is listening to that, Mr. Speaker. They want to know what he's going to do now for Kamsack. The people in the audience, they want to know now.

And the Kamsack Hospital doesn't just serve the people of Kamsack. It looks after people from the First Nations reserves of Cote, Keeseekoose, Key First Nation, and as many as 4,000 campers that go to the Duck Mountain Provincial Park through the summer. It's the responsibility of the government to assure that these people have access to quality and timely health care, and the government is failing to do that.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: how can he give a \$71,000 raise to the CEO of Regina Health Region, \$100,000 raise to the Saskatoon Region Health CEO, and a 60 per cent raise to the Prince Albert CEO and look the people of Kamsack in the eye and say, I can't do anything for you?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, we're working closely with all the health regions around this province. That's why we've increased their funding by \$250 million in this past budget, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that is a far cry, when that member herself put out a press release, so proud of the fact that only 25 health regions were running a deficit, Mr. Speaker. That's their record.

Mr. Speaker, our record is increased medical seats. Our record is increased residency positions . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I'd ask the members to allow the minister to respond to the question they've asked. I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, our record is increased medical students. It's increased residency positions, Mr.

Speaker. And in three years of this government, it's increased the amount of doctors in this province by 228. I'll put that record up against any year of the NDP, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'll even put it up against the year that they closed the hospitals in Invermay, Norquay, and Langenburg, Mr. Speaker. That's the record of the NDP.

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

Tendering of Government Contracts

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Education admitted last night that the Sask Party government delivered a contract for modular units to a business in the Premier's own riding. This \$4.4 million contract was not properly tendered. The Sask Party put out a tender for some child care modular units and received some bids. But then they changed the project significantly, and they did not tender the new project. Businesses who didn't bid on the original project for a variety of reasons are upset that they didn't get a chance to bid on the new project.

To the minister: why did the government just hand over a \$4.4 million contract to the Swift Current company?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, we're quite excited that our province is growing. And with that growth quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, is more families coming to our province. And we are seeing more students in our province, which is quite exciting particularly in specific communities. As well, Mr. Speaker, we're trying to backfill a huge infrastructure problem that we have within our province as well as trying to backfill the lack of daycare spaces.

With all that in mind, Mr. Speaker, we decided to try innovation instead of procrastination, which is what we saw under the NDP, Mr. Speaker. And there was a tender put out for modular units. There were four bids that came in, Mr. Speaker, and Modus, which is an Alberta company that happens to have a manufacturer in Swift Current, was the winner of that bid, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, innovation does not equal the absence of accountability and the absence of transparency, and that's what we've seen under this government. Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Education has never sole sourced a contract before, and the minister admitted last night that they probably never will again. This was a special one-off deal for a Swift Current company.

An official admitted in committee last night: "We are currently in a process of looking at the Modus relocatables to assess the appropriateness of them." Surely the appropriateness of the modular unit should have been assessed before dumping 4.4 million into this untendered contract. Had the minister actually done her homework and talked to school boards, she would have learned that these particular modular units cost at least

\$75,000 more per unit. Mr. Speaker, overpaying for 31 units by \$75,000 is a waste of over 2.3 million taxpayers' dollars.

To the minister: why did they deliver an untendered contract to this company without assessing the appropriateness of the modular units, especially when those units are so much more expensive for school boards and the public?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, I know the member opposite wants to continue to say it was untendered. We have the names. He's aware of the other bids, the bidders' names, so he knows . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Now another member chanted it was for child daycare. Child daycare or instructional space is interchangeable, Mr. Speaker. So some use it for child daycare. Some use the units for instructional space. It's interchangeable, Mr. Speaker. These units service both for the schools.

Mr. Speaker, yes there is question that we have right now that they may be about 75,000 more expensive than some of the contractors that are building relocatable units. But the issue that we had at the time and decisions that school divisions were able to make was in expediency. One of these units can be ready within 21 to 30 days.

There is issues out there. We know that there are shortages in trades. There has been many situations where it's been difficult to find the tradespeople for different infrastructure projects around our province. This was ready within 21 to 30 days, Mr. Speaker. They could have the classroom. So expediency was extremely important when we looked at this project.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, they changed the parameters and the scope of the project, and there should have been a new tender. And the minister knows it. It's interesting that the Sask Party government can't deliver a new education funding formula, it refuses to deliver a fair offer to teachers, but it sure knows how to deliver untendered contracts.

After the mess of the 1980s, changes were made to make the tendering process transparent and accountable, but apparently the government has forgotten all of those lessons. The reality is that school boards can purchase modular units for a lot less than these units cost, but the Sask Party government pressed ahead and delivered a \$4.4 million contract that was not properly tendered. No wonder many school boards and construction companies are frustrated by this deal in Swift Current.

To the minister: what does she have to say to the companies that didn't get a chance to bid on the actual project that went ahead, and what does she have to say to school boards that have seen their costs increase substantially because of this special one-off deal?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, I'm going to repeat once again: it was tendered. He is well aware of the number, or the

companies, that put a bid on that tender. I will also repeat yet again, the units are interchangeable, Mr. Speaker. Some are being used for pre-K [pre-kindergarten] space, some are being used for child care space, and some are being used for instructional space, Mr. Speaker.

School divisions had a choice. There was a school division that did not want to use this type of unit for their relocatables and they took the alternative. Mr. Speaker, we gave the school divisions that choice. We also gave them this option if they were under pressure that they needed something immediately because this was ready in 21 to 30 days.

[14:30]

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 172 — *The Victims of Crime Amendment Act, 2011/Loi de 2011 modifiant la Loi de 1995 sur les victimes d'actes criminels*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 172, *The Victims of Crime Amendment Act, 2011* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Justice has moved first reading of Bill 172, *The Victims of Crime Amendment Act, 2011*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — When shall the Bill be considered a second time? I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice

Mr. Michelson: — Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice to report Bill No. 153, *The Provincial Court Amendment Act, 2010* without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall the Bill be considered in Committee of the Whole? I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I request leave to waive

consideration in Committee of the Whole on this Bill, and that the Bill be now read the third time.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Justice has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 153, *The Provincial Court Amendment Act, 2010* without amendment and that the Bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. The minister may proceed to third reading.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 153 — *The Provincial Court Amendment Act, 2010*

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I move that this Bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 153, *The Provincial Court Amendment Act, 2010* without amendment be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice

Mr. Michelson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm instructed by the Standing Committee of Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice to report Bill No. 154, *The Provincial Court Consequential Amendment Act, 2010*. This is a bilingual Bill to be passed without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall the Bill be considered in Committee of the Whole? I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this Bill and the Bill be now read the third time.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Justice has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 154, *The Provincial Court Consequential Amendment Act, 2010*

without amendment and that the Bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. The minister may move third reading.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 154 — *The Provincial Court Consequential Amendment Act, 2010/Loi de 2010 portant modification corrélative à la loi intitulée The Provincial Court Amendment Act, 2010*

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — I move that this Bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 154, *The Provincial Court Consequential Amendment Act, 2010* without amendment be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice

Mr. Michelson: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice to report Bill No. 165, *The Adult Guardianship and Co-decision-making Amendment Act, 2011* without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall the Bill be considered in Committee of the Whole? I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this Bill and the Bill be now read the third time.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Justice has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 165, *The Adult Guardianship and Co-decision-making Amendment Act, 2011* without amendment. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. The minister may proceed to third reading.

THIRD READINGS

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — I move that this Bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 165, *The Adult Guardianship and Co-decision-making Amendment Act, 2011* without amendment be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice

Mr. Michelson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice to report Bill No. 164, *The Police Amendment Act, 2011* with amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall this Bill be considered in Committee of the Whole?

I recognize the Minister Responsible for Corrections, Public Safety and Policing.

Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert: — Mr. Speaker, I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this Bill and that the Bill and its amendments be now read the third time.

The Speaker: — Order. The Minister Responsible for Corrections has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 164, *The Police Amendment Act, 2011* with amendment, and that the Bill and its amendments be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — When shall the amendments be read a first time? I recognize the minister.

FIRST AND SECOND READINGS OF AMENDMENTS

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

Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert: — Mr. Speaker, I move that the amendments be now read a first and second time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister Responsible for Corrections that the amendments be now read a first and second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — First and second reading of the amendments.

The Speaker: — The minister may now proceed to move third reading.

THIRD READINGS

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

Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert: — Mr. Speaker, I move that this Bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister Responsible for Corrections, Public Safety and Policing that Bill No. 164, *The Police Amendment Act, 2011* with amendment be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 170 — *The Corporation Capital Tax Amendment Act, 2011*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of *The Corporation Capital Tax Amendment Act, 2011*.

Mr. Speaker, this government is introducing an amendment to

The Corporation Capital Tax Act to introduce a new bracketed rate structure for small financial institutions in Saskatchewan.

The province has reviewed the impact of small financial institutions exceeding the current lower tax rate threshold of \$1.5 billion in taxable capital and the significant increase in tax payable that results from crossing over the threshold and becoming subject to the higher rate of tax on their entire amount of taxable capital.

The introduction of a new bracketed tax structure for small financial institutions will allow them to continue to expand and provide quality financial services without being unfairly penalized as a result of crossing over the \$1.5 billion threshold. With this change, small financial institutions will continue to be subject to the lower tax rate of 0.7 per cent on the first 1.5 billion of their taxable capital and will be subject to the higher rate of 3.25 per cent only on their taxable capital in excess of \$1.5 billion.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of *The Corporation Capital Tax Amendment Act, 2011*.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Finance has moved second reading of Bill No. 170, *The Corporation Capital Tax Amendment Act, 2011*. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the Minister of Finance that *The Corporation Capital Tax Amendment Act, 2011* be now read the second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. To which committee does this Bill . . . Oh, pardon me.

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

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — To the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

The Speaker: — The Bill stands referred to the Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

Bill No. 171 — *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2011 (No. 2)*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and move second reading of Bill No. 171, *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2011 (No. 2)*.

Mr. Speaker, in the fall of 2008, our government delivered the largest personal income tax cut in Saskatchewan history. We raised the basic and spousal personal tax exemptions by \$4,000.

We raised the exemption for dependent children by \$2,000, and we introduced the Saskatchewan low-income tax credit to ensure that lower and moderate income individuals and families share in Saskatchewan's economic prosperity. These measures provide almost \$300 million in annual tax savings to Saskatchewan residents, and remove 92,000 Saskatchewan residents from the provincial income tax roll.

Mr. Speaker, our government is building on these income tax reductions in the 2011-12 budget. We are increasing the basic and spousal exemptions by another \$1,000 effective January 1, 2011, and we are increasing the exemption for dependent children by \$500 to \$5,514 per child, also effective January 1, 2011. When you combine these increases with the Saskatchewan low-income tax credit, Mr. Speaker, a family of four in Saskatchewan will not pay tax on their first \$45,550 of combined income. That's the highest income threshold in Canada. In other words, Mr. Speaker, in other words, Mr. Speaker, that family can now earn more tax-free income in Saskatchewan than any place in Canada. This tax reduction, together with the previous reductions introduced by our government, means that a family of four with \$50,000 income will save \$2,447 in income taxes this year, Mr. Speaker.

It also means, Mr. Speaker, that a further annual income tax savings of \$60 million for Saskatchewan residents and another 22,000 people coming off the income tax roll. In four years, Mr. Speaker, we have eliminated provincial income tax for approximately 114,000 Saskatchewan residents. Mr. Speaker, the income tax reduction measures undertaken by our government since 2007 have reduced Saskatchewan income taxes by \$420 million annually.

Mr. Speaker, the budget also announced that the small-business corporate income tax rate is being cut more than half from 4.5 per cent to 2 per cent effective July 1st, 2011. This tax reduction will provide Saskatchewan small businesses with \$80 million in annual tax savings and gives them the third lowest rate in the country and the lowest in the new West. Mr. Speaker, we believe this improvement in the tax competitiveness of our small-business sector makes Saskatchewan the best place in Canada to start a new business or expand an existing business.

In conjunction with the reduction to the small-business tax rate, the budget announced that Saskatchewan's dividend tax credit rate for dividends from small businesses is also being reduced to maintain integration between the corporate and personal income tax systems. The current rate of 6 per cent will be reduced to 5 per cent for 2011 taxation year and to 4 per cent for 2012 and subsequent taxation years.

There are three additional amendments in the Bill that are more technical in nature. First, the newly legislated amounts for the personal income tax exemptions will apply for the 2011 taxation year. The indexation provisions of the Act are being amended to prevent these amounts from being indexed for 2011 and then to reapply indexation starting in 2012.

The remaining two amendments are technical clarifications that have been requested by the Canada Revenue Agency.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to move second reading of *An Act to*

amend The Income Tax Act.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Finance has moved second reading of Bill No. 171, *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2011* (No. 2). Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — To the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

The Speaker: — The Bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

[14:45]

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 167

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Reiter that **Bill No. 167** — *The Saskatchewan Grain Car Corporation Amendment Act, 2011* be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Quennell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to address *The Saskatchewan Grain Car Corporation Act*, the Bill No. 167. And, Mr. Speaker, it's a fairly short Bill, Mr. Speaker, and if one looks at the second reading speech of the minister that introduced it, a Bill that almost has no practical effect whatsoever, but it's generally supportive of shortline railways.

And the reason I say that, Mr. Speaker, and I don't think there's anything particularly controversial about support for shortline railways in this Assembly or within the province of Saskatchewan, but the reason that I say that about the minister's second reading speech and I tend, Mr. Speaker, to take second reading speeches fairly seriously, and in some cases I think more seriously than the ministers that give them. But the speech . . . As a matter of fact at one point — and I don't mean to comment on a Speaker's order; I don't think I am — but at one point the Speaker seems to be under the impression that it's a ministerial statement, and that was an understandable impression for the Speaker to have at the time because it certainly sounded like a ministerial statement and less like a

second reading speech.

The minister outlined that the Bill would give the Saskatchewan Grain Car Corporation the legislative authority to undertake shortline sustainability grant program, develop other initiatives in the future, and better position the corporation to respond to the needs of rural Saskatchewan, broadening the authority of the grain car commission and allowing it to be more active in assisting the shortline rail industry in the province. And after that, the minister doesn't say much more except shortline rail, shortline rail.

And at the point where the Speaker's under the impression it's a ministerial statement, the minister is speaking about votes in estimates of Highways and Infrastructure, allocations for the Saskatchewan grain corporation, and funding increases. And it's either at that point a budget speech or a ministerial statement, but doesn't sound very much like a second reading speech.

He proceeds after that to go on in a very ministerial-statement way that he's directed the Saskatchewan grain corporation to use its resources and expertise to look at new and innovative ways to provide assistance to the Saskatchewan shortline rail industry. We can assume that the Bill is at least partly a step in that direction, and that's what the minister says, and then talks about consulting with stakeholders.

Now this is reminiscent of other legislation that's before the House now where the government is marketing one idea, and legislation addresses something either different or, in this case, narrower than the broader marketing. In this particular case, Mr. Speaker, and I think in the other case I'm thinking of, we don't have any problem with the principles being marketed. But it's our duty to look at the legislation that's actually brought before the House and what its actual intents and effects are and whether those intents and effects are identical or similar or even coherently compatible with the broader ideas that are being marketed by the government as perhaps being the Bill, being the legislation that's being proposed, whether or not in fact there is a lot of similarity or connection between the two.

And in this respect, the minister . . . And I think this is relatively unusual for a second reading speech. We're in the second reading debate, and I'm responding, in part at least, to the minister's comments on the Bill. The minister decides to read letters that are supportive of not the Bill specifically but of the support for shortline railways.

So the implication in the second reading speech by the minister, the implication is that the Bill itself has the support of the stakeholders who provide these letters to the minister or to the ministry. And perhaps that is the case. And I would think that it probably is, Mr. Speaker. But it's not clear, at least in a couple cases. There's three letters here. In a couple cases, it's not entirely clear that the stakeholders are addressing all aspects of the Bill as much as they are addressing what they would like the government to do or they would like, put it more accurately, what results they would like to see from government action, Mr. Speaker. And that result is a greater viability for shortline railways and the beneficial effects that that could have for producers.

And certainly one of the letters is from the Saskatchewan Shortline Railway Association. And they would certainly like to see greater support for shortline railways, and any legislation that enabled them to be more financially viable they would be supportive of. And I expect they would be supportive of this Bill whether or not they were consulted specifically on the aspects of this Bill before it was introduced in the House or not.

The other correspondence is from the Association of Rural Municipalities and from the Agricultural Producers Association. And that is interesting, not because I wouldn't think the Agricultural Producers Association would not be supportive of support for the shortline railways, but that legislative support arguably is still there.

In the explanatory notes that the ministry and the minister provided along with the Bill, it's quite clear that amongst the few changes to the current legislative framework that are being made by this Bill. The first is a wording change to clarify the commodities other than agricultural products are being hauled here. So that section of the Bill or that subsection of the Bill doesn't make any difference to agricultural producers. They're already covered by the legislation. And the legislation is being expanded to cover other commodities other than agricultural products, which tends towards the general statement of intent in the Bill which is that it's for the benefit of the railway industry, Mr. Speaker.

And some of my colleagues have commented, some of my colleagues have commented on the choice of language there because it's clear that the legislation before is dealing with transportation issues confronting agricultural producers in the province. And that was why the grain corporation exists. That's why it did exist, and that's why there was a legislative regime to allow for support of shortline railway to assist agricultural producers.

Now the intent of this legislation, as set out in the Bill, is to support the railway industry with the assumption — and I guess I might discuss that in a little bit of detail — the consumption of that is good for producers and not just agricultural producers. So I guess it's a significant change in the wording but also sort of in the intent of who's being served here. And it has been seen in the past by the government who brought in the original legislation. It has been seen by the past that shortline rail industry was there to serve agricultural producers, and the legislation and the corporation were there to serve agricultural producers.

Now in part, this legislation makes an interesting change that the corporation exists not to serve agricultural producers, certainly not directly. Perhaps indirectly would be the intent of the government, but not directly. Directly, the interests that it is to be served is the railway industry, Mr. Speaker, and there's a grand history of that in this country, Mr. Speaker, a grand history of that. Arguably, arguably where our neighbour to the South was founded a revolution, perhaps re-founded by civil war, it's been the national narrative, the story of Canada, myth — not in the sense of something that's not true, but myth in something that's larger than just a mere story or mere history, Mr. Speaker — that the country of Canada was formed, at least as we know it and particularly as we know it in the West, by the railway, a railway that linked Eastern Canada with the port in

British Columbia and allowed for settlement of the Prairies and the national strategy of the first Government of Canada, the Macdonald Government of Canada, that resources from, and particularly in those days, Mr. Speaker, wheat and other grains, resources from Western Canada would feed manufacturing in Eastern Canada.

The balance has shifted, Mr. Speaker, and it's shifted because of the value of resources in part. And so although this is still a resource economy in the Western Canada, whether it's as much the servant of an eastern manufacturing economy in Eastern Canada I think is far, far more in doubt.

But it's the culture of our country, not just the history of our country, that the railway formed what Canada was to become . . . and Pierre Berton's books obviously but also Gordon Lightfoot's railway trilogy. I mean the railway is very much of what we are and what binds us together.

And even with the shifts with the end of the Crow rate, Mr. Speaker, the importance of a railway to westerners is still there. It's been an uneasy relationship, Mr. Speaker, and I'd comment on that briefly. It's been an uneasy relationship, but certainly a vital and an important one all this time. And I think, I know it was much commented on at the time when the Crow rate disappeared, and the minister comments on it in his second reading speech that one of the reasons for supporting shortline railway and the vital reasons for supporting a shortline railway is to take traffic off the highways.

And Minister of Highways and Infrastructure who introduced the Bill in the second reading speech, he's also the minister not only of Infrastructure and responsible for the Grain Car Corporation and the introducer of this Bill, but of course he's the Highways minister maybe first and foremost. And he notes in his second reading speech that the “. . . more product moving on rail [to quote the minister], that means less wear and tear on provincial highways.” And that was a significant argument by provincial governments at the time the Crowsnest rate was disappearing as to the expense that was being downloaded, again nationally and from the railway, onto the provinces. And of course, that's history, Mr. Speaker, as so much of our uneasy relationship with the railway is history.

But the story of rail transportation and particularly rail transportation for commodities is far from over as this legislation and the legislation that it amends certainly stands witness to and appreciates.

The part of the Bill that the opposition finds more problematic than the parts of the Bill that arguably only strengthen the Grain Car Corporation for the ultimate, I hope, ultimate benefit of producers in the province, whether they're agriculture producers or otherwise . . . The support for the shortline rail industry that's expressed by the minister in his second reading speech, whether that's really effectively carried out by these amendments or not is another question, but that support I don't think is controversial on this side of the House. And I don't think anything I've said suggests that it might be.

[15:00]

And the ability of the corporation to purchase assets for the

benefit of the rail industry, we're actually saying, Mr. Speaker, we do, we do wonder about the wording. That's a little bit of a concern.

People of Canada have for over 100 years done a lot for support of the rail industry, Mr. Speaker, and sometimes we felt we were getting a return for that, and sometimes we felt that we were not. And a lot of politics and divisive history goes into that relationship. But that's what our hope is and that these assets that we purchased by the Grain Car Corporation will be a benefit not just for the rail industry, although that's the wording that the government has decided to use, but for the people who are served by the railway industry and particularly by shortline railways.

There's a corresponding provision, subsection 12(e) that provides the corporation can dispose of assets acquired as a result of changes from the subsection 12(d) allowing the purchase assets . . . So if these assets are replacements, then what is being replaced can be sold, or when these assets should be sold so other assets can be purchased that better serve the corporation, they can be disposed of. So we see those as mere provisions and not necessarily controversial in themselves either.

The part of the Bill that has been problematic for the opposition, I think, if you've listened to any of my colleagues' remarks carefully, is the ability of the Grain Car Corporation to borrow money. And:

subject to any orders or directives of the Treasury Board, [that is the committee of cabinet ministers] provide financial assistance by way of grant, loan, guarantee or other similar means to persons for the purpose of allowing those persons to acquire railway rolling stock, plant, equipment or other assets that will benefit the railway industry;

Well that's, I guess, other than the sort of the broad, expansive next section, to allow the corporation to do anything necessary or conducive to meeting its objects and purposes, which is very broad and vague, I suppose it's that section that causes us the most questions, raises the most concerns, and which we will need to explore further. To a certain extent, it appears the Grain Car Corporation becomes an agency of the Treasury Board to borrow money or guarantee money.

And there's been quite a bit of debate in this Legislative Assembly recently about government guarantees and even the difficulty getting ministers to admit that they exist, and what I think one minister of the Crown called creative financing at one point. And this is problematic because it's reminiscent for many of us of the type of debt that was accumulated in different places, different ways, off the regular books by the Devine government back in the 1980s.

And the debt, although it would be the debt of, carried by the Grain Car Corporation, is not necessarily a debt for the benefit of the Grain Car Corporation. These are grants, loans, or guarantees to persons for the purpose of allowing those persons to acquire railway rolling stock.

So the Grain Car Corporation, as I read it, will be acquiring

debt, public debt, to allow, I assume, corporations because they are persons, private corporations, publicly traded corporations, to allow those persons to acquire railway rolling stock, plant, or equipment for the benefit of the railway industry. I mean if those are railway companies, then I assume it would be for their benefit to have the government loan, or the Crown corporation loan, the Grain Car Corporation loan to allow them to acquire railway rolling stock, plant, and equipment that will benefit the industry.

The opposition would have liked to see more comfort that these would be agriculture producers that would be receiving this benefit, that the language in the legislation would not be as expansive as it is both in allowing debt to accumulate and loans to accumulate, and off the operating books of the government, and also a bit more specific about who would benefit from these loans or grants.

And the whole language of the Act about benefiting the railway industry and its move from support of shortline rail lines in support of agriculture producers is all somewhat troubling. And I know that I have colleagues who have considerable more expertise and knowledge about these matters and this industry than I do who will want to enter into this debate, and to allow them to do so, Mr. Speaker, I adjourn debate.

The Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Meewasin has moved adjournment of debate on the Bill No. 167. 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 Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, to join the debate on Bill No. 155, *The Natural Resources Amendment Act* and just to, I guess, share a view. And I want to share some discussions that have taken place and concerns that may be out there.

We see this piece of legislation, and it's going to make some amendments. And any time you amend I guess a Bill, people are asking questions and want to know what exactly is going to happen.

We have a responsibility, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that we do our job and on behalf of the people that bring the concerns forward. And when legislation is brought forward, we have to make sure that we ask the right questions. We make sure as best possible that we can to ensure that their concerns and the questions they have are answered. And we have to make sure we ask these questions before this goes to committee or wherever it's going to end up as the law.

But I just want to . . . We see some of the proposed changes that

they're making to this Bill, the amendment, and there's different areas of concern and the role the advisory council will play. When you look at funds, and I think any time you're looking at dollars and you're allowing a different way, people want to make sure that, what role will this council have, or a committee? There's a lot of questions. What exactly is going to change? And I think people want to be very clear what those changes and how those changes will impact on anybody that was using this legislation I guess to cover them off to do the work, the good work that they do on behalf of the province.

But any time you make any type of a change to legislation, I think there are different agencies and people that use the legislation. They want to make sure that this legislation is taking care of what they need to be taken care of, to make sure it doesn't take away from them without consulting them; it doesn't add powers to individuals without consulting. So we've got to make sure a lot of questions will be asked. And I know we're going to get an opportunity to debate this Bill and ask questions about it and make sure we're very clear. And I think we want to be very clear on any changes we make to legislation.

And you know, *The Natural Resources Amendment Act*, a lot of people have concern right away when you even talk about that because there's so many different areas that are impacted. Land, and people will look at it that way. Will this impact land? Will it impact traditional land, treaty land, homeland of the Métis? Will it affect municipalities? Will it affect protected lands? There's a lot of different issues come into play and organizations that want to make clear that process. And will it affect farm land? Will it affect the trappers?

So there's a lot of questions, and I will go through them when we talk about this because we have to be very, very cautious. Because we've seen this government, the Sask Party government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've seen the way they're willing to change regulations without consulting First Nations, Métis. We've seen what they've done with trappers on some of the regulations and legislation that has been passed through this House, that they have not spent the time to make sure.

And you could sit there and say, oh yes, we consulted; we talked to a few people and they really like it. Well yes, because they may be benefiting from it. But to truly go back and ask the government and ask the official opposition to make sure that legislation that affects them, truly that those individuals had an opportunity to share their views, some of their stories, their ideas, and how will it impact them.

And whether they're traditional land users, whether it's regulations for hunting and fishing . . . And I have to be honest. I've had a lot of trappers and a lot of northern people very concerned when regulations are changed and when a government says, oh we consulted you; oh yes, yes, they were consulted. And you find out later, no they weren't. You may have gone out and reached to one person, but you sure did not do the process that we call consultation to First Nations and Métis when you've changed . . . and trappers, when you've changed some of the regulations. So there are concerns out there right now and I know that for a fact.

You know, we see some of the departments and the ministries

changing the regulations, and they've been given that power. When you do that and you don't consult First Nations, Métis, the trappers, whether it be farmers, whether it's citizens, whether it's workers, any time you're going to change something and the government says, oh now don't you worry; trust us, we're going to take care . . . I think alarm bells go off with many people because they've seen exactly what this government's willing to do without following the duty to consult. And that is very clear from First Nations and the Métis.

We've had large groups, we've had individuals share their concern, frustration, leaders from communities very concerned. Any time you start messing around with regulations without consulting or any changes you're going to make to protected lands, we've seen the pattern that the Sask Party government's willing to do without consulting. The pattern's there. So people aren't making this up and we don't have to fearmonger and create anything. It's the reality. People see it and they're not happy with it, and they've seen the way they've been treated.

And I'll tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they're very concerned. Any time that there is changes, they want to make sure they understand them. And they're asking their representatives to make sure they speak for them and make sure that those concerns come forward. So I go back to looking at Bill 155, *The Natural Resources Amendment Act*, and we want to make sure. We're not exactly sure what all will be changed and what amendments they're asking and who will it impact in the end. And I mean we can make word changes; we can make small adjustments to legislation. But then sometimes, I guess, in the end there may be changes to regulations that affect . . . And that process will go further and can cause a lot of grief for some individuals. Maybe for some it won't.

But I know people are very concerned, and back home they want to make sure that, whatever pieces of legislation come through here, that they want to make sure the government understands that before you change regulations that will impact First Nations, Métis, traditional land users, I know the farmers . . . There's a lot of different land users, a lot of different people who rely on legislation and rules. And I guess that's how our citizens get to, you know, to follow and know what opportunity is there for them, and it's through legislation that's passed here. And let's make it very clear: they are concerned.

And again I'm going back to this because I think it's very important, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We've seen legislation passed, protected lands, that there was quite a concern. So when I look at Bills like this, Bill 155, and you look at different Bills that have come forward, and we've had the opportunity to debate and talk, but the people really feel sometimes that their government is not hearing them, and they voice their concerns. And I know they voice their concerns to their MLAs, whether they're government or opposition.

But you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, individuals want to make sure that there's protection for them. And when you're making changes, and I mean right away you say, the natural resources amendment, people right away want to know exactly in detail, and they want to make sure what exactly are we changing. What is the proposed changes we're trying to make here?

[15:15]

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know for a fact that back home the trappers, they live off the land, they utilize the land, and when that land is . . . When we pass any legislation here that affects them, they're very concerned. And when we take, we change regulations, rules, legislation, and a government does that without consulting them, they feel offended. They feel insulted. And let me make it very clear, and I've talked on different Bills and about that.

You know, you look at the, you know, the court system and the challenges that have gone on, Supreme Court of Canada ruling has made it very clear, very clear that First Nations and Métis, the Aboriginal people must be consulted when legislation's going to be affecting them.

And I don't know if this change, and I don't see in . . . And maybe that's what needs to be tightened up, that we have to ensure that legislation affecting First Nations, Métis, any time organizations that have a legal grounds to stand on to say they're concerned about change you're going to make, that that should actually, there should be a process in place that makes sure that the trappers, the land, the people that will be impacted by any land or any policies, regulations that will affect them, that we've truly reached out. And sometimes they're minor. And sometimes, you know, legislation comes in here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we know that it's good for Saskatchewan and it's the right thing to do. And I know that we have co-operated and on both sides will co-operate. And the co-operation is fine to some point.

But sometimes there have been situations where legislation's been passed that has not been good for the people out there, whether they're First Nations, Métis, Saskatchewan residents. And oh, you think about the protected lands. You think about the human rights. You look at that legislation and some of the concerns, I mean the organizations and group that come forward, and they're very concerned about some of the changes.

So when I look at Bill 155, *The Natural Resources Amendment Act*, it's very concerning to me, and I know to individuals out there. How will this impact them? And what are the changes? And I want to make sure what comes after this when you change legislation? Will regulations be changed without consulting? And we've seen some of the changes, that some of the Bills come forward, when you look at the fine print, that all of a sudden the ministry and the minister have a lot of authority over everyone else. And that's very concerning.

So you want to look at each piece of legislation and make sure we're doing the right thing, that people, their concerns are addressed, whether it's the traditional land user, the person hunting, fishing. We know there's many people, the anglers; we look at outfitters. There's a lot of individuals that want to have their say. And they want to make sure that people that — you know, the protected lands — there's different organizations that want to make sure that we're doing all we can to protect the lands and protect the resources.

And any time you want to make amendments to that natural resources, I think people are really . . . They pay attention. And sometimes we think, oh I don't think people are paying attention. I want to let the Sask Party members over there know that yes, people pay attention. And they're looking at some of

the stuff that has gone on, you know, and different Bills — Bill 5, Bill 6, Bill 43. You look at Bill 80. You look at the human rights protection. I mean some of those Bills are very concerning to individuals, the legislation that this government is willing to pass and push through. You look at the photo ID [identification]. There's quite concerns that people have with all this.

Why are these Bills coming forward? You know, are Bills brought here, Mr. Deputy Speaker because individuals are . . . lots of concern out there and the government wants to respond. I understand that. But sometimes when you find it hard, you see that well there's nobody coming forward, not one individual, and you see a government trying to push, you start questioning yourself, and you start looking at every Bill that comes forward.

And you've got to make sure that, on behalf of the people of our province, we're doing what we need to do. We're asked to be here, and we're asked to do our best. And I think we all try to do that, and we'll work hard.

But I want to make sure, you know, any time you bring something like this, you know, and especially when you talk about the Fish and Wildlife Development Fund, here's a fund, and there's a lot of organizations I guess that maybe access that money or Saskatchewan residents benefit from the good work that they're doing, different organizations do. Nobody's questioning the good work that some of these organizations do that utilize some of the funds. I think they do a great job. They try their best. And you'll have different organizations out there that represent our province well. And they're truly ambassadors of their organizations, and they work hard.

Same with the trappers. They want to do the right thing with the land. They're truly stewards of the land. They know exactly what's going on when they're harvesting and they're trapping, they're fishing, they're hunting. That's a lifestyle, and it's a very proud lifestyle. And we had the trappers here yesterday making their voice known and making sure that their concerns and some of the challenges they're facing.

So when I look at Bills like Bill 155, and I've referred to that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's important to make sure we have discussion. But we better make sure we use comparisons to other Bills that have come forward, and some of the Bills that have had amendments, and some of the legislation that this government, the Sask Party government's willing to push through. It's concerning, and I know people are very concerned back home. They want to make sure that any type of Bill or whether its amendments, that we go through and who will it impact and how will it impact on their traditional land. How will it impact?

I guess the farmers are worried. Residents of our province who live in our municipalities are worried. How does legislation impact them? And there's so many different things and laws, and they have to trust their government and they want to trust their government. But sometimes, you know, they feel let down, and sometimes they're angry when you talk to them. Individuals feel betrayed, and they'll say, well you're not taking care of our best interests. How come, how come you pass such laws? Yet there are laws that, you know, make sense and they are there to protect individuals and Saskatchewan residents and

people who visit here.

You know the outfitters, we look at them. And there's many outfitters out there, and they try to work with the local trappers. And you know, they have to have those discussions. But if you don't consult them when you're passing legislation, yes I think you have to talk to the outfitters to make sure how are they impacted and what impact will this have. Will it have any impact on them? I don't know if anyone has done that, and sometimes I think it doesn't happen. A person gets busy, and off they go doing their legislation. So you have to wonder sometimes why this legislation's coming forward. What's the basis on it?

But then you go back to talking about the Métis. And I'll talk about them. Have they been consulted? And it isn't just the leadership. You can't write a letter and say, oh we wrote a letter to that organization and they were consulted. That is not what it is.

And I'll make it very clear. Traditional land users, people in our province, make it very clear, they were supposed to be consulted. And I'll be honest with you, the track record of the Sask Party hasn't been very good when it comes into the area of the duty to consult. And on many files I look at that and many different ones, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that hasn't been done. So when I look at Bill 155, *The Natural Resources Amendment Act*, it's very concerning.

But I also want to say we know that we're going to have an opportunity to debate this. And I know many people want to have a chance to debate it. My colleagues want to make sure they go through it, and we're going to look at it. And everybody has their different areas that they want to talk about the Bill. And some of my colleagues have brought out some good points, and some of them will bring out the good points, and we'll ask some good questions. And, you know, it makes a person think a little bit about what exactly are we trying to do here.

And sometimes they're simple little amendments, but sometimes they have great impact on other individuals in our province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And when you see those challenges happening and you see that happening, it's concerning. And individuals want just to make sure that we're asking the right questions debating the Bill, that we're making sure Saskatchewan residents, the best interests of them, is taken care of.

And I'll speak very highly for trappers. I'll speak highly for the fishermen out there. I'll speak highly for the outfitters. And I say it this way: they want to make sure that their concerns, when legislation and regulations are going to impact them, they want to make sure their voice is heard. And they want to send the message to the government: before you change legislation, regulations, consult them in a meaningful way with respect, providing them the resources they need to make sure that legislation that's impacting them that they have that opportunity and expertise to have a look at it. So using the ministries to work with them, to make sure that we're reaching out, and that is true leadership.

And you know, when I talk about leaders, we have many

leaders in our province, different organizations, and they do an excellent job speaking up for the individuals that they represent and the people that they speak for at many tables. They have issues and concerns. They want to make sure, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that all their issues are being addressed when any time we bring legislation.

But I just want to go back and kind of use an example of when we change legislation that impacts a lot of our First Nations, the Métis, our farmers. We look at outfitters. We look at municipalities. You know, a lot of legislation has been amended and new legislation that's come forward, some of it very good legislation. But we have to make sure that we're doing our job the people ask us to do, making sure their issues, their concerns are addressed.

And I want to make sure to the trappers back home and in this province — not only in northern Saskatchewan, we have trappers in southern Saskatchewan — I want to make it very clear, we have First Nations in northern Saskatchewan, lots. We have lots of First Nations in the South. Our Métis citizens in Saskatchewan, we have a lot of them living in the North and in the South. Just want to make it very clear, we as residents want to have a province to be proud of. We want legislation that takes care of us, protects us, protects our children, our grandchildren. We want to make sure that whatever legislation comes forward that it has a purpose and the right purpose, that it isn't used as a tool to inflict any type of demands, pressure on individuals.

And we have to make sure that as an opposition, and I take that very serious and I know my colleagues who have spoke on this floor take it very serious, the role that we play, holding that Sask Party government accountable for the legislation that they're bringing forward, for the job they're doing. They're in power; they're there. Yes, I understand that. But we will hold them to account. The people have asked us to do that. And that's why we're called the official opposition, to make sure that we do the right job to hold them accountable because the Saskatchewan citizens expect nothing less than that, to hold this government accountable. And we will do that.

You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I look at some of the other areas of these amendments that, you know, they're proposing. They look fine. There may be some word changes. They're going to, you know, change some of the actual I guess definitions, and we'll see where the definitions are changed. But you know, overall we want to make sure that any impact that this legislation will have, 155, the natural resource amendment . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh, we talked about that. That's very, very clear. And that's a good point.

That duty to consult is very important, like I said earlier. And I guess I want to reflect on that. The Supreme Court of Canada made it very clear, very clear that First Nations and Métis must, must — didn't say may — must be consulted, have to be consulted. You shouldn't be doing any legislation impacting their rights, traditional rights of Aboriginal people of Canada. So that protection is there. And I want to stress that very clearly because I think sometimes it's not taking . . . Or maybe it is taken for granted and it shouldn't be. That's very clear. That was a very clear ruling. I believe it was a unanimous decision about human rights and protection of Aboriginal people, the

duty to consult and accommodate.

So when you look at that type of ruling, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's very clear. And I have to be honest, I think the government of the day has not always honoured that, and I think will be held and the voters will hold them to account for that. And I think the voters have to hold them to account to that.

And you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know I could go on and showing examples of other Bills that we have passed and you know, the human rights one, Bill, that's coming forward and we're debating it. And it's bringing forward by this government, you sometimes wonder where did it come from?

And you know, and I'm shocked that the Justice minister would bring such a Bill forward, that you know, you take legislation or you take the tribunal that was there and that process and how it worked. And I think there was things that they could have done to adjust, to adjust that and to make it easier and maybe to speed the system up. But a government chose not to look at other options. It just brings forward one way — this is what we want. Because I think at the end of the day, they didn't like some of the rulings the tribunal brought forward that found in favour of certain individuals. So I have to . . .

And I think people are wondering why. And when you see, you know, the Amnesty International, and you see different organizations making comments about these type of Bills and changes, that we're going backwards. It's pretty sad and you see a government pushing ahead with it. So people are very cautious, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Bill 155, *The Natural Resources Amendment Act*, and I just use that as an example, people are very concerned. So if you're willing to deal with human rights, what else is in this Bill?

[15:30]

And I know we're going to go through it and people will go through it and my colleagues will go through it word for word, sentence for sentence. And we'll make sure, and we're going to do our job. We're going to make sure we talk this thing right through and you know, we'll debate it well. We'll make sure that we uncover everything. And we use examples, and like I said, the human rights one, to see that legislation. The Bill for photo ID, look at the different Bills that are brought forward. And you know, it's pretty sad to see. There's a government, and I think a government that's scared of the people, so it wants to take away some of the powers from the people. And I think that's a sad day when you see a government trying to take away the power of the people.

So we live in a democratic society where people have fought and my grandfather, you know, fought. He gave up a lot for the democratic process that I can have and my grandkids can have and his grandkids will have, his great . . . He did an honour, his brothers did that honour, many people have done that honour. And to see some of the things going on that this current government has brought forward, it's a shameful and it's a pretty sad day for some of the legislation that's coming through here.

So when I talk about Bill 155, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to be very clear. We want to make sure we go through every little

sentence, wording, and I know my colleagues and myself would do that. I know people out there watching want to make sure we're doing our job and, you know, we will. We'll make sure that we ask the questions. We'll make sure that we ask the questions. And at the end of the day, hopefully we have uncovered anything that may be of concern to Saskatchewan residents, to First Nations, the Métis, to the outfitters, to the farmers, to our trappers, to our fishermen.

The fishers out there want to make sure their voice . . . and they want to see things changing. And they've seen some of the stuff that this current government has done, has not been in the best interests of the fishers, has not been in the best, I guess, benefit for them as an industry. We see some of the promises and the commitments, and then we see that turn away and we see hope. And then we see the hope lost, all because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government decides to pick winners and losers. And that's a sad day for some of the industries out there. When a government gets to pick winners and loser, who benefits? Their friends.

So I mean this legislation, we're not sure how it will impact, but I'll tell you, Bill 155, *The Natural Resources Amendment Act* may have some huge impact on Saskatchewan residents, may not. But we're going to make sure we debate it. We're going to make sure we ask the questions, and we're going to show the people that we've done our work on this side, holding that Sask Party government account.

So at this time, I know other individuals, my colleagues, would like to speak on the Bill, and there'll be more wanting to bring their information forward, and they'll have questions on it. So at this time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm prepared to adjourn debate.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 161

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

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I rise today to make a few comments on the Bill No. 161, *The Election Amendment Act, 2010*.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is an important, important Bill that is before us in the legislature. This Bill is about the right to vote, right to vote, have a democratic vote — the type of vote that impacts directly on us in our daily lives and is fundamental to our society, to the people here in Saskatchewan. It is a right that we have fought for, that many people in fact have, through

wars, died for, and it is important to all of us, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we get something so crucial as voting that we get that right.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Bill was introduced by the Minister of Justice. And just to quote some of the things that he was saying and which I thought I would bring forward here, because I was not too sure in his choice of words when he said that he did not think, as he puts it, the minister did not think that this would disenfranchise voters. Then he went on to say, if you plan your affairs, you should have no difficulty in voting. This, Mr. Deputy Speaker, almost sounded like a funeral to me, that somehow you had to plan your affairs before you would have to vote. He went on to say, but if you think you're going to go out at five minutes before election time without anything, you're not likely going to be able to vote.

Now perhaps that wasn't, he didn't really put a lot of thought into those words. But if you look at the way we vote in Saskatchewan, many times I've gone — prior to being in this Assembly, whether it be in the federal or in the provincial elections — and went to my polling station, walked in, they had my name. I said who I was. I got a ballot, Mr. Deputy Speaker, went, and I voted. And many people, many people that is the standard. That is what they understand when it comes to voting, and they would go and vote.

And this Bill about bringing in photo ID and in terms of the way the minister has laid it out — of what we would now have to be putting our affairs in order before we go to vote — is of concern, is of concern not only to me but to the opposition in the legislature here, that he simply says that this will not disenfranchise voters, I'm not so certain, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

For example if anyone was to go — thinking that they have the same, that had voted perhaps for any number of years, perhaps 20 years or more that they voted a certain way, gone to the same polling station — go in there and then find that, well, they didn't bring their wallet or they didn't bring some ID or perhaps they don't have the ID or they didn't need the ID before . . . Perhaps there was some reason why they came at 10 minutes before the closing of the poll, and now they would not be able to vote.

Now this is of concern because anything that does not allow people to vote, I believe, would be undemocratic. Also when you say it . . . I'm not sure. Perhaps the minister would not say it in the same way, would use different words. But to say if you plan your affairs you should have no difficulty in voting — and this is sort of a huge thing that one must undertake before going to the polling station — somehow does not sort of conform with ideas of going in and exercising your right to vote.

It is your right. It is the citizen's right, not the government's right. This is the citizen's right to go and vote and not the government to try and make it more difficult or to work with disenfranchising the right to vote.

Now this would be not . . . There are more things around this, more things with this minister in terms of the Bill 160, for example. This minister has brought in the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code amendment, saying that this will also make things easier, that this will also be good, that it'll allow

for a smooth system, for people to bring their concerns before the human rights board and the commissioner and that this would allow for a smoother system to dealing with issues or cases that people have. Again the minister here said that he was trying to make the system run more efficiently, more smoothly. But we are finding and we are hearing from concerned people that in fact they did not understand what the minister was bringing forward in Bill 160. They are very concerned as to what they were told about how Bill 160 would assist them and now what, in terms of the law, upon closer inspection of what Bill 160 actually says.

So isn't it kind of interesting, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we now have this same minister putting forward or talking about a Bill, Bill 161, *The Election Amendment Act*, and saying that in fact this is for efficiency, that it is time that we move ahead. Again are we moving ahead, or what are we doing?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are in the midst of a federal election in our country, and one of the things that has arisen because . . . We have had concerns in terms of people voting in not only, you know, in our provincial but in our federal elections. And one of the things that has occurred in the federal election is vote mobs. And so there is an article on "Vote mobs' shake up election", and this one was posted on April 6th by Amber Hildebrandt, the CBC [Canadian Broadcast Corporation] news. And basically if I may, Mr. Deputy Speaker, just read in from the article here:

Students insist the "vote mobs" are strictly non-partisan and are not intended as protest. Instead, the goal is to counter a belief that youth are not politically engaged — and to make politicians take notice of their young constituents.

It goes on to say:

"We're using this as our platform to say: 'Hey! Pay attention to us! We have an opinion and we are going to vote,'" says Jessica McCormick, director of external affairs at the Memorial University of Newfoundland Students' Union, which is planning a vote mob this weekend.

Inspiration [Mr. Deputy Speaker] for the first vote mob in Guelph came from CBC comedian Rick Mercer's recent rant calling on young people to "do the unexpected" and vote, says Johnson. Voter turnout among youth is consistently dismal. In the 2008 federal election, only 37 per cent of voters aged 18 to 24 cast a ballot.

Again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, here is something that we should be looking at and promoting young people or whatever way people can move to vote. Instead what we are doing is saying in fact that what we should do is to plan your affairs before coming to the polling station.

And again further on, this is concerting, if in fact not disconcerting, that we would be looking at this without a full consultation, without some consultations in a full report on the shortfalls within our voting system before we would proceed with these. Now again there are many reasons why we have to take a closer look at this Bill.

And as I've pointed out, Bill 160, the Human Rights Code amendment Act, again here we have a similar situation. The minister's saying that this will make things run more smoothly, that people will have their cases. There will be no waiting times.

But the Human Rights Commissioner will be making the decisions around this issue, be making the decisions. Solely it'll be up to him to decide which cases go forward, where there are appeals, where there is to be any cases that go forward to the courts. It'll be up to that commissioner to decide on mediation. And I guess at first glance, where people were having their cases delayed for sometimes one, two years or more, this would seem appealing. Upon closer examination, what we find is that not . . . The question, is this putting too much power in the hands of one person, one person over at the Human Rights Commission? And what are the controls, or what do we have? For example, we agree or we have faith in one commissioner and then lose that faith in the new appointment.

As much as our human rights is important to all of us, so is our right to vote, to exercise our democratic right to vote. And I would again want to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that it is not only our human rights that we should be concerned about, but it is actually a human right that we have, that we have the right to vote. We have fought hard for that, and we should always understand that it is us as a citizen that that is our right. It isn't the government that should be playing with that right and telling us. It should be the citizens who say to the government that this is what we should be doing.

So in that . . . And we have many over the last number of years that the Sask Party government has been in power, we have many examples of lack of consultation, *The Wildlife Habitat Act*, where again there was time and again that we stood here almost in disbelief, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as every week somebody would come in and say that they were not consulted by the minister at the time bringing in that. There were many people very disappointed at what happened there, but the government seemed to push through this legislation.

[15:45]

Again here, even today in question period, we had the minister saying that in fact that they did not, that they had tendered appropriately for the Modus. And in fact what is occurring is questionable, Mr. Deputy Speaker, questionable in terms of what they are doing and just trying to ram things through. And that is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is very undemocratic in terms of what is occurring. So it is a concern.

When we look at this minister, with the track record that he is establishing, bringing forward a Bill on voting and saying that this is what we believe should be happening, and we have nothing. No consultation on this; no report. There were no perhaps committees struck to actually, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to deal with this whole issue, to deal with it in such a fashion that a report perhaps did come back to this Legislative Assembly outlining to all of us what some of the things that we should be looking at, we should not only be looking at but perhaps doing, so that as in terms of the vote mobs, we could be encouraging young people to vote and not in fact discouraging them because they are, they haven't planned their affairs prior to going to

vote. A curious choice of words there by the minister again, to talk about, to talk about voting. Voting should be a serious matter, but not, not on the level of perhaps of planning a funeral or something, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I don't think that we should be looking at it in that fashion.

Again, so now I've spoken about one group and perhaps we, you know, in terms of students, being quite a number of years ago a student myself, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the thing about that, the excitement of being able to vote. Not necessarily having perhaps the ID necessary, perhaps thinking I can simply go in and vote, registering, because the enumerator came around and I was signed up and I, at that point in time that's all I had to do, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I felt then I could go and vote.

And now we're asking something more of young people who want to become engaged. But I think it is things like these that, that disengage them, disenfranchise people when they have to think, well do I have everything? Am I going to be missing something? You know, well maybe, you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, maybe it's too much. Maybe, you know, we'll just skip it this time. And I'm not certain that, that what was missed . . . Or I'm certain, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what was missed here was the whole issue of making it easier to vote, encouraging people to vote, encouraging people to become involved in the political process because it impacts on their daily lives, and giving them that kind of opportunity as opposed to raising some barriers here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as to why they can't, would not be allowed to vote.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is only in terms of the youth. There are another group that I am very concerned about is the seniors, the seniors in our province who have built this province, who through no faults of their own might be somewhat disabled in different ways, who have also, as I mentioned, go on to vote, voted in a fashion that they have done for numbers of years, now to find that they have to . . . that things might change. That when they go now, they might be, they will have to bring some identification. Again, if it's a picture ID makes it more difficult, but they will have to come with some identification. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they might come and say, well I've voted here for 30 years, and I want to vote. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they would not now be allowed to vote. And is that right? How is that encouraging the political process? How is that making things better?

And this all comes back down to because of thinking we know what is right as opposed to what this government, Sask Party government has continually failed, is to consult the people of this province. And sometimes, Mr. Deputy Speaker — and I do want to say this again — sometimes they will tell us they consulted, and in fact we find out that they didn't consult.

And it is starting to appear in this minister's case that in fact he is saying that he had people onside, and people are now dropping offside because the legislation under the human rights amendment was not explained to these people, and they are now saying, well we didn't realize that that might be the impact. And yet the minister here again stood up in this House in front of all of us and said, look at all the people I have supporting this Bill. And that's on the record too, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And that will be interesting to see what starts happening on that piece.

So again here we have a minister who did not consult. What did he do to, what necessitated these changes? Who was it that brought forward concerns regarding this? Was there voter fraud, Mr. Deputy Speaker? What was it that drove the changes in this Bill to have the minister here particularly stand up and say, we need these changes because it is to make the voting and participation in our political system, to improve that political participation in our system if we make these changes? And we see nothing of the sort here, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I see nothing in the material before me that there was any of that done, other than the minister's words to plan your affairs, and you will have no difficulty in voting.

I had gone through a number of elections and I actually perhaps, Mr. Deputy Speaker, maybe there was something wrong in the way that I looked at this, that I didn't plan my affairs. I knew my plan to the extent that I knew the voting time, and I knew when I had to get down and vote. But I surely, Mr. Deputy Speaker, other than I should be concentrating on the policies of the parties who are running and asking for my vote that I was planning my affairs, but I was not planning my affairs in a way that I would somehow have to take time to determine that I would be allowed to vote.

And that is a problem because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this I believe will disenfranchise a number of people. And there are challenges to this type of legislation across the country. And as opposed to just simply going forward and ramming through and trying to get this Bill through, we should have been thinking about that and thinking about those legal challenges and saying perhaps we should wait. What will happen to our legislation if the legal challenge is successful? Where are we at? And people are raising concerns right across the country about having to do this.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, again actually in the Bill itself, various sections are repealed and amended but the basic point here where in 65(1), "On entering the polling place, a voter shall give his or her name to the deputy returning officer."

And then, "If the poll clerk determines that a voter's name appears on the voters' list, the voter, before being given a ballot . . . and voting, shall," and then it says, "provide the deputy returning officer with the satisfactory evidence of the voter's identify and ordinary residence required pursuant to section 72.1."

This leads me to also raise issues about people who do not have a permanent residence. Perhaps we have . . . Well we know that there are a great number of homeless people who this impacts who we are disenfranchising because of the residency. How are we reaching out to the people who perhaps find themselves, if I may use the term, couch surfing? How do we reach out to people who do not have a permanent residence? Where was the attempt to reach out and say, you have a right to vote, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

And I want to say again, it is the right of people, the citizens of this province. That is their right. It's not the government's right to hand out and decide and determine and to put conditions on. It's the people's right to vote. And that has to be guarded, particularly here in this Legislative Assembly. We have to be guarding that right because it is a very important right, Mr.

Deputy Speaker. That right is a right that has been fought for and we have had to . . . People have died for that right. And as we look out, look out across . . . It doesn't take much to turn on the TV to hear about all the people right across the world fighting for rights, rights to be represented, rights to choose their leaders, rights to choose their governments. People are striving for democracy throughout the world.

We are seen as leaders, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We should take that role seriously. We should not take it lightly. We should be concerned about that role, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because it is important. It is important because we must guard that right, the right of the citizen to vote.

Perhaps some do not appreciate that or perhaps they just simply don't like that, that somebody can pass judgment on the things that we do, whether it's in this Legislative Assembly or whether it's in the capitals across the country or in Ottawa, but it is an important right, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we should not take it very lightly that we would make changes, would make changes to our voting procedures, to our voting rights, without some careful thought and careful study.

And I don't see any of that here, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I see nothing, in fact, here that would lead me to believe that there were consultations, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I do not see anything here that would show me reasons why perhaps there was some voting fraud or stuffed ballot boxes or all the kinds of things that we hear about. Where were those concerns? I don't see any of them here. Nothing is being raised here that would lead to the changes that are being requested. Who was it that . . . Again, who was it that was consulted? I guess on this issue if no one was consulted, at least the Justice minister, in this case, would not have to be concerned that we would be raising issues as to who exactly he consulted.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is again the opposition's responsibility, it's our responsibility to look at this legislation. And there is a lot here to look at, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a lot here for us to review. But I think the points I made earlier, the points I made earlier are of concern. They are of concern to me because of the way that this same minister handled the human rights amendment, amendments in previously.

And they are of concern, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because when you come here in this Legislative Assembly and you say that you have supporters, that you have supporters in the gallery who accept or who are supporting your legislation that you are putting forward, and then we hear on this side that in fact: one, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that it was not explained; two, that they didn't know the consequences of that and that they were simply told that this would be an expedited process or at least a process where many cases could be heard and mediated.

But no one took the time to explain clearly all of the things in that Bill, and it's a sad day, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a sad day when people then come and say, well we didn't know that and here we were in the Legislative Assembly, in their Legislative Assembly, sitting there and saying, we support this Bill. It doesn't do us a lot of good. It doesn't bring forward a lot of confidence or respect, I would even say, for this place when that sort of thing occurs. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is a sad day for this legislature. And it doesn't lead to the kind of confidence

that people need to have in their legislature, legislators to do the job that is required to have this province move forward.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, those are but just some comments on this Bill. I again think that in the minister's speech that he gave in bringing forward the Bill, he tried to allay some fears by saying that there would be all sorts of things done, particularly, he said, in the regulations, that there would be laid out in the regulations a number of ways that people could vote.

But that leads to no comfort for us, Mr. Deputy Speaker, nor of comfort for the people of Saskatchewan, when it comes to looking at this Bill and believing that somehow in regulations that he will cover off all the concerns for people in terms of when they come to vote, that they will be able to vote, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And not at all, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

[16:00]

Because something as important as voting should, I would say, not be left even to the whim of regulations, the whim of a government in power, but should be here to be debated, should be debated and should be discussed in this Assembly so that we all understand what the rules are, Mr. Deputy Speaker. No one should be making up rules behind closed doors on how we exercise that most valuable of democratic institutions, the right to vote. The citizen's right to vote is number one, and we have to guard that, and we have to be very careful before thinking of making any changes to that right, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So the regulations, the part on the regulations — and there are changes in the Act which have been made to allow for that, to give Executive Council the right to make these changes — we are uncertain, I suppose, Mr. Deputy Speaker, how soon those will be made. But again I think, just a concern that this is too important, Mr. Deputy Speaker, too important not to have that full list and expanded list or the regulations on how people will be, what ID will be used, what ID will be acceptable when people arrive to vote.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would still challenge, I would still challenge that across this whole province that perhaps we would think that people are tuned in here and watching us to debate this or perhaps tuned in to watching the minister propose this Bill, but I would say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that there would be a large group of people out there who will not be aware of this legislative change. They will not be aware of this legislative change, and this is going to cause difficulties. This is going to cause difficulties and disenfranchise people who will arrive at the polls, not knowing that they have to come . . . because for a number of years, a great number of years, they have voted and have gone to the polls without having to get their affairs in order, as the minister has outlined here.

It's a very strange choice of words indeed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that you would phone up somebody in Davidson at the nursing home and say, we want you to get your affairs in order because you're going to go to vote. I'm not sure what I would think if somebody phoned me and said that to me, you know. That's a very, very unique choice of words. And it would be a very interesting phone call to receive in a nursing home in Davidson and say, you should get your affairs in order before you get to go to vote. I would almost be alarmed, I would think, Mr.

Deputy Speaker, at that.

But be that as it may, before we make those kinds of important changes to this very important right, the right to vote, we should be doing a number of consultations. We should be asking questions about why is this being challenged in the courts. Why would we want to go forward on something like this when other places are saying there are difficulties with that? If we're going to strike out, it's not like we are going into new areas, but it is a concern. It is very much a concern, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we have started on this path, and it looks like the government is bent on putting in this legislation.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have talked about encouraging our youth to vote. We've talked about seniors voting. We've talked about people who are homeless. We talked about people who do not have a permanent residence, who are changing residences. All of this, all of this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, adds to the difficulty in voting. And this does not address that for those people who we are trying to bring in to vote.

Again, the youth in our country, in our province, we should be doing everything to encourage them to vote. And I don't see this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as helping that. Perhaps not everybody has to be a Rick Mercer to come up with some ideas or that the students can take some ideas and formulate a plan as to how they would vote, but it is that kind of, it is that kind of creativity, that kind of innovation that we should be striving for, that we should be looking at when we change legislation to make people in fact . . . What about a unique idea of making legislation that would make people want to vote, Mr. Deputy Speaker? That's what we should be discussing and looking around the world, perhaps there are other places, other countries that have had made changes and see what their rates of participation are. Because the healthy democracy is one where all the citizens participate, where we hear all the voices, those that we agree with and particularly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with the voices that we do not agree with.

And that's the difficult part about governing, that is the difficult part about being whether it's in opposition or government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is hearing voices that are contrary to our views and in some way addressing their concerns, be it through debate, discussion, or coming to a compromise, or in fact acknowledging that one or the other party is in fact right on the issue and moving forward. And that is the way that we have proceeded, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I would say that we should continue to proceed that way.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is important. They should be commended, these youth in our universities, as the case is here, for making the attempt to energize, energize our youth and our country. Energize them so that they could, would come out and vote, so that they would become involved in the political process.

In that release that I spoke of earlier that was . . . Just to show you the ingenuity here of the students, Monday's vote mob at the University of Guelph, also dubbed a surprise party by organizers, inspired organizers at about half a dozen universities across the country to create similar events over the next week.

At least 200 attended the gathering in Guelph outside a Conservative Party campaign event. A YouTube video shows young people running out of the bush and then unfurling a banner that says, surprise, we are voting. Controversy arose after at least one participant was reportedly not allowed inside the campaign event because he was believed to be a protestor.

It is this kind of action, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this kind of event, and if that is what young people do in terms of one way of generating enthusiasm, we should not be condemning that. We should be attempting to, in all cases, understand what is going on here and encouraging that. And we should be looking at that and taking that into account when we make changes.

And there was some issues where people voted at the university, and there was controversy in this last . . . in the federal election that's passing, whether or not we count those ballots. And there were challenges made and my understanding is that they were in fact going to accept that vote, those votes and those ballots. So very interesting kind of situation, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And that's what we should be looking at. We should be looking at promoting, in that case, perhaps we need to look at different polling stations.

We should be saying to people that you should vote. You should vote. And looking at the various things that are happening around the country, happening around the world, if I may say, that show where people — through various actions, events, or whatever — are coming out to vote. Where are these places where the vote is high, Mr. Deputy Speaker? And what are they doing to make that happen? That is what we should be looking at, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Instead what we have here in this legislature is a Bill being put forward, 161. We also have the 162 where they are in fact foisting on the municipalities and school boards the same regulations, the same legal implications of when and of ID voting. And I wonder what consultation was done with the municipalities.

And it raises an interesting point because even, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is not to call one meeting and say to people, well we are going to make these changes and just move ahead. Because the kind of situation that is developing around Bill 160, we don't need more of Bill 160, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the kind of situation that's developing where people are saying, we were told this is what the Bill was about but we didn't understand all the implications.

And so perhaps that's what's happening here with the municipalities. Perhaps they, were they asked? Where's their consultation? Are they ready to move ahead on this issue? Or are they going to say, there were some unintended consequences that are now occurring and perhaps we should have had more study, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, just so that it's crystal clear, just so that it's crystal clear the concerns that I have raised here, the concerns that I have raised, again the minister's words: if you plan your affairs, you should have no difficulty in voting. That is the start. And that's a concern in terms, as I've mentioned, of somebody receiving a phone call and saying, plan your affairs because you have to go and vote.

Another concern that I have, was there consultation? What is driving the changes here? What is driving the changes? There is nothing that was put forward before this Assembly, nothing in the minister's remarks when he introduced the Bill to say that here is what happened, here is what we have had. We have had trouble with voting. We have had concerns with voting. We are trying to encourage more voting. None of those things were talked about. We simply said that we were going to encumber people a bit when they arrive to the polling station that there will be some hoops that they will have to now jump through before they can vote. And how is that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, how is that being helpful?

Further, Mr. Deputy Speaker, further on this, on an issue that is as important, that is as important as the citizen's right to vote, what consultations with the general public were held on this? Set aside that there were none, that we did not hear about any concerns that were raised, what consultations, direct consultations were held about this issue in this province?

The minister will say, well this is in existence in some fashion in other provinces. It's existent at the federal level in some way. But the question that we also have to deal with is, this has also been challenged in the courts. This has been challenged in the courts, and what did the minister do to look into that? What did he do in terms of, he did not speak about anything or tell us anything in terms of that there were concerns in other provinces, that he simply said this was being done. But what about the concerns that people had? Why has this ended up in the courts? Why has this ended up in the courts?

And I believe that the Civil Liberties Association is also involved where they have taken on these issues. And they've taken on these issues, and we can't say enough about those people who this impacts directly — our young people, our seniors, people who perhaps are homeless, people who perhaps, as I used, couch surf, people who perhaps do not have a permanent residency. These are people, these are residents, we have to . . . We are judged, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a lot of times by how we treat the most vulnerable or the most disaffected in our society. That is how we're judged. Not perhaps immediately as we make decisions, but over time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we're judged by that.

[16:15]

And it is a concern, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we look and we're trying to, particularly I would think the seniors who have voted in a particular manner, who have voted over time, who have voted in a manner where they simply arrived at the poll. They perhaps voted at the same poll for a number of years and their names are there. People know them. And this time it'll be different, and the only thing that I suppose people will be telling them, you should have gotten your affairs together before you came to vote. A very curious, curious again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, choice of words regarding an issue that is so important to all of us.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Municipal Affairs minister also chimed in on this as I mentioned before in 162, *The Local Government Election Amendment Act*. He also said that the photo ID will apply, but he did talk a bit about consultations. We did not hear anything in the Justice minister's speech about

that, about the consultations that he had done. Again the municipal minister did talk a bit about that.

Again the only thing the Justice minister could do to allay any of the fears or concerns that were raised here was that there would be a list of other allowable forms of ID, will be developed. And again he did mention here: after consultation with various groups and set out regulations after the Bill was passed. So the consultations at the time had not even been done, Mr. Deputy Speaker. These consultations, according to the minister, had not even been occurred or done, but he was considering consulting people after the Bill would be passed.

And I think that shows a little lack of respect for the legislative process here to not include but simply to say . . . not include what those consultations, the results of consultations would be prior to introducing the Bill so that the minister should perhaps . . . not should have but should . . . gone out and consulted and brought forward his report, brought forward the concerns that were raised, brought forward if he was moving on ID, brought forward a list from those consultations of how this would work.

But instead, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe he's got it all backwards here. He's putting the Bill in, and then he says that lists of other allowable forms of ID will be developed after consultations with various groups. There's no mention of which groups this would be, who is it that he's going consult. I'm not certain, Mr. Deputy Speaker, whether those consultations have started as of yet, whether they will only be done in Regina perhaps, whether they'll be travelling to rural Saskatchewan. There is nothing here that indicates what he will be doing.

Again the only thing that the minister . . . And we talked about nursing homes or long-term care homes, Mr. Speaker. And he did mention there would be a lesser onus on them. But again, I don't know how you would say to somebody in a nursing home that you should get your affairs in order because you have to go and vote. Rather ominous, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have made a number of comments. I will need to review this Bill further and see what other concerns we have. It is again, as I mentioned, unfortunate that we do not, that there were no consultations held before on this Bill. It's unfortunate that after the Bill is passed that the minister had indicated to us that he will do consultations on an expanded ID, develop forms or whatever ID would be acceptable.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is the sort of thing that we are simply being asked to accept, that we accept that there will be consultations. Again there's been nothing outlined here. There's been nothing indicated to us of how this would work. It is very, as an overall, Mr. Deputy Speaker, very, very disappointing in the manner in which this Bill has been handled. It doesn't leave us with a lot of confidence on this very important, very important right — the right of citizens to vote — that we have, that the ministry has looked at this in the best possible way.

But being that as it may, Mr. Speaker, at this time I know that there's others that wish to speak on this and I will be taking my place.

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

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well you know, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice has introduced what I consider to be two controversial Bills into this Assembly — amendments to the Human Rights Code and now we have the amendment to *The Election Act*. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice has argued that this is about having more rights for people when it comes to Human Rights Code. And he has argued that this is about ensuring, in the case of *The Election Act*, that people who have a right of citizenship need to offer up some sort of voting identification in order to cast their ballot.

Mr. Speaker, I have been voting in every provincial and federal election since I turned 18. I voted in every municipal election since I turned 18. I voted for a school board since I turned 18.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting. This is the first federal election, because I went to the returning officer, where I had to show a piece of voter ID in order to cast my ballot for the next Government of Canada. And why is that? Well it's because the Harper government changed the legislation, and it's no longer good enough to go with your card that, from Elections Canada, that has your name and your voter number for your poll and your address and your city you live in or the town you live in and your postal code. That's no longer good enough. What you now have to do is you not only go with your little card, but you have to have a piece of voter ID in order to cast your vote, which in my view is a democratic right of every citizen in this country. But that's not what we're going to have.

Now the members over there argue, oh the Government of Canada has this requirement. Oh, the Government of — I think it's — British Columbia, has this requirement. The Government of Ontario has this requirement. The Government of Quebec has this requirement. And so because all these other governments have it, we want to do it too.

Well you know, Mr. Speaker, when I was a little kid, my mother would say to me, well just because someone jumps off the bridge, does that mean you should jump off the bridge? I'm sure all of us had that particular little nugget told to us when we were using all kinds of excuses for why we did what we did. So this doesn't hold a lot of water with me as to why we need this particular legislation — because the Government of Canada does it, because Quebec does it, because Ontario does it, and because British Columbia does it.

So, Mr. Speaker, and I also understand that British Columbia, the BC civil rights association is challenging this particular piece of legislation because it's their view that it will dispossess Canadian citizens of their right to vote because of the need, the requirement for some form of identification.

And what's particularly troubling about this piece of legislation is that it's not clear at all what the government is going to do in terms of regulations because what kind of identification you need is going to be laid out in the regulations. And that really isn't subject to any kind of public scrutiny. At least when it comes to this piece of legislation, the government has to bring the legislation to the Assembly. The Assembly gets to debate the legislation. The Assembly gets to vote on the legislation. The Assembly gets to ask questions about the legislation.

But when it comes to regulations, that is the purview of the

government, and they will scrutinize the regulations. They'll have officials draft the regulations. They will have cabinet approve the regulations, and then those regulations will be gazetted. Well I think when it comes to fundamental rights, it seems to me when we're talking about our rights as Canadian citizens, our right to vote, that this should clearly be laid out in the legislation in order for the people who have been elected by the citizens of our province to debate how this voter ID is in essence going to come into existence.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's my view, it's my view that the right to vote affects our everyday life. The right to choose a school board trustee, the right to choose my RM [rural municipality] councillor or my reeve or my mayor or my city councillor, my right to choose my member of the legislature, my right to choose my MP [Member of Parliament] should not be impeded because the Government of Saskatchewan, the Sask Party Government of Saskatchewan has decided that, in order for me to exercise my fundamental right as a Canadian citizen, I'm going to have to turn up at the polls with some sort of identification that verifies who I am.

My card, even though the scrutineers come along, even though I file income taxes — at the bottom of my income tax form I say whether or not my name can be given to Elections Canada — even though when I went to vote at the returning office last Friday, what happened? The person who was taking my information goes onto a computer screen, looks me up and what poll I'm at, sees my name, sees my address, sees my city that I live in, and is able to verify my postal code. And you know, Mr. Speaker, it was ridiculous. It was ridiculous because I had my voting card with me, not unlike what other people do when they go off to the polls to vote.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's my view, it's my view . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh, how would they would know it was me, Mr. Speaker? Now that is quite funny because here's what happened. When you go to a poll on election day . . . What I have to say to the member from Biggar . . . Let's just take Biggar. Let's take Biggar. Everybody knows everybody in Biggar. Let's take the poll of Biggar.

And let's see, you know, Mrs. Jones has lived down the street for the last 90 years. She gets herself to the poll, and under their legislation she's going to have to take her ID with her in order to vote.

So, Mr. Speaker, I can just see it all now. Mrs. Jones or Mrs. Brown has been voting for the last — let's say — 75 years. She's been going off to the polls to vote. Let's say she's been voting for 70 years, and she goes off to the poll. Everybody's sitting at the polls. Whether it's the returning officer or the scrutineers from the Conservative Party, the Liberal Party, and the NDP — they all know who Mrs. Jones or Mrs. Brown is. She's going to be asked to provide her identification, but she didn't bring her purse or, you know, she doesn't have her ID on her. And she doesn't have a driver's licence perhaps. Maybe she has a social insurance number. She doesn't have photo ID.

And what she's going to have to do is — what? What is she going to have to do? — she's going to go home and then maybe come back because according to the legislation she's going to have to have a piece of identification. And Mrs. Jones, what if

she's a rural elector? Maybe she's driven 25 miles in order to get to the polls because she's been doing it this way for decades. She's been going to the polls for decades.

[16:30]

Everybody knows who she is. She knows who's sitting at the poll. She knows that Amy is representing the Conservatives. She knows that Frank's representing the NDP, and she knows that Mildred is representing the Liberals. And they all know each other, and they all say hello to each other. And they go to church together. Maybe they're part of the Catholic Women's League or the United Church league. You know, they all know each other. They've known each other for decades, Mr. Speaker. But this is how ridiculous this particular piece of legislation is.

Now the members opposite have said or the Minister of Justice told us that there haven't been any problems. There has been no problems with voter fraud. There's no specific incident of voter fraud. But he says he wants to enhance the integrity of the system, Mr. Speaker.

So you know, here we have a government that came to power in 2007. Did they tell us that we'd all have to have voter identification in 2007? No. Did they have a specific incident that caused the government to bring in this particular amendment to *The Election Act*? No. So why is it, why is it that they are introducing voter identification?

We don't have voter identification in Alberta. We don't have voter identification in Manitoba. We don't have voter identification in Newfoundland and New Brunswick and Nova Scotia and PEI [Prince Edward Island]. We don't have voter identification in the Northwest Territories or the Yukon or Nunavut. No, no, we don't have that. But, you know, it's sort of . . . I'll get back to what my mother used to say to me. Just because someone else jumps off the bridge — meaning Ontario, British Columbia, Quebec, and the Government of Canada — well we're going to go over the bridge too. Oh what a ridiculous, ridiculous argument, Mr. Speaker. It's ridiculous.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the government says oh, well you know everybody has some form of identification. Well let's just think about that. How many members of the legislature have had a constituent that's come into their office, they require some form of identification in order to, you know, maybe get into a subsidized house or to collect income assistance . . .

An Hon. Member: — I have.

Ms. Atkinson: — Have you had it? I have too. But these are low-income people. They don't have a driver's licence. They don't have a birth certificate. They've lost their social insurance number. I mean we're talking about people who are articulate but they are low-income. Now what do they have to do? How much do they have to pay in order to get their birth certificate? How much do they have to pay? Does anyone know over there? Does anybody know? How long does it take to get it? Does anybody know that over there . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Exactly. They never get it.

I have assisted people in trying to get a birth certificate, and it

takes months. It takes months. And what does it cost? I believe the cost is \$40. Well you know, if I'm choosing between food and that escalating rent because we don't have rent control and maybe just living, am I going to spend \$40 to get my birth certificate that I lost? Am I going to spend money to get a new photo ID or a new driver's licence? And the reality is that people aren't.

Now the members . . . I heard the members earlier say, well we had this whole thing in the last federal election. Well one of the things that I know is that you, if you didn't have your identification, you could have someone vouch for you. Someone who lived in the poll could vouch for you.

An Hon. Member: — They can do that here too.

Ms. Atkinson: — They say, they can do that here too. Well where is it in the legislation? It is not in the legislation. In order to vote under the Saskatchewan legislation that these rocket scientists have introduced into the Assembly, you have to have some form of identification in order to vote, according to the Bill that has been introduced by the members opposite.

So it's no longer good enough . . . Even in the federal situation up until recently, you could have someone who could vouch for you, an elector, someone who might be your neighbour, to take you to the polls and say, yes, I've known Sally for 50 years; they live next door. They're at 833 Main Street. I know them. That is not what the members opposite are proposing.

Now let's get on to First Nations people. There are some First Nations people that do not have identification. There are low-income . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh, the member talks about Meadow Lake. Well we'll see how Meadow Lake all turns out. We will see. I can hardly wait. They've been, you know, they've been sort of wanting that one for some time, but we'll see how that turns out. What the members opposite don't know is that the party found it, and members from the campaign of our present leader found it, and they dealt with it. That is the truth, Mr. Speaker. That is the truth.

Now oh, well they laugh their little heads off. You know, that's typical, typical conservative. You know, it's been interesting to watch the Prime Minister in the debates where he out-and-out lied to the people of this country, and then we saw the Leader of the NDP, the Leader of the Liberal Party basically say, Prime Minister, you're lying. And you know, we're not supposed to use that word in here to describe other members, but I think there have been several occasions when there have been big stretches of the truth, and the spin has spun and spun and spun.

But we will see what happens in Meadow Lake. We will see what happens in Meadow Lake. And I'm sure that there will be members of the opposition that may want to offer some semblance of an apology when we see what happens there, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, we have a situation where this government, the Sask Party government, you know, really doesn't defend human rights. They don't really want people to vote, but only maybe some people — their people. They know, they know that there are people who, you know — and you look at the record — there are people that don't support their

government.

We know that there are a lot of First Nations and Métis people. I think we have six First Nations and Métis candidates . . .

An Hon. Member: — Eight.

Ms. Atkinson: — Eight, pardon me. Eight that are running on the NDP ticket in the next provincial election. And we're pretty proud of that. We're pretty proud of that. Eight NDP First Nations and Métis people who are running in the next provincial election, and we know what this might be about. This might be about causing certain groups of citizens in our province to not have the ability to exercise their fundamental rights.

We know that New Democrats tend to represent inner-city neighbourhoods where a lot of people who are disadvantaged, and struggle, don't necessarily have the appropriate government-issued ID in order to exercise their vote. And so, you know, I do wonder, I do wonder whether or not this is about trying to decrease the number of votes for the New Democrats.

We know that it takes months to get a treaty card. We haven't seen . . . Once again it's regulations. It's regulations. This government's going to determine what is fitting to be a piece of proper identification in order to exercise a citizen's democratic right.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as I said, we have . . . We know that there is senior citizens who are at a time in their life where they no longer have a driver's licence. You know, the question is, is this government going to demand photo ID from seniors in order for them to vote? Is the government going to send in SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance], I guess, to start taking pictures of seniors in nursing homes and housing complexes, in order that they can exercise their democratic vote? Are they going to send SGI on to First Nations areas, inner cities, in order that people can exercise their democratic vote? I somehow don't think that that's something that this government would be prepared to do, but maybe I'm wrong.

Maybe that Minister of Justice that is trying to take away human rights in this province and the tribunal system — and, you know, in order to have a right enforced, we have to now go to a QB [Queen's Bench] judge — maybe that Minister of Justice is something more than what I think he might be. And maybe, maybe the Sask Party is going to send in all these SGI photographers to take photo ID. I guess we could ask the minister in the committee. But I somehow doubt it, Mr. Speaker, I somehow doubt it.

Maybe the government's going to have SGI go on to our post-secondary campuses. Maybe they'll take photo ID, but maybe they won't. But, you know, the question is, how do you get a piece of photo ID? What do you have to have in order to get a piece of photo ID? I think you need ID to get one of those photo IDers.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I go back to my main premise — this is ridiculous. No one's asked for this. It's one of those things, well the federal government's doing it. We all know about Stephen

Harper. BC's doing it. Ontario's doing it. Quebec's doing it, so therefore we have to do it. And what is the member from Moose Jaw saying?

An Hon. Member: — He said that Meadow Lake asked for it.

Ms. Atkinson: — Oh, Meadow Lake. He said Meadow Lake asked for it. Well I wonder if the member from Meadow Lake asked for it. Is that what you're saying? The member from Meadow Lake asked for it? And why would that be?

Well the member from Meadow Lake has got a real challenge on his hands in the next provincial election. And why is that? Because Chief Helen Ben who is a well-respected First Nations woman and leader in our province is going to represent the New Democratic Party in the next provincial election, which the government will call in, I think October 10th or somewhere in there, for November 7th.

And what does that member from Meadow Lake want? I guess he doesn't want First Nations people from Canoe Lake and Flying Dust and all of the First Nations areas around Meadow Lake to vote because he just wants to get his votes from his pals that have ID. Even though . . . You know, but it's democracy. It's democracy, Mr. Speaker. Whether you live on-reserve or off-reserve, whether you live in the inner city, whether you are drug-addicted, whether you are someone involved as a lawyer or a doctor or a preacher or a sex trade worker, it doesn't matter what you do, Mr. Speaker, your right as a citizen, as a person who was born or came to this country, you have a right to vote.

And what the members opposite are doing is they are taking away some people's right to exercise their democratic right to vote for the person of their choice. And we think that is wrong, Mr. Speaker. We think that is wrong.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we know, we know and the members opposite know this, that there's an estimate that we have about 2,200 homeless people in the province of Saskatchewan. These are people that don't have an address. All you have to do is go in to Saskatoon Nutana in the summertime, and we have people that are living along the river. They do not have a home. We know that there are people that are couch surfing. We know that there are people that do not have a place to live, and they go from couch to couch to couch.

Now why are they homeless? There are a variety of reasons why people are homeless, but for a lot of people they simply don't have the resources to have their own home . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh go to the food banks, he says. Go to the food banks. Well you know, what a ridiculous argument. Because you're homeless and you use a food bank, you don't have the right to vote.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think that there are people who are involved in anti-poverty movements, the social justice movement, who would seriously disagree with the members opposite. People have a right to vote regardless of their circumstances, and they have that right because they are a citizen of Canada, Mr. Speaker. They are a citizen of this province.

[16:45]

As I said, there are 2,200 people that are homeless . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well you see, here we go again. You know, I really do wonder about a group of men and women that just chirp from their seats. I haven't heard one of them get up on this Bill except the member from — where is he from? — Southwest. Southeast. He got up, the Minister of Justice, and he said — what did he say to us? — Saskatchewan is not taking this step in response to any specific incident, but rather we want to, and I quote, “enhance the integrity of the system.”

Now oh, they're clapping. Oh, they're clapping. They're clapping. Oh, lookit. The member — just, you know, maybe Chad Blenkin wants to know this — the member from Yorkton clapped. The member from Biggar clapped. You know, these are the talking heads for the Sask Party, but they don't have the wherewithal to get on their feet and defend this legislation. They're silent.

You know, some people would say that they don't have the courage of their convictions. They don't have the courage of their convictions because they can't pull themselves out of this lovely chair that we all sit in. I think it's worth about \$1,600 in order to sit in one of these chairs. They're leather and lovely. They've got the coat of arms. They represent the people of the province. Each of us that sits in this chair have been elected by the citizens living in our constituency who are 18 years of age and older. They come here. They have a microphone, but they don't have the courage of their convictions.

But they will sit there . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh lolly, here we got another one. Now who would that be? That would be the Minister of Education. And what did we learn from her last night? Let's talk about her. Let's talk about her ministry. They never had sole sourcing, certainly not when I was around after 1991 because the mess that was down in Education capital . . . I remember an MLA who was on that side of the House that wanted to have a new school up north of P.A. [Prince Albert]. By the time we got to government, it was closed. Brand new school closed, and why was that? Because there were no students. It was total political interference.

Now I say, Mr. Speaker, you don't want to be reminded of these days but that was . . . [inaudible] . . . so we got rid of that. We got rid of political interference in Education capital.

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. Order. I find it interesting to listen to the member, but I am finding it difficult to try and tie some of the most recent comments to the piece of legislation we're dealing with, Bill No. 161, *The Election Amendment Act, 2010*.

Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'll just tell you about how I was going to connect it. So what happened to the member of the legislature from up there north of P.A.? What happened to him in '91? He was defeated by the people of our province. He was absolutely defeated because there was so much political interference, and that's about democracy.

You know, democracy's a very, very fragile thing. It's a very fragile thing. There are people that are coming to this country now under our immigrant nominee program that don't have the right to vote in their country. There are people coming from the Philippines and China and Egypt and other parts of the world

that do not have the right to vote. They're coming under the skilled trades class.

An Hon. Member: — They don't get here without it.

Ms. Atkinson: — Oh, they don't get here without what?

An Hon. Member: — Passports.

Ms. Atkinson: — Oh. And you know what? As a citizen of this country, I have a right to a passport. I have a right to a passport unless — unless, and I've just learned this recently — that in the province of Alberta they're taking away people's passports if they don't make their maintenance payments, you know. Which gets me to this: there are people in this province who don't make their maintenance payments to support their children and they have their driver's licence taken away. And in the case of Alberta, they are now taking away people's passports if they don't pay their child support.

Well, Mr. Speaker, so here you have a situation where you don't have a driver's licence because you haven't made your child support payment; you don't have your passport because you haven't made your child support payment in the case of Alberta — I'm not quite sure what the policy of our Sask Party government is — but there are circumstances where people simply don't have identification.

And the government has not spelled out in any kind of detail what kind of identification will be required in order to cast your ballot in not only a provincial election, but they've also done it for municipal elections. And guess what? They weren't asked to do this by municipalities. I guess they wanted to have a consistent application of this nonsensical, nonsensical policy.

So, Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, there are people who are coming to this country. They're coming as immigrants. They're coming because they have the right, they want to become Canadian citizens. They want to have the right to vote.

And it's my view, if you look at the history of this government so far, they're making it harder and harder for people to exercise their democratic right not only to vote, but we know that they've got legislation that makes it more difficult to hold protest. We know that they have fundamentally taken away many trade unionist rights to withdraw their service in the case of a labour dispute. We know that they are changing the way we go about enforcing our human rights in this province by getting rid of the tribunal system.

And now they want it to make it very hard or much harder for the very people whom government historically has failed. And I'm not just talking about a Sask Party government, but I'm talking about all governments regardless of stripe. I think we have all failed the disenfranchised First Nations people, Métis people, senior citizens, and so on. So, Mr. Speaker, I do have great difficulty with this piece of legislation.

Now the government says that they're trying to harmonize the rules in Saskatchewan to make them more like those in other provinces and the federal government. But we know that the federal legislation is being challenged, and we know that as these kinds of challenges make their way through the various

court systems, at some stage the Supreme Court of Canada no doubt is going to render a decision on this.

We know that in the case of British Columbia, we have a coalition of organizations including people with disabilities, seniors, renters, and people who are homeless that are challenging the B.C. legislation.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it's argued that their preference . . . And it sounds as though they prefer photo ID. There is no question that this is going to lead to some people being disenfranchised. And I don't think . . . I mean, one of the things I've always believed in is you cannot have the tyranny of the majority over the rights of a minority. And that's called democracy.

You know, people fundamentally, regardless of their station in life, have the right to be heard. And they have the right to exercise their vote because the vote, at the end of the day, is all you really have. And I think that citizens have a right to say we want you but not you. I think we have the right to that. And I don't think a piece of photo ID can take away what I fundamentally believe to be my democratic right. And my democratic right is to cast my ballot and say I want you and I don't want you. And what the government is doing is it's reducing the numbers of people that might say I want you but I don't want you. And I think that's wrong.

Now the members over there say that's a good point and maybe that's what this is all about. This is about disenfranchising people who don't support them. And there are more and more people that don't support them. There are more and more people. And we know that First Nations and Métis people have been extremely disappointed by the members opposite. We know that senior citizens are disappointed by the members opposite. I mean, senior citizens in this province are seeing their activity centres close because of escalating costs of utilities. And maybe they want to say we want you but we don't want you.

We know that the homeless and people who do not have . . . who go from house to house to house, you know, they're trying to get on their feet. You know, you have to have some identification in order to get social assistance. You have to have it. And so there are people that just go, you know, they go to the food banks. They go from friend to friend or riverbank to riverbank, or they put their thumb in the air and they go from town to town. We know this is happening in the province of Saskatchewan. And if we don't know that, Mr. Speaker, then we haven't been doing our jobs as elected members of the legislature.

We also know that because of the escalating costs of rent, that people are leaving their address or they're moving out and trying to find a place elsewhere. And so you don't necessarily have a change of address. And we know that there are people who are eligible to vote but they don't live here, they live over here, but they haven't gone through the process of changing their identification. So you know, the question is what happens if I've recently moved and I haven't yet received my updated documentation from the government? What if I've not yet got mail from a government agency? Does that mean I don't have the right to vote?

I think if someone who is a citizen who has some identification knows me and can vouch for me, I think that should be good enough . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh the people over there are saying, oh spare me. Well you know what? One of the things I know about this democratic institution is I have the right as an elected member of this legislature to say what I have to say about legislation, about the performance of the government. That is my right and that is my duty. That is my duty.

And my duty for the members opposite is to say this: their legislation is going to disenfranchise a number of people who are citizens of this country and they have the fundamental right to exercise their vote. And what those members opposite are doing with this legislation is taking away a fundamental right of citizenship in this country. And I believe that. I believe that. And I believe that, and I have the right to say it in this House, regardless of what they say. Regardless of what they say, that is my right.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I will take my place. I will adjourn debate. I've said what I had to say on this legislature. I was going to say I've had enough of the members opposite, but we all know we all have those days. But I've said what I have to say, and I'd like to adjourn debate.

The Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Nutana has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 161. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move the House do now adjourn to facilitate committees this evening.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has moved that this House do now adjourn to facilitate the work of committees. 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 16:59.]

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