



FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

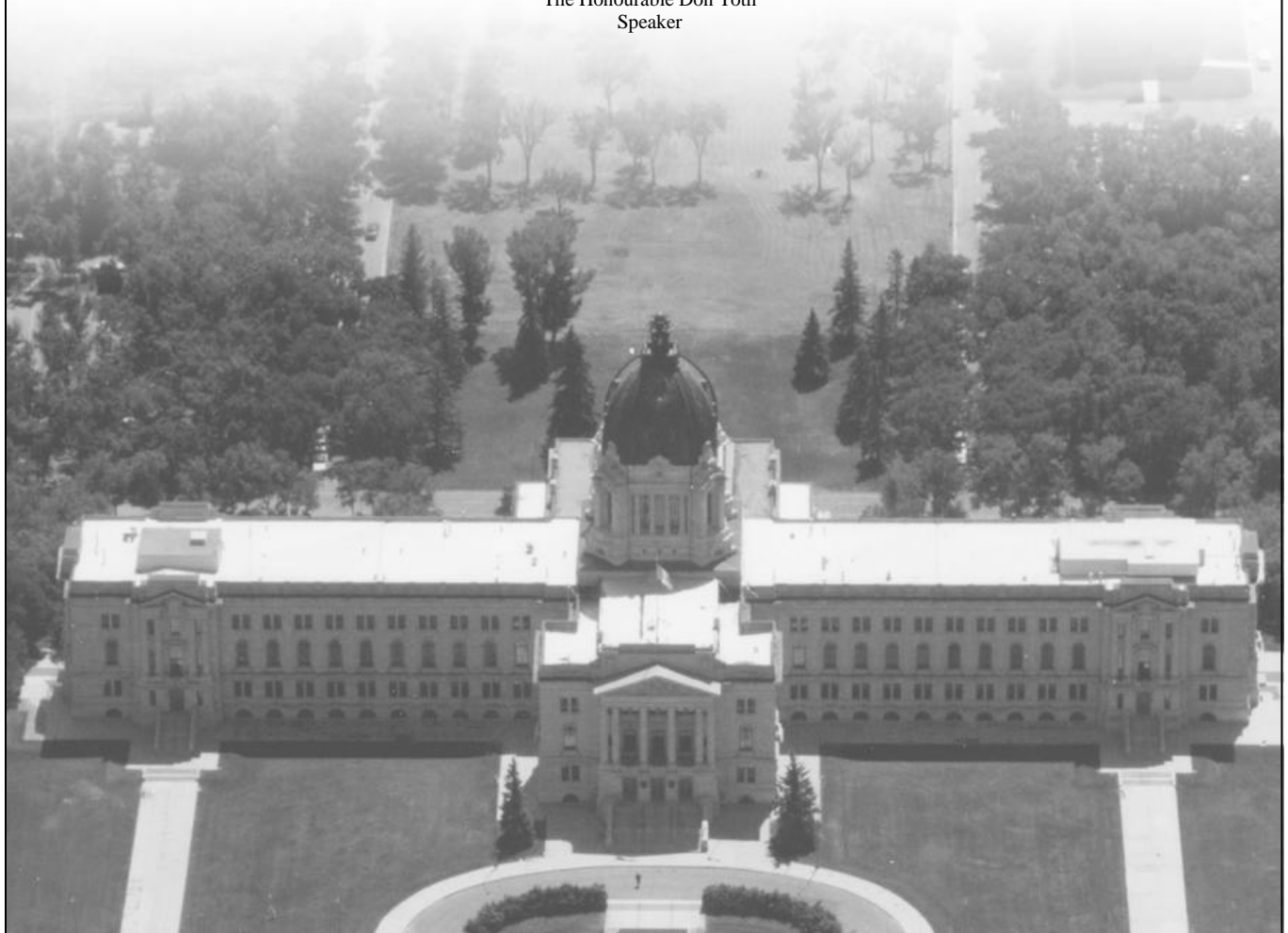
of the

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
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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
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Heppner, Nancy	SP	Martensville
Hickie, Hon. Darryl	SP	Prince Albert Carlton
Higgins, Deb	NDP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Hutchinson, Hon. Bill	SP	Regina South
Huyghebaert, Hon. D.F. (Yogi)	SP	Wood River
Iwanchuk, Andy	NDP	Saskatoon Fairview
Junor, Judy	NDP	Saskatoon Eastview
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Krawetz, Hon. Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
Lingenfelter, Dwain	NDP	Regina Douglas Park
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMillan, Hon. Tim	SP	Lloydminster
McMorris, Hon. Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Michelson, Warren	SP	Moose Jaw North
Morgan, Hon. Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Morin, Sandra	NDP	Regina Walsh Acres
Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Norris, Hon. Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
Ottobreit, Greg	SP	Yorkton
Quennell, Frank	NDP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Reiter, Hon. Jim	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Ross, Hon. Laura	SP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
Schriemer, Joceline	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Stewart, Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Taylor, Len	NDP	The Battlefords
Tell, Christine	SP	Regina Wascana Plains
Toth, Hon. Don	SP	Moosomin
Trew, Kim	NDP	Regina Coronation Park
Vermette, Doyle	NDP	Cumberland
Wall, Hon. Brad	SP	Swift Current
Weekes, Randy	SP	Biggar
Wilson, Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Wyant, Gordon	SP	Saskatoon Northwest
Yates, Kevin	NDP	Regina Dewdney

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

Clerk: — Members, I wish to advise you that Mr. Speaker is not present to open today's sitting.

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would request leave for an extended introduction.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Minister of Justice has asked leave for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the Assembly a number of people seated in the galleries today. They are firefighters from throughout the province.

In particular I would like to introduce, from the Saskatchewan Professional Fire Fighters Association, President Kirby Benning, Secretary-Treasurer Brian Belitsky, and Vice-president Lloyd Zwack. They are joined by members of all eight professional fire departments in Saskatoon, Regina, Prince Albert, Moose Jaw, Swift Current, North Battleford, Yorkton, and Weyburn.

Mr. Speaker, much to the chagrin and sadness of some of the women that work in this office, the firefighters are not here today to audition for the calendar. They are here today to witness passage of amendments to *The Workers' Compensation Act*. The amendments will expand the occupational disease presumption for firefighters to include primary site esophageal cancer.

Mr. Speaker, the firefighters presented a compelling case for making this change, and I'm pleased that with the co-operation from the members opposite we will be able to pass the legislation today and support these brave men and women. I hope that all members will join me in welcoming these professional firefighters to their Assembly.

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to join the minister in welcoming the firefighters to our Legislative Assembly. As the minister has said, they are here on a very important day to witness changes to, amendments to the Workers' Compensation Board.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to particularly introduce Kirby Benning, president; Brian Belitsky, secretary-treasurer; and

Lloyd Zwack, vice-president. Also I've noticed in the hall, some firefighters from fire hall 2, which is in my constituency in Saskatoon. And I ask all members to welcome these firefighters to our Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I would request leave to make an extended introduction.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Premier has asked leave for extended introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. On 16 August of last year, I received a call providing notice of what would be in the news the next day, the 17th of August, specifically that there would be a takeover bid, a hostile takeover bid of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan by BHP Billiton, the Anglo-Australian mining giant. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that changed a lot of things for the government, but most importantly it made . . . It was a very important day in the life of a province and in the lives of many of those who work in our potash industry and for people right across Saskatchewan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our government benefited from the advice of many from those who worked directly in the industry. I was grateful for the counsel that I received from former premiers of this province, from former Premier Devine, and had a chance to chat with former Premier Calvert, a couple of occasions to touch base with the premier, former Premier Romanow, and Premier Lougheed of the province of Alberta.

We got good advice from a number of them. And there was a common denominator in much of the advice, especially as I recall from Premier Romanow, and that was that we would want in this province to have a task force of the senior officials from various ministries who would know this deal and its potential inside and out and from every single perspective and be able then to advise the government accordingly.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we took that advice and immediately established, under the leadership of the deputy minister to the Premier, Doug Moen, we established a task force of senior officials within government who did a lot of work, exhaustive work to do just that: to know this deal and all of its implications, to engage the right outside parties, to advise the Assembly, the Government of Saskatchewan appropriately. And they worked very, very hard on this particular initiative. And we just thought it appropriate at some point here during the session to be able to acknowledge those professional public servants who lent their voice and their skill to the effort of the government. I want to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that there are those who are not represented here who were not formally part of the task force, but were rather contracted by them, including the Conference Board of Canada and also Gowlings, a firm in Toronto.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, through you and to you I'd like to introduce to all members of this Assembly these women and men who were very much central to the government's position on the BHP takeover and its communication of that position as well: Doug Moen, the deputy minister of Executive Council; Kent Campbell, the deputy minister of Energy and Resources — and maybe they'll give us a wave, if they don't mind, as we introduce all of them — Chris Dekker from Enterprise Saskatchewan; Laurie Pushor, chief of staff to the Minister of Energy; Wes Jickling from Intergovernmental Affairs; Hal Sanders, Energy and Resources; Cory Hughes, Energy and Resources. I think I saw Kirk McGregor, there he is from Finance; Rick Hischebett from Justice; Tony Koschinsky from Justice; as well as Heather Sinclair, I think I saw Heather, there's Heather from Justice; Rod Fink from Energy and Resources; Brian Southam from Energy and Resources; Kirk Brecht from Energy and Resources; as well as Dylan Jones who is the associate deputy in charge of Intergovernmental Affairs for the Government of Saskatchewan.

There are a number of, there's a few on the task force who couldn't be here today, well, one of them could be, but is doing other things: Reg Downs from Executive Council, also Graeme Mitchell from Justice, and Wolfgang Langenbacher who was at the time in Executive Council.

I also want to thank all members of this Assembly, some of them who in a formal way and others in an informal way, provided advice to the Government of Saskatchewan and indicated then their support for the position of the Government of Saskatchewan when we came to that conclusion. And that was manifest in a resolution from this Assembly, which was an important part of the development as well. And we want to acknowledge the work of two ministers assigned to lead the file for the government, and that was the Minister of Energy and Resources, the member for Kindersley; and the member for Meadow Lake and the Deputy House Leader, the Minister of Enterprise as well on that file.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this province was so very well-served by these professionals who have joined us today. And it is a small but important, I think, measure to thank them formally in this Assembly. And I do so make that request of all members now that we welcome them here to their Assembly, and we thank them for their service on one of the most important issues that the province has faced in recent years.

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

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I want to join with the Premier and offer a thank you to this potash task force that was put together during some very difficult times, I think, for the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the first thing that came to mind when I looked at this group of professionals in the Saskatchewan civil service was that how poignant this is when we just had a memorial service for former Premier Allen Blakeney, who put a very high regard and stock in the whole concept of having a professional civil service that is there to offer good advice, sound advice, and solid advice to the political leaders in this province. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this just signifies how timely

that commitment of Mr. Blakeney's is, or timeless maybe would be an even more appropriate term.

Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to have these people here in the Assembly so that we can offer, join with the Premier and offer a thank you for the service, not only to Saskatchewan as a province, but to each and every citizen. And on behalf of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, please accept our thank you also for the good work and good advice.

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to introduce 24 public service employees who are seated in the Speaker's gallery. They are here to take part in the parliamentary program for the public service. These professional civil service members are employees from the following ministries. We have Agriculture, Enterprise Saskatchewan, Finance, Government Services, Public Service Commission, and the Legislative Assembly Service.

Mr. Speaker, I have an opportunity to meet with some of these individuals in a while, and they'll ask a whole array of questions I'm sure. We usually do talk about how and why and when and where the work that they do meets with the work that we do, and we have great fun in understanding how the work that everybody does makes this province move. So I'm looking forward to meeting with you, and I ask all my colleagues to join me in welcoming these civil service members to our Assembly.

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

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the minister and welcome the many civil servants who are here with us today in the Assembly. Mr. Speaker, these are the people who work day in and day out on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan and provide those services that are so important to the people.

So on behalf of all members of this Assembly, I'd like to thank you for the work that you do on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan, know that it's appreciated, and know that the work that you do for the people is in the interest of the people. And we in this Assembly acknowledge that. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Rosthern-Shellbrook.

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, seated in your gallery today is a couple of constituents of mine from Shellbrook. They are Tracy and James Azevedo. If I could just get them to give a little wave.

Thank you for coming from Shellbrook today. We had a very good conversation in my office earlier, and Tracy is with the delegation from the Saskatchewan House of Prayer. She's been down here many times. I've introduced her a short time ago in regards to the Saskatchewan House of Prayer. But today she brought her husband, James, down to view the proceedings of the Assembly today. And I thank her and her husband, James,

for both coming down, and I'd ask all members to help welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am very pleased to introduce, seated in the east gallery, 45 grade 8 students from the St. Theresa elementary school here in Regina and in my constituency. And they are accompanied here today by their teachers Ryan Forrest and Dan Brown.

They are going to take in a part of the proceedings of the House here. Then they're going to tour the legislature, and I'll catch up with them a little later for a photo and some refreshments in room 255. And, Mr. Speaker, I know with 45 students, that's going to be a pretty good-sized drink bill when it's all over with. But I'd ask the members to join with me in welcoming our future community leaders to our legislature. Thank you.

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

Mr. Trew: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to help welcome the firefighters here today. And I want to simply commend them for bringing an annual lobby to the legislature. It started many years ago when I was much closer to the front end of my political career than the end I'm at now.

I feel a special affinity to this group because, Mr. Speaker, I was the minister that was in the right place at the right time, and we co-funded a research chair at the University of Saskatchewan to try and prove the volumes of literature that the firefighters kept giving us year after year about cancers. And that was the beginning of today's culmination of the presumptive legislation that's going to be enacted. I want to congratulate our friends, the firefighters, this day above all others. Thank you.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a great pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to all members an individual seated in your gallery, and that's my dad, Chris Broten. He took the day off from work today and is in Regina on some personal matters, and we were able to have lunch together. And it's a real honour to have him here in the Legislative Assembly. Partisan politics skipped a generation, I suppose, but I know he follows everything quite closely, and I truly do appreciate his support as my dad. So I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming Chris Broten to the Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Advanced Education.

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join the member opposite in recognizing Mr. Chris Broten. He has served the province with considerable distinction. He works within the Ministry of Advanced Education,

Employment and Immigration where in Saskatoon he is a tireless force of good and making sure that there are opportunities for individuals right across that community and well beyond. And so I'd like to join the member opposite and invite all members of this Assembly to welcome Mr. Broten to his Assembly.

[13:45]

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm honoured to rise in the legislature today to present a petition by citizens concerned about the unreasonable rent increases being experienced in the province of Saskatchewan and their call for rent controls, their call for action on something that has been termed unacceptable. In the prayer it says that they:

Respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan to take the following action: cause the government to immediately enact rent control legislation that protects Saskatchewan tenants from unreasonable increases in rent.

This petition is signed by a number of active and engaged citizens in the city of Regina. I so present.

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

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I rise to present a petition that speaks to the issue that I think we all believe strongly, that all Saskatchewan children have a right to learn in a supportive and stress-free environment that ensures they have the best possible chance to succeed in school. And it's distressing that the government's own data shows that a growing number of students require additional support to succeed in school, Mr. Speaker.

And we know that educational assistants provide support to students with special needs, including learning disabilities and behaviour problems, and ensure that their behaviour doesn't disrupt the learning environment for other children and are also an integral part of the professional team that deals with students who have different support needs.

Mr. Speaker, this petition was circulated across the province actually, and we have a number of them, some of which I'm tabling today, and speaks to the issue that Saskatchewan people feel very strongly about. 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 provide funding for the required number of educational assistants to provide special needs students with the support that they need and maintain a positive learning environment for all Saskatchewan students.

Mr. Speaker, these petitions are signed on behalf of citizens in Melville, Prince Albert, and Regina. I so present.

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

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

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

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

I do so present, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mr. Furber: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today to present a petition in support of a potash royalty review because the people of Saskatchewan are owners of the 1,000-year strategic resource, and as the owners of that resource they deserve to receive the maximum benefit from the resource. Additionally, Mr. Speaker, the CEO [chief executive officer] of PotashCorp has said that there's a new norm for potash moving forward in the world and that their profit margin of \$732 million last quarter proves that new norm standard. 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 these 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, today's petition is signed by good folks from Yorkton, Esterhazy, and Regina. I so present.

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

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise yet again today to present a petition regarding restoring funding equity to Regina Catholic schools. Regina Catholic schools received \$275 less per pupil than Regina public schools in the 2009-2010 fiscal year, amounting to a funding inequity of \$2.7 million in total. And that total is growing, Mr. Speaker, and it's growing across the province, given that this affects all the Catholic school divisions in Saskatchewan. That funding inequity places program delivery and staffing levels at risk, and we're already seeing programs being cut for the fall of 2011. The Government of Saskatchewan has denied Catholic school boards in the province representation on the government-appointed committee mandated to develop a long-term funding formula for Saskatchewan school boards. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to address the funding inequity between Regina Catholic schools and Regina public schools that provides \$275 less per pupil funding for Regina Catholic school students, totalling \$2.7 million, and make known that the continuation for another school year of funding inequity places program delivery and staffing levels at risk in Regina Catholic schools; and in so doing, immediately restore funding equity to ensure that every student in Saskatchewan, whether enrolled in a Catholic or public school, receives equitable resources to ensure every student in Saskatchewan has access to a quality education.

Mr. Speaker, these petitions today are signed by residents of Regina, Saskatoon, Cut Knife, North Battleford, Mervin, Prince

Albert, and Humboldt. I so present.

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, I stand today and present petitions in support of personal care home funding. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan residents require different levels of care in their senior years, and that personal care homes play a vital role in providing the seniors who live in them an appropriate level of care. And, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Ministry of Health currently does not fund personal care homes, although it does fund special care homes which provide services to seniors requiring higher levels of care. Therefore:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan cause the government to provide a subsidy to personal care homes, permitting the seniors who rely on them to live in dignity and independence without bearing an undue financial burden.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the petitions are signed by residents of the constituency of Saskatoon Fairview, Saskatoon, Warman, and Dalmeny. I so present.

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

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

And today the petition is signed by residents of Saskatoon, Regina, Kerrobert, Cowessess, North Battleford, Radville, Weyburn, Moose Jaw, and Yorkton. Mr. Speaker, I so present.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, I rise once again 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 a record that includes the running of deficits and increasing of debt at times of record highs in revenues, Mr. Speaker, three consecutive years of loading debt to this province, well over \$1.3 billion, and this year alone increasing the total public debt by \$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 today are signed by good folks and concerned citizens of Carlyle, Carievale, Pilot Butte, Regina, and Lumsden. I so submit.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Indian Gaming Authority Donates to Children's Hospital

Ms. Schriemer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm pleased to report the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority, SIGA, donated \$500,000 towards the new children's hospital in Saskatoon.

The children's hospital is the culmination of years of hard work and dedication by people from across Saskatchewan who want to ensure that our youth can access the best possible care right here at home. Our province is known around the world for our resource wealth, but we can all agree that Saskatchewan's most precious resource is our children.

Our government announced that we have fulfilled our commitment to fully funding the construction of the children's hospital, a \$200 million investment. The long-held dream of a children's hospital for Saskatchewan is now becoming a reality through the tireless efforts of the Children's Hospital Foundation, the Saskatoon Health Region, and all those who have donated to this project.

This donation is a significant contribution from SIGA, who gives back to the community through donations and sponsorships to many well-deserving causes. While this facility will benefit everyone in Saskatchewan, it will be especially important to our First Nations youth.

I would like to ask all members to join with me in recognizing SIGA for helping to bring us another step closer to realizing our dream of a new children's hospital. Thank you.

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

Compensation Coverage for Firefighters

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, during our session last fall, a delegation of firefighters came to the Legislative Building to lobby for changes to *The Workers' Compensation Act*. Mr. Speaker, today on behalf of the official opposition, we are proud to say their message has been received, resulting in amendments to the Act which will put our compensation coverage for firefighters in line with other provinces.

Under *The Workers' Compensation Act*, 2011, primary

esophageal cancer will be added to the list of cancers, presumptive occupational diseases for Saskatchewan's full-time professional firefighters. This expansion is in addition to the nine forms of cancer and heart disease relating to firefighters already under law.

There are close to 700 full-time professional firefighters in Saskatchewan. Our support for these brave women and men is demonstrated through legislative work like this. It is an example of how responsible opposition and government can and should be in protecting working people. I would like to thank both opposition and government caucuses for their important work on Bill 174.

Mr. Speaker, we must also continue to protect and advocate for these brave women and men. Firefighters are at increased risk for cancer because of their work. We must continue to monitor and expand the list of potential diseases risked for our firefighters face in the workplace. As our knowledge grows regarding their exposure, so too should our protection and compensation for these selfless workers. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in showing our gratitude and recognize these brave women and men. Thank you.

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

Missing Children's Month

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm pleased to advise the House that May 2010 has been proclaimed Missing Children's Month in Saskatchewan. This important proclamation reflects our government's concern and support for all missing children and their families. This also demonstrates the Saskatchewan government's commitment to protecting children and youth as well as our appreciation for the ongoing efforts of Child Find Saskatchewan.

Missing Children's Month in Saskatchewan coincides with the 20th annual Green Ribbon of Hope Campaign organized by Child Find Saskatchewan and its national organization. Throughout our province and across Canada, the green ribbon has become a well-recognized symbol of remembrance of missing children and an expression of hope for their safe return. May 25th is National Missing Children's Day in Canada. Together this special day and month provide an important opportunity to raise awareness on behalf of missing children and their families.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I encourage all members of this Assembly and all Saskatchewan people to join with Child Find Saskatchewan in the month of May by wearing a green ribbon of hope as a symbol of remembrance for the safe return of all missing children in our country.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

[14:00]

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

Masters National Badminton Championships

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm pleased to rise to congratulate a group of Saskatoon badminton players on their performance at the recent Masters National Badminton championships held recently in Ontario. Bill Metcalfe, who lives in Saskatoon Riversdale, and his partner from Ontario, Sally Dakin, won the Mixed Doubles Masters title in the 55 to 60 age category, defeating Saskatoon players James Taylor and Marcia Jackson in a bit of a barnburner, 24-22 and 21-16.

Bill, the men's singles defending champion in the 55 to 60 category two years running, was defeated in a hard-fought final. He and partner James Taylor also had some success in men's doubles making it to the semifinals in the 55 to 60 category. This championship was a qualifier for the International Badminton Federation's World Masters to be held in Vancouver in August. Competitors needed a top-four finish at nationals to qualify. Bill, who recently turned 60, will be representing Canada in men's singles, men's doubles, and mixed doubles in the 55 to 60 category.

Bill was first introduced to badminton in high school, but took the sport up seriously in his early 20s and has proudly represented Saskatchewan at various badminton championships since then. He has taken home 32 national Masters medals over the years — 17 gold and 15 silver. Bill is a great example for all of us. He plays to win, but he also has such a love of the sport and a desire to always improve. I have no doubt he will be winning championships for years to come.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I ask all members to join with me in congratulating Bill, James, and Marcia on their success at nationals and wishing them the best of luck at the worlds this summer. Thank you.

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

Snowbirds Begin 2011 Season

Mr. Michelson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last Saturday the skies over 15 Wing Moose Jaw were filled with excitement as the Canadian Air Force Snowbirds demonstrated their acrobatic precision and speed, manoeuvrability and timing in performing their Acceptance Show for the 2011 season. The Acceptance Show is a demonstration of acrobatic professionalism and is the first official performance of the new season. It is performed before military officials, families, and dignitaries. I, along with honorary colonel of number 2 Canadian Forces Flying Training School, the Minister of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing, were delighted to be in attendance.

This year is the 41st season of the Snowbirds demonstration team, which will be performing 55 shows in 33 locations throughout Canada and the United States. The performance included a number of new manoeuvres to delight and awe audiences and is timed to selected music to add to the audience experience.

The Snowbirds have performed great shows over the past 40 years, and this year will prove to be an exciting and entertaining for all audiences. Congratulations to commanding officer,

Lieutenant Colonel Maryse Carmichael and the entire Snowbird team of pilots, mechanics, and support staff as they take off for another exciting season. I ask this Assembly to join me in recognizing the Canadian Snowbirds, one of Canada's most cherished national symbols. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Asthma Awareness Month

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, May is Asthma Awareness Month. There are over three million Canadians that suffer from asthma. It affects people of all ages, but especially affects many of our children and youth. Asthma can limit people's ability to participate in various activities and can make people more susceptible to flues and other diseases or worsen their symptoms.

Something that many people do not realize though is that most all Canadians with asthma could live symptom-free if they manage their asthma well. Despite this fact, approximately 60 per cent of Canadians with asthma do not have optimal control of their disease. This results in reduced quality of life for individuals suffering from asthma as well as increased health care costs. Improving control of asthma symptoms by using prevention methods and medications, instead of reaction or rescue medications, can help reduce hospital admissions and improve overall health of individuals.

Asthma Awareness Month is about increasing the general public's awareness of asthma as well as communicating to Canadian people that asthma can be managed. People with asthma can live healthy and happy lives, but they have to be given the proper tools and information. Asthma Awareness Month is important for encouraging Canadians who are dealing with asthma themselves or in their children to seek help and information that will allow them to live life to the fullest. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Martensville.

Member's Reports

Ms. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The member for Saskatoon Massey Place has been touted as a potential future leader of the NDP [New Democratic Party]. He is given very important jobs by the current leader like ensuring the demise of Ryan Meili. His future seemed very bright. That's why we're all surprised he's now been demoted to offering up spy reports on the Minister of Education. First in committee on April 18th, the member for Massey Place made the following report, and I quote:

Someone from the community called me and told me that on one occasion the minister shared a meal or a coffee . . . And following that, the minister left the restaurant and seemed quite animated or agitated because of something that she heard. And the minister immediately went on her cellphone in her car and made a call following the meeting . . .

Mr. Deputy Speaker, then he reported on a random note found

in the men's washroom. This was his undeniable proof about the government's alleged attitude towards teachers. And most recently, the member from Massey Place has reported on the minister's activities in her own office. He reported that — wait for it — she looked out her window, Mr. Speaker. It's all getting a little creepy.

Perhaps the member should give up on his spy games and stick to what he does best, taking out potential leadership candidates in his own party.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Contract Negotiations with Health Care Workers

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, on Monday, 60 health care professionals withdrew services in Prince Albert to bring attention to this government's failure to provide over 3,000 health science professionals with a fair and respectful contract. Mr. Speaker, the government ignored them, and today 150 specialized health care professionals have withdrawn services in Saskatoon to once again highlight chronic understaffing and unfair wages.

To the minister: the government has money to pay health region CEOs up to 60 per cent wage increases, yet they offer specialized health care professionals less than the inflation rate. Does he believe that this is a fair and respectful contract offer that values the work these people do?

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

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the issue around the health sciences certainly is disconcerting that of course there was job action on Monday, and we see it again today in Saskatoon.

The two parties were at the table yesterday, and SAHO [Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations], according to a news release, has taken more to the table. They offered the one group that the Health Sciences were concerned about — paramedics, Mr. Speaker, that they were underpaid and certainly lower than the Western Canada average, Mr. Speaker — that was addressed with, I believe, about a 9 per cent increase on top of the 7.5 to address that particular profession, Mr. Speaker. If you look across the piece, the offer that I believe SAHO has offered Health Sciences is fair and competitive, most importantly competitive with Western Canada. It puts us at, on top or above in many different professions, Mr. Speaker.

I would ask both sides to get back to the bargaining table. I think there's much more discussion that needs to take place at that level.

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, Saskatchewan EMS [emergency medical services] workers were the lowest paid in

Western Canada and the government was publicly embarrassed into increasing their offer for EMS workers. That increase does nothing to increase the offer for other health care professionals or solve the chronic understaffing that is putting patients' lives at risk. For example, Saskatchewan has the lowest number of respiratory therapists per capita in Canada. Calgary Foothills Hospital has more respiratory therapists than all of Saskatchewan.

To the minister: why is he putting patients' lives at risk by offering a contract that is less than the cost of living increases? How does that increase the recruitment and retention of respiratory therapists, speech pathologists, and any other health care professionals?

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

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, over the last three and a half years of this government, we've worked hard to make sure we have the proper complement of human resources across the province, whether it's physicians — where we've got more work to do — whether it's registered nurses, psychiatrist nurses, or any of the health sciences, Mr. Speaker, that are negotiating right now. In fact over the last three and a half years, we've seen an increase of their membership by over 20 per cent, Mr. Speaker.

In other words we're not experiencing out-migration of these professionals. We're seeing in-migration of those professionals, Mr. Speaker. And that's why it's extremely important to be competitive with Western Canada. And I think if they were to look at the agreement put forward by SAHO, you'd find that very many of those professionals will be at the average or above the average in Western Canada. Mr. Speaker, I think it's a fair and reasonable offer. I'd ask both parties to get back to the table and find some common ground, Mr. Speaker. I think that's the best agreement, is when it's a negotiated agreement.

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's quite the actually the destructive style that this government pursues in negotiations. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the only negotiation this government has done is through intimidation with the help of Bill 5, that has corrupted the bargaining process, and Bill 6, that allows them to intimidate and threaten workers and public.

Mr. Speaker, health science professionals have been without a contract for two years. The government has the money, but chooses to give it to health region CEOs instead of the people that actually care and provide for families. SAHO's last offer is a clear sign that the government has no intention of negotiating a fair and respectful contract.

To the minister: will he come to his senses, Mr. Deputy Speaker, put Saskatchewan people ahead of his own agenda, send the contract negotiations to binding arbitration so a fair, respectful deal could be worked out and the families can get the health care they deserve in this province?

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

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, as I've already said in my answer, that we really believe that there's still much more discussion that can happen at the bargaining table. That's why we're asking both parties to get back to that bargaining table, Mr. Speaker, because we believe that a negotiated settlement is the best settlement.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, I want to quote from an article that was in the paper a number of years ago and it says, "I firmly hold to the view that the best contracts are always those negotiated at the bargaining table between the parties." It goes on to say, Mr. Speaker, "Today, again along with the Minister of Health, [and at that time in quotes in this article] John Nilson, yesterday, I would encourage the parties to get back to the bargaining table and hammer out a negotiated settlement." Said by Lorne Calvert, Mr. Speaker, in 2002 when those members oversaw a 28-day strike by this very union.

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

Policies Regarding Rent Controls

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. A minister of this government said in a scrum yesterday that in reference to the unacceptable rent increase of more than 60 per cent faced by the people in the Portnall apartments, "We're glad this is happening in an isolated way."

Sadly, this isn't an isolated problem. In Moose Jaw, tenants were given 100 per cent increases. In another case a retired senior who has lived in an apartment since 1974 is being forced out by an increase of 30 per cent — something her fixed income cannot meet, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There are simply too many tenants in Saskatchewan that are being gouged.

To the minister: knowing that these types of rental increases aren't isolated, is the government ready to take steps to protect Saskatchewan renters with second-generation rent controls?

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, we've had this discussion in the House for many days now talking about rent controls. And we know that the members opposite are in favour of rent controls, and we know that our government believes that what we need to do is have more homes on the market and more money in the pockets of the people so that they can have some options.

Mr. Speaker, right now we know that the vacancy rates have improved in seven out of nine of Saskatchewan's largest cities. In fact the vacancy rate when the members opposite were in power was 1.2 per cent. Today it's 2.5 per cent. Mr. Speaker, we also know that there's the multiple housing unit construction increases just brought out yesterday. It said that multiple unit starts are up 745 units between January of 2011 and April of 2011.

Mr. Speaker, there's more work to be done, and we know that. And we know that in every one of these cases is an individual that's looking for a home. But at the same time, the rent control

that the members opposite are talking about is not the answer. More units is the answer.

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

Mr. Forbes: — You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if she'd read that whole story yesterday, she would have known those units were for home ownership — home ownership.

Mr. Speaker, the same minister yesterday used the analogy that if a car dealer doubled their price, a customer could look elsewhere. And no one is writing us or coming to the legislature to complain about a shortage of cars, but they certainly have been talking about a shortage of affordable housing. The minister effectively dismissed their concerns, saying he's happy to see market forces prevail.

To the minister: considering the lack of new rental construction that's occurred over the past four years, isn't it safe to say the market has failed and by not responding to this, this government has in turn failed the renters of Saskatchewan?

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I think there are a number of statements that members opposite should think about. When there are new homes being built, that means there's opportunities for people to move out of rented units, have their own home, and there'll be more rental spaces available for other people.

Mr. Speaker, in 2007 when the members opposite were in government and increases were going up by 21 per cent, the members opposite had the opportunity to put in rent control and they decided against it. In fact one of their own consultation summaries talked about although there was a mixed response regarding rent control, the general conclusion was that rent controls create uncertainty and will lead to a decline in housing availability and quality. As well rent controls would be a disincentive for investment.

Mr. Speaker, we need more housing. That's why we put together a plan to make sure that we'll have 4,600 more units in place. Mr. Speaker, more work to do, but that's what we're doing.

[14:15]

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

Mr. Forbes: — And we hear now that work won't actually start until mid-July from the minister.

Mr. Speaker, this government has repeatedly failed the people of Saskatchewan when it comes to consulting. In the case of the housing summit, it's obvious that the views expressed by the people there means nothing or the government would be moving quickly to enact rent control legislation to protect Saskatchewan renters.

To the minister: a simple yes or no question. In a scrum yesterday, did the minister say, when asked about extending the notice period for rent increases, respond by saying, "We specifically asked some tenants as to whether they thought it was beneficial, and the tenants, their preference would have been to have rent control"?

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, we do consultation all the time with tenants, both at the forum and at various other places. Mr. Speaker, the reality of it is there are tenants that would prefer rent controls to a longer notice period.

Mr. Speaker, the analogy that's used is that you can simply go somewhere else if prices have gone higher, does not apply very readily to tenants when they live . . . [inaudible] . . . This is their home. They've got additional costs in moving. It's not a simple matter that market conditions prevail. For a tenant that's in a place . . . They may be a school student that's in the middle of a year; they may be a senior. For them it's a difficult situation. And, Mr. Speaker, it's something that this government takes very seriously. We are working to provide more homes. We are working to ensure that people have got good varieties and good options so that they can move. Mr. Speaker, there's more work to be done and we intend to continue to do that work.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The statement that the tenants want rent control and that this came up at the housing summit is alarming. The Premier said on May 3rd in reference to the housing summit, "There's not a lot of interest in rent control." The Premier further said that "rent control was not in demand as a result of the summit." I suppose that logic can be followed if you ignore the input of the renters themselves.

To the minister: in the last six days of this sitting, we still have time to work together and protect tenants. Will the government commit to working with our members on an amendment to provide some protections for Saskatchewan people and families that are facing economic evictions?

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, what the members opposite are asking for is some short-term gain, but it'll be long-term pain. What they're actually, what we really need to know is that we have to send a message there's this province is open to investment, that we are wanting developers to come in here . . .

[Interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. Order. I would like to listen to the answer the minister is providing. I recognize the Minister of Social Services.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, to the members opposite, I was at the summit for those days and I did talk to the non-profit organizations that were there. We paid for the way for many of

those organizations to come. I had an hour and a half meeting with them and the discussion that they had was a long-term plan to have a home in this province.

Mr. Speaker, I had questions from every one of those, from individuals, had an opportunity to discuss each area, whether it was Saskatoon, Prince Albert, Meadow Lake, Regina, right across the province. And those people were saying, what are we doing? How can we be involved in making sure there's partnerships in the province and we have more units? Mr. Speaker, that is our goal, to make sure that everybody can call Saskatchewan home. And we will do that whether the members opposite want it or not.

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

Consultation on Legislative Amendments

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the NDP voted against Bill 155, *The Natural Resources Amendment Act*, because once again this government has put forward a Bill without doing proper consultation. When the government put forward its changes to *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act* last year, the Sask Party government did not consult with the FSIN [Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations] or First Nations stakeholders who should be consulted when the government deals with wildlife issues. Bill 155 also deals with wildlife management.

When I asked the minister in committee Tuesday evening whether he had consulted with the First Nations or the FSIN, the minister said, "We believe that specifically FSIN would have been invited but obviously don't appear on my list . . ." To the Premier: why is this government refusing to consult with First Nations people?

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for the question. Mr. Speaker, in regards to this Bill, the Government of Saskatchewan consulted widely with a number of organizations in dealing with the governance of the Fish and Wildlife Development Fund, Mr. Speaker. So we consulted with a number of agencies and organizations that have membership on the stakeholder, on the existing steering committee which will now be an advisory council, and those organizations that do put names forward into the future.

I want to be very clear, Mr. Speaker, that the changes that were made to this Act, to *The Natural Resources Act*, will have no impact on treaty rights. The FWDF [Fish and Wildlife Development Fund] land will remain Crown land, and First Nations access will not be impacted any way. And I want to make sure that that's very clear for the public in Saskatchewan, and that is being communicated to the FSIN that this has . . . These changes are governance changes and have no effect on access to FWDF land.

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

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, that communication should be made during the consultative process, and the FSIN, I guarantee, will not accept that. Mr. Speaker, what the Sask Party government fails to realize is that consultations regarding Bill 155 aren't just supposed to be pleasant conversations that the Sask Party sees to have fit. The Sask Party government has an obligation under the law, a duty to consult. Considering this legislation breaks the law in failing duty to consult, will the Premier immediately repeal this legislation before it is proclaimed?

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, the member will know, the member will know — and we went through this on a number of occasions in committee — that the steering committee, the steering council as it has existed in the past has not had its roles and responsibilities or the makeup of that committee clearly defined in legislation. We have taken the step to clearly define in legislation what the roles and responsibilities and expectations of the stakeholders as well as the responsibilities of the minister and of the government, Mr. Speaker.

I want to be very clear when the member talks about duty to consult, that actions undertaken by the new advisory council will be assessed to determine if duty to consult will apply as it has in the past, Mr. Speaker. The relationship . . . Because of this Bill, Mr. Speaker, the relationship with First Nations does not change at all.

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

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, there's a very disturbing pattern that is occurring under the Sask Party government, a pattern of disrespect, Mr. Speaker. The Sask Party government failed to consult with First Nations people with Bill 132, when the Sask Party government removed 3.5 acres of wildlife habitat protected land from legislation. The Sask Party government are ignoring the concerns with Bills 162 and 161 about further restricting voting rights and how that will affect First Nations people. The Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations used an expletive when referring to a comment made by a First Nations chief. The Sask Party government got rid of the Aboriginal employment development program and placed the First Nations University of Canada in jeopardy of being shut down. And the list, Mr. Speaker, goes on.

Now we see further disrespect by once again failing to consult with First Nations people with respect to Bill 155. Again, will the Premier immediately repeal Bill 155 and pursue proper and meaningful consultations?

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, I think the disturbing pattern is the member not understanding what the legislation actually does. Mr. Speaker, clearly where the legislation moves this fund into, from a steering committee with not a clear definition of what the steering committee actually does and the

interaction between the steering committee and their roles and responsibilities, to one that is clearly defined within the legislation.

The duties of the council, as stated under the new legislation, shall advise the minister on things like the allocation and expenditure of the fund, the acquisition of lands, the administration of lands, the disposition of lands acquired, the annual budget, and the annual work plan for the fund, Mr. Speaker. None of the activity of the fund, whether it's a steering council, as it's been in the past, or now an advisory council with clearly defined roles, has no bearing, Mr. Speaker, on the relationship between the fund and the lands and First Nations in the province, Mr. Speaker. That'll be clearly outlined to the FSIN to alleviate any of those concerns.

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

Care of Children

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. All members of this Assembly have a responsibility and obligation to protect the children in our province, Mr. Speaker. Last week we had two reports released, Mr. Speaker. One was the Children's Advocate report, and the other was a report by a former assistant deputy minister in the Department of Social Services. Both reports highlighted the fact that the government is failing to meet the needs of children in its care. Both reports highlight an increase in child fatalities and injuries in care.

To the minister: have you had the time to read both reports, and has the Premier taken the time to read both reports, and what steps is the government taking as a result of these reports to ensure that vulnerable children are protected, nurtured, and cared for in our province?

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite, yes, I assure you I've taken the time to read both of those reports, and both of those reports are very important because they're talking about the children in our province. And both of them have a number of recommendations that we have looked at and many of them have already been fulfilled, things like the caseload numbers. Both of those reports talk about having more front-line workers and that's what we've done in this budget, have hired 30 more caseload workers so that people are on the front line helping our children. They're talking about things like the emergency foster homes and making sure they have things like criminal record checks and they have first aid training. Yes, that's something that we've done already, Mr. Speaker.

We've talked about the PRIDE [parent resources for information, development, and education] training that's important so that foster families, people who are looking after children that are in the responsibility of government, that they actually have more training and understand the responsibilities. That's been undertaken, Mr. Speaker. And more importantly, the caseload numbers are going down. We know that there are always going to be children in our care, and the important thing is that, if we can see a trend downward, it means that the work

that's being done is being done well.

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

Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, we're seeing a trend. We're seeing more children injured and more fatalities in the care of the government over the last three years. Mr. Speaker, the minister can stand and talk about all the things she's doing but front-line workers don't see the reduction in caseloads, the reduction in work, the reduction in pressure the minister talks about.

Mr. Speaker, children are important in our society, and we all have a responsibility to look after them and an obligation to ensure that they're safe in our communities. Mr. Speaker, Tim Korol, the assistant deputy minister, was hand-picked. He was a friend of the former minister of Social Services, hand-picked as a special adviser to her and then as an assistant deputy minister to review the situation. He has brought forward a report, and he finished the job he was hired to do even after being fired, Mr. Speaker, a report called *Saskatchewan Child Welfare: The Secret Shame*, Mr. Speaker, a secret shame.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what assurances can the minister give us that the government is taking the welfare of these children in their care seriously, Mr. Speaker? All of the indications are to the contrary — more injuries and more deaths, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite, I know that if the member would read that report, he would know that there isn't more injuries and more deaths. The trend lines really have not changed. They haven't gone down, which is really scary and I wish, Mr. Speaker, that they would.

But I want to tell you that the report that was written by the individual the member talked about, it doesn't matter to me who wrote it. What I wanted to look at was the recommendations that he brought forward: recommendations like more checkups for foster homes — that's the type of thing we're doing; ensure that the Aboriginal children that are in our care are looked after securely and that there's a cultural value in their lives — and we make sure that that's being done.

Mr. Speaker, we put more money into the Aboriginal child and family services so they can also hire more front-line workers. That's very important so that the First Nations and Métis children can be put in homes of extended families. That's something they've been asking for for a long time, and we've done it this year. Mr. Speaker, we put more money into the Aboriginal child and family institute to make sure that training could take place so that foster families within the Aboriginal families could have more families in the extended unit, Mr. Speaker.

There's more work to be done. And children are our future, and I assure you we're looking after them.

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

Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, there's a great deal more work to do, and they hire a special adviser to the minister to deal with this issue. They make that individual an assistant deputy minister with the responsibility of bringing back recommendations, Mr. Speaker. And as that assistant deputy minister works through the department, looks at concerns brought forward by families and others and brings them to the minister, what happens, Mr. Speaker? He's fired, Mr. Speaker. He's fired. Then what happens? The deputy minister's fired. The minister's moved. And what do we have? A continued increase in both injuries and fatalities of children in care in our province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, was the minister moved and was Tim Korol fired because the government wasn't prepared to protect children in their care?

[14:30]

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you what this government wants to do for children in their care. They put forward for the first time ever a committee with seven ministers, seven ministers who put all their resources together and put forward a budget of \$34 million for a child and youth agenda. The first time ever in this province, and maybe in Canada, where we go across boundaries and talk about taking down the silos between ministries and talking about a child.

It is not about a ministry. It is not about a government. It is about the children. And that's why we have new child care workers. That's why we have a 24-7 intensive family support model to prevent children from coming into care. That's why we put \$17 million to address education and employment for First Nations and Métis people. That's why we put forward \$1.6 million for fetal alcohol spectrum disorder and ASD [autism spectrum disorder]. And they're the kind of issues that are dealing with our children.

Mr. Speaker, we have to talk about the reason children are in care. And that's what we're doing as a government, and I'm proud of it.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member of the Crowns and central agency.

Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report Bill No. 147, *The Public Interest Disclosure Act* without amendments.

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this Bill, and the Bill now be read

the third time.

The Deputy Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bill No. 147 and that the Bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — The minister may proceed to third reading. I recognize the Minister of Social Services.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 147 — *The Public Interest Disclosure Act*

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

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Social Services that Bill No. 147, *The Public Interest Disclosure Act* without amendment be now read a third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

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

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the committee Chair of the economy.

Standing Committee on the Economy

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on the Economy to report Bill No. 167, *The Saskatchewan Grain Car Corporation Amendment Act, 2011* without amendment.

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

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — 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 Deputy Speaker: — The Minister of Highways has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bill No. 167, *The Saskatchewan Grain Car Corporation Amendment Act, 2011* without amendment and that the Bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — The minister may proceed to third reading. I recognize the Minister of Highways.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 167 — *The Saskatchewan Grain Car Corporation Amendment Act, 2011*

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

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Highways that Bill No. 167, *The Saskatchewan Grain Car Corporation Amendment Act, 2011* be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

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

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Human Services Committee.

Standing Committee on Human Services

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am instructed by the Standing Committee on Human Services to report Bill No. 159, *The University of Regina Amendment Act, 2010* without amendment.

The Deputy Speaker: — When shall this Bill be considered in Committee of the Whole? I recognize the Minister of Advanced Education and Immigration.

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Thanks very much, Mr. Deputy 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 Deputy Speaker: — The Minister of Advanced Education has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 159, *The University of Regina Amendment Act, 2011* without amendment and that the Bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried. The minister may proceed to third reading. I recognize the Minister of Advanced Education and Immigration.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 159 — *The University of Regina Amendment Act, 2010*

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Thanks very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I move that this Bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Advanced Education and Immigration that Bill No. 159, *The University of Regina Amendment Act, 2011* be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 174 — *The Workers' Compensation Amendment Act, 2011*

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice and workers' compensation.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of *The Workers' Compensation Amendment Act, 2011*. Mr. Speaker, our government has the utmost regard for the critical services provided daily by firefighters to save lives and protect our communities. Medical research indicates that firefighters are often exposed to hazardous, job-related conditions that over time can have serious effect on their health.

Since the presumption for professional firefighters was included in the Act in 2003, the list of occupational diseases has been expanded based on the best available medical evidence. Mr. Speaker, this government is moving to amend *The Workers' Compensation Act* to further expand the occupational disease presumption for firefighters to include primary site esophageal cancer.

Currently 10 jurisdictions including Saskatchewan have established rebuttable presumptions with respect to firefighters and certain forms of cancers. Five jurisdictions already include esophageal cancer within the presumption.

Mr. Speaker, the proposed expansion would be in addition to the already established presumption in Saskatchewan that nine

forms of cancer and heart disease are occupational diseases for firefighters. These include primary site brain cancer, primary site bladder cancer, primary site kidney cancer, primary non-Hodgkins lymphoma, primary leukemia, primary site ureter cancer, primary site colorectal cancer, primary site lung cancer, and primary site testicular cancer.

It is important to note that the legislation does not prevent firefighters, their families, or volunteer firefighters from filing a Workers' Compensation claim if they do not meet the specific requirements outlined in the presumption. As with all injuries, these will be investigated and adjudicated on a case-by-case basis with consideration given to the type of injury and the available scientific evidence.

The Workers' Compensation Board has identified 60 firefighter claims received since 2003 of which 39, or 65 per cent, have been accepted. This total includes cancers that are not currently within the established presumption, but have been found to be a result of working as a firefighter.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out to all members that there is no incremental cost to employers as a result of this amendment because claims for these diseases are already considered under existing legislation and policies. Rather the amendments simply mean that we recognize the risk that firefighters take in order to protect our lives, our homes, and our communities and want to respond more readily if they find themselves in a time of need.

This province's workers' compensation system has brought stability to the Saskatchewan workplace for the past 80 years by providing coverage at a competitive cost and protecting workers and employers against the risks and uncertainties of litigation.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, this amendment further addresses the link between specific occupational diseases and the profession of firefighting. Mr. Speaker, I'm honoured to move second reading of Bill No. 174, *The Workers' Compensation Amendment Act, 2011*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the Minister of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety that Bill No. 174, *The Workers' Compensation Amendment Act, 2011* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion? I recognize the member from Saskatoon Fairview.

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I want to join with the minister by putting on the record a few comments on behalf of the official opposition.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Professional Fire Fighters Association executive do an incredible job on behalf of their members in the area of occupational injuries and illnesses. Through their lobbying efforts they have, among other legislative changes, achieved the introduction of presumptive cancer legislation in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, they have a proud history in the area of occupational health and safety, and for those efforts I want to commend their work, and I'm sure all members in this legislature do as well.

Mr. Speaker, occupational health and safety in Saskatchewan also has a proud history, a history of not only leading Canada but of impacting the world. Mr. Speaker, I want to turn your attention to a recent book by David Bennett called *Northern Exposures*. Mr. Deputy Speaker, David Bennett worked as a firefighter in England from 1972 to 1977. While there he became a local union secretary and health and safety representative. Mr. Bennett holds an M.A. [Master of Arts] in history and philosophy from Cambridge University and a Ph.D. [Doctor of Philosophy] in philosophy from McGill University. Mr. Speaker, I want to at this time read a piece about what Mr. Bennett had to say about the history of occupational health and safety right here in our province. And I quote:

The first law in the new era of health and safety was that of Saskatchewan in 1972, two years after the Occupational Safety and Health Act in the United States and two years before the Health and Safety at Work Act in the United Kingdom. The Saskatchewan law came about under the influence of Bob Sass, associate deputy minister of Labour, and it is largely to him that we owe that particular evolution of health and safety in Canada. Not only did the Saskatchewan law set the tone of Canadian legislation but its precepts found their way into the generic health and safety convention of the International Labour Organization (ILO), No. 155 in 1981. The Saskatchewan law was heavy on worker participation in health and safety and the articulation of three health and safety rights: the right to participate in the form of joint workplace committees; the right to refuse unsafe or unhealthy work; and the right to know — information, education, and training from the employer.

Mr. Speaker, as we deal with issues of occupational health and safety, it is important for us to understand this history. Having personally listened to Mr. Sass speak, I know that Mr. Sass practises occupational health and safety with passion and set a standard for all of us to aspire to. This passion, Mr. Speaker, we all witness here today with the work being done by the Saskatchewan Professional Fire Fighters Association.

Mr. Speaker, we must understand that workers killed on the job, whether immediately or whether it be from something contracted years prior, is our responsibility. Today we move forward with the passage of Bill 174 to amend *The Workers' Compensation Act, 1979*. Mr. Speaker, I'll not go over the entire list of occupational diseases presumptions for firefighters in our legislation, but I'll say that the addition of the primary site esophageal cancer is a necessary addition.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make special mention of the efforts of the Saskatchewan Association of Fire Chiefs who were calling on the government of Saskatchewan to expand the current presumptive legislation to include part-time and volunteer firefighters.

Mr. Speaker, firefighters have among the highest rates of occupational injuries and illnesses, and they are on the front lines protecting us and our families. We owe them all a debt of gratitude for their service to our province. Mr. Speaker, I want to end by saying, when it comes to occupational health and safety, it is always a time for action. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion moved by the Minister of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety that Bill No. 174, *The Workers' Compensation Amendment Act, 2011* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Deputy Speaker: — To which committee shall this Bill be committed? I recognize the minister of workers' compensation.

[14:45]

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I designate that Bill No. 174, *The Workers' Compensation Amendment Act, 2011* be committed to the Committee of the Whole and be considered in the Committee of the Whole later this day.

The Deputy Speaker: — This Bill stands committed to the Committee of the Whole. The minister's requested leave for Bill No. 174, *The Workers' Compensation Amendment Act, 2011* to be committed to the Committee of the Whole and to be considered in the Committee of the Whole later this day. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried. Leave has been granted.

Bill No. 173 — *The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act, 2011*

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for Crown Investments Corporation.

Hon. Mr. McMillan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to tell members of the Legislative Assembly about Bill No. 173, *The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act*.

Mr. Speaker, the highest priority of any government must be the protection of its citizens and their property. The legislation before us today deals with an issue that is specific and important. *The Automobile Accident Insurance Act* was passed in 2002 and that Act has a serious flaw. When criminals steal cars, they often drive recklessly. They have little regard for their own safety or the safety of others. You don't have to be an expert in risk analysis to predict what's going to happen. It's a recipe that is all too likely to end in a crash, but it's the kind of predictable outcome that highlights the serious flaw in this legislation. Under this current legislation, criminals who crash stolen cars are entitled to all the same injury benefits that the law-abiding citizen would receive after actually paying for the insurance. Criminals can receive the coverage, even though they stole the car, even though they didn't pay for any insurance.

Make no mistake — the people in Saskatchewan, when people

in Saskatchewan have a car stolen, they are victims of a serious crime. They are often serious economic consequences for victims of car thieves. Dealing with the loss of a stolen car can put tremendous stress on a family budget. But the victimization is about more than money. People in Saskatchewan depend on their vehicles. They depend on their vehicles to visit family and to get groceries. When a criminal steals a car, all of these everyday activities can become a huge source of stress.

For many people in Saskatchewan, a vehicle is more than a means to get from point A to point B. Many people in Saskatchewan depend on their vehicle to earn their living. Farmers depend on their trucks to care for their livestock and to get field work done. Tradespeople such as electricians and plumbers depend on their vehicles to get to job sites and to haul their tools. For people who depend on their vehicles for their livelihood, the loss of that vehicle can mean a loss of many days of work.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to remember that these law-abiding vehicle owners pay for their insurance every year. Mr. Speaker, that's what makes the flaw in this legislation so serious. The legislation means people in Saskatchewan are victimized twice when criminals crash their stolen cars. The first victimization comes when the criminal steals the car and causes all of the stress that comes with that situation. The second victimization comes when the current legislation forces law-abiding citizens to pay for the criminal's benefit with their own insurance premiums.

Let's be clear, Mr. Speaker. When the Auto Fund pays for a car thief's benefits, the money has to come from somewhere. Auto Fund payouts come from the premiums that are paid by law-abiding drivers in the province. These payouts can be significant. Under the current legislation, a criminal has several benefits, one of which is if the criminal can't go back to work after destroying a stolen car, he or she could qualify for income replacement benefit. The Auto Fund's payments for the income replacement benefit can be as high as \$80,000 a year. That's not all, Mr. Speaker. After two years of receiving the income replacement benefit, the Auto Fund could be forced to provide a pension of 10 per cent per year. Mr. Speaker, many people would be happy to have a job that paid \$80,000 a year with a 10 per cent pension. The flaw in this legislation gives criminals the chance to receive that income complete with a cushy pension plan for wrecking your stolen car. The flaw compounds the injustice by forcing Saskatchewan people to pay for it through their insurance premiums.

Some may argue that criminals can't receive the income benefit while physically in prison. Mr. Speaker, that's cold comfort. The reality is that a criminal who is convicted but receives a suspended sentence could still, under the current legislation, get the income replacement benefit. Even criminals who get jail time could still receive the income replacement benefit after their release.

Mr. Speaker, there are probably those who will brush this off as an issue that is insignificant. They'll look at the total revenues and expenditures within the Auto Fund and say that a few thousand dollars doesn't matter. Mr. Speaker, those people are wrong. When the Auto Fund awards benefits to a criminal, the money comes out of the premiums of law-abiding car owners in

Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I know a young family with a one-year-old son and a Honda Civic. The insurance on this Civic is just over \$1,000 a year. If the Auto Fund pays even one criminal the maximum income replacement benefit for even one year, the cost will eat up the premiums from that family for the lifetime that they are driving. Mr. Speaker, the young family I mentioned earlier has only one car. If a criminal steals their Civic, they'll be walking. Whether they're going to work or going to get groceries, if they are to slip and injure themselves while they are walking, Mr. Speaker, they will not be covered by insurance and will have access to no benefits, Mr. Speaker, while the criminal who may crash their car will have full benefits under the current legislation, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that is unacceptable for the people in Saskatchewan and that's unacceptable for this government.

Fortunately people in Saskatchewan elected a government to fix these kinds of flaws in legislation. Bill 173 will ensure that criminals who crash stolen cars will not have access to Auto Fund benefits. Law-abiding Saskatchewan citizens will no longer be forced to pay for the criminal behaviour of car thieves through insurance premiums. When criminals steal cars and drive recklessly, they will have to face the consequences of their decisions.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people expect their elected representatives to move quickly on issues like this one. They understand the need for respectful debate, but when the issue is clear, they want action. In the April 9th edition of *The StarPhoenix* I was pleased to read that the NDP is following our lead to fix this flawed legislation. The member for Regina Dewdney committed that the opposition would support such changes. I'd like to thank the member for that support. The people of Saskatchewan are counting on him to keep his word and pass the legislation as soon as possible. To give credit where it's due, the previous government included provisions in the current legislation to strip drunk drivers of their benefits. We're looking forward to working with the opposition to implement this correction to the current legislation.

Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to holding criminals responsible for their actions, and protecting law-abiding citizens. This legislation is the latest example of the initiatives we're taking to keep our communities safe. Mr. Speaker, this government will always protect law-abiding citizens and hold criminals responsible for their actions. Criminals that steal cars and cause collisions have to face the consequences of their decisions. Law-abiding citizens should not have to subsidize criminal behaviour through insurance premiums. Mr. Speaker, Bill 173 makes sure that law-abiding motorists will no longer have to pay for crimes of car thieves.

Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 173, *The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act, 2011* be now read a second time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Government Insurance that Bill No. 173, *The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act, 2011* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt

the motion? I recognize the member from Regina Dewdney.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm extremely pleased to enter into the debate on this very important legislation. Mr. Speaker, when this was first brought to my attention by a reporter asking if we would support these amendments to the legislation, Mr. Speaker, my reaction was instantaneous because in my opinion this was an oversight, something that was missed unintentionally as we moved forward to hold accountable people who were driving and causing injury to others, or themselves for that matter, while in the act of a criminal act, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, there is no question about our support for this particular piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker. It was an oversight, as I had indicated. And I think the people of Saskatchewan benefit from the fact of the co-operation that allows a Bill like this to pass on very short notice, to be in place as protection for the people of the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the Minister of Saskatchewan Government Insurance that Bill No. 173, *The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act, 2011* be read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Deputy Speaker: — To which committee shall this Bill be committed? I recognize the Minister for Saskatchewan Government Insurance.

Hon. Mr. McMillan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I designate that Bill No. 173, *The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act, 2011* be committed to the Committee of the Whole, and request leave for the said Bill to be considered in the Committee of the Whole later this day.

The Deputy Speaker: — This Bill stands committed to the Committee of the Whole. The minister has requested leave for Bill No. 173, *The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act, 2011* be considered in the Committee of the Whole later this day. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Leave has been granted. I do now leave the Chair for the House to go in Committee of the Whole.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE ASSEMBLY

Bill No. 174 — *The Workers' Compensation Amendment Act, 2011*

The Deputy Chair: — The first item of business before the committee is Bill No. 174, *The Workers' Compensation Amendment Act, 2011*. Clause 1, short title.

[Clauses 1 to 3 inclusive agreed to.]

The Deputy Chair: — Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, enacts as follows: Bill No. 174, *The Workers' Compensation Amendment Act, 2011*.

I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — I move that the committee report the Bill without amendment.

The Deputy Chair: — It has been moved that the committee report Bill No. 174 without amendment. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Chair: — Carried.

Bill No. 173 — *The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act, 2011*

The Deputy Chair: — The last item of business before the committee is Bill No. 173, *The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act, 2011*.

Clause 1, short title. Is clause 1 agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

[Clauses 1 to 7 inclusive agreed to.]

[15:00]

The Deputy Chair: — Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, enacts as follows: Bill No. 173, *The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act, 2011*.

I recognize the member of Saskatchewan Government Insurance.

Hon. Mr. McMillan: — I move that the committee report the Bill without amendment.

The Deputy Chair: — It has been moved that the committee report Bill No. 173 without amendment. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Chairman, I move that the committee rise, report progress, and ask for leave to sit again.

The Deputy Chair: — It has been moved by the Government House Leader that the committee rise, report progress, and ask for leave to sit again.

Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Chair: — Carried.

[The Deputy Speaker resumed the Chair.]

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Chair of the committees.

Mr. Bradshaw: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the committee to report Bill No. 174, *The Workers' Compensation Amendment Act, 2011* without amendments.

The Deputy Speaker: — When shall this Bill be read a third time? I recognize the minister of labour and workers' compensation.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 174 — *The Workers' Compensation Act, 2011*

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

The Deputy Speaker: — The member has requested leave for Bill No. 174, *The Workers' Compensation Amendment Act, 2011* to be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried. Leave has been granted.

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

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved that Bill No. 174, *The Workers' Compensation Amendment Act, 2011* be now read the third time and passed under its title.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Chair of committees.

Mr. Bradshaw: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the committee to report Bill No. 173, *The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act, 2011* without amendment.

The Deputy Speaker: — When shall this Bill be read a third time? I recognize the Minister for Saskatchewan Government Insurance.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 173 — *The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act, 2011*

Hon. Mr. McMillan: — Mr. Speaker, by leave, I move that this Bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member has requested leave for Bill No. 173, *The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act, 2011* be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Leave has been granted. I recognize the Minister of Saskatchewan Government Insurance.

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

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved that Bill No. 173, *The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act, 2011* be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Deputy Speaker: — When shall the committee sit again? I recognize the Government House Leader.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Next sitting, Mr. Speaker.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 162

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

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

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And it's a pleasure to rise and offer some comments on Bill 162, changes proposed to the local elections Act.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill has been a bit contentious, I would say, in many of the comments that have been made and many, I think,

from where it initially started last fall. But the government, despite there being some opposition and some questions in one particular area, seems bound and determined that this piece of legislation should go ahead as is and are not offering any comment for further consultations on the legislation proposed.

I guess, Mr. Speaker, I need to go back to the beginning when the legislation was tabled. And on November 30th of 2010, there was a press release that was put out by the Government of Saskatchewan that speaks to this Bill being introduced, *The Election Amendment Act* or *The Local Government Election Act, 2010*, and it actually was tied in the same press release with *The Election Amendment Act, 2010*. And I mean obviously from both of the Bills putting forward a number of the same initiatives, mainly the voter identification and photo ID [identification] as it has been referred to on numerous times, there is some differences in the pieces of legislation but, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is one area where they are similar.

And in the press release the minister made the comment that it's appropriate and necessary for Saskatchewan to follow suit with the standards that are being used for the next federal election. Well, Mr. Speaker, that federal election has been held, and I'm sure all of us are aware of issues that came about with the identification and how that was defined and how it was applied at a variety of polling stations. And the Minister of Municipal Affairs made the comment in the same press release that "Voter identification improves accountability and transparency in local elections . . . These amendments help our entire province move forward."

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are many people that would disagree with that. And I know myself and many of my colleagues will disagree with that. And there are many people throughout the country who disagree with the federal government requirements and how they have been applied. In fact there are court challenges that are currently ongoing, I believe, in British Columbia was the main one that I read about.

Mr. Speaker, there has been a fair bit of discussion, not only in comments made in this House, but in a broader context. And I think first and foremost we need to look at the explanatory notes and some of the changes that are being proposed. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are some good ones that looks at the existing provisions that are in with the current legislation and changes that are being proposed, and I think first and foremost, terms of office.

That is something that has been requested by municipalities, to look at the length of term for municipal governments. And, Mr. Speaker, this has been talked about in SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] for quite some time and SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] for quite some time. And at the last chance to make any changes, the government actually didn't go ahead with them. They left off, they put forward other changes, but left off the term of municipal governments and school board officials, moving that from three to four years. And then for some reason they came forward with it on this piece of legislation. Now, Mr. Speaker, I don't think anyone really disagreed, and we expected it to be brought forward the last time when the municipalities were pretty well unanimous that they supported the initiative. So it was a bit of a surprise. But then when it came forward this time,

it is packaged in with some other changes.

There is some existing provisions on by-elections that are being changed, also changing of polling places. And there is clarifications when it comes to duties of a returning officer and appointment of officials, and clarification that enumerators need only be appointed if the council or a board has directed the preparation of a voters' list. So there's a number of other provisions that are contained in this piece of legislation and the amendments to the legislation. I would say many are good; they are what's been requested. There is some changes when it comes to the whole idea of the use of a voters' list, Mr. Speaker, that I guess we will deal with a little more in committee.

But what it talks about is the existing provision is in election materials. The returning officer shall provide, free of charge, one copy of the advanced poll list mentioned to each candidate who requests one. And the change will clarify that an advanced poll list is only required when a voters' list is being used. So municipalities have the option of compiling a voters' list or using voter registration forms. And currently section 61(1.1) requires the deputy returning officer to prepare an advanced poll list, whether or not a voters' list is prepared. Now, Mr. Speaker, I don't know how this does away with concerns of inappropriate voting, but it's something that for sure I will be asking questions on once this Bill moves to committee.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's a number of changes that have been put forward in this Bill, and I know, and I'm sure you're aware also, that the most contentious of all has been the requirement for identification and photo ID that was put forward by the government. Now, Mr. Speaker, many people will say that, and I know the minister had stood and talked about there will be a number of other options that are available to voters, a number of other pieces of identification that will be acceptable at the polling stations.

And, Mr. Speaker, that really just confuses the matter even more and raises a number of concerns because what this is doing is putting the list of acceptable identification into regulations. And what that will mean, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is after this session of the legislature, there is more than enough opportunity for the government to require any type of identification that it likes. And there will be absolutely no public debate on the required pieces of identification because when it's in regulations there will be the ability of the government to change the identification required for a voter to carry to a polling station, and it will only take an order in council that will be signed off in cabinet and that the people of this province will have no opportunity for discussion. The people and the taxpayers and the voters of this province will have no opportunity for input, and we will only find out about it after the fact, Mr. Speaker, once it is already signed off and is the law of the province of Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, that makes many people nervous.

[15:15]

Mr. Speaker, there was an editorial in *The New York Times* April 26th of 2011, and it notes that Republican lawmakers across the United States are passing laws requiring citizens to show photo ID before they can exercise the right to vote. *The*

New York Times stated that the clear intent and effect of the photo ID legislation is to lower voter turnout and particularly participation in elections by groups that traditionally support the Democrats — the young, the poor, and African-Americans.

Rarely noted outside of the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly is that that is currently what's going on and is being put forward by the Sask Party government and that they are pushing through the Assembly these two pieces of photo ID legislation. And evidently it's been inspired by Republican vote suppression legislation and is for the same purpose, to lower voter turnout and particularly voter turnout by groups who do not support the Saskatchewan Party government — the young, the poor, and minorities.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the right to vote and to have an impact on the decisions that affect you in your daily lives is fundamental for a democracy that we enjoy here in Canada and in the province of Saskatchewan. And it's a right that should be exercised by everyone in a free and democratic society, not just the comfortable or the privileged or those who are doing relatively well under the status quo, Mr. Speaker.

The list of people that this government has failed is long and is growing. This government has failed seniors in this province. And we've all talked of and seen and met with seniors who are struggling to cope with the rising cost of living and in particular rising rents and the rising cost of utilities. Soon they will be impacted by the rising cost of food, and they've already been hit with the rising cost of transportation. And now they're frustrated by this government's broken promises on health care which are coming more and more quickly. And many seniors are telling us that they feel let down, even betrayed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by this government.

Now at a time in their lives when many of them no longer have a driver's licence and may not be travellers, world travellers, Mr. Speaker, and have a passport, this government is demanding that seniors present a photo ID when they vote. And seniors, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are one of the committed, most committed demographics in our society that feel a responsibility and understand the responsibility that each and every one of us bears and takes that responsibility seriously to make sure that they get out and vote. And they are being set aside by this government, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

This government has failed people in all walks of life. Students are angry about the cost, the rising cost of tuition; the cost of rent, utilities, and car insurance. First Nations people and Métis are angry about this government's lack of consultation on issues like *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act* and lack of consultations on Bill 155 that we heard about today, Mr. Speaker. And homeless people, there are an estimated 2,200 homeless people in Regina alone. They are angry that this government has done nothing to help put a roof over their head.

Now this, these are all people, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that are being disenfranchised by the changes put forward in this Bill and the requirement for a photo ID to be able to exercise your right to vote in whether municipal or provincial elections.

Mr. Speaker, this government has also vetoed the selection of a bipartisan committee for the Chief Electoral Officer, and they

have ignored the current Chief Electoral Officer's recommendations when it comes to changes that are needed for the elections Act, and instead went ahead and put in their own. They're preventing another political party in this province from accessing its funds and competing on a level playing field in the political field, Mr. Speaker. And they've made it harder for people to exercise their democratic rights to free speech and hold protests in Bill 43, Mr. Speaker. Now they want to make it harder for the very people whom this government has failed the most to cast a ballot.

The government says that they're trying to harmonize the rules in Saskatchewan to make them more like those in other provinces or at the federal level. But the federal legislation is currently being challenged in the Supreme Court of British Columbia by a coalition of organizations including people with disabilities, seniors, renters, and people who are homeless.

Mr. Speaker, this does not sound at all like a Bill that has been widely through the consultation process and, Mr. Speaker, we have to question as to why this Bill is being so ardently pushed forward by this government.

Mr. Speaker, this government also claims that people will not be disenfranchised, and they're pointing to measures in the legislation that give people alternatives. But all of us in the Assembly have seen instances where deputy returning officers have been overzealous in their interpretation of the rules. There is a very real danger that the clear preference for photo ID would lead to some people being exactly that — disenfranchised, Mr. Speaker. And moreover some people will find it difficult, if not impossible, to be able to comply with this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, many renters change address frequently. It will be difficult for them to prove, for example, that they currently reside at a given address. And what if they've recently moved and not yet received updated documentation from the government? And what if they have not received mail from a government agency?

Mr. Speaker, all of these will disenfranchise the voters. And we all know as politicians, Mr. Speaker, that it's important for citizens to get out and vote. And, Mr. Speaker, if anything, of anything I have learned while being in this job, it's the importance of people voting — the importance of people voting, whether it's for their library board or their school board or for municipal city councils or councils or reeves and councillors in the rural municipalities, or whether it's voting for provincial politicians or federal politicians.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, all of us have an impact on the lives of taxpayers and citizens in our province. And I believe that it is incumbent on each of us to encourage people to vote, not to be passing legislation that makes it more difficult, makes it more awkward, and puts more of a responsibility on the voter to prove to us that they are actually citizens. Mr. Speaker, it should be, the onus should be on us as legislators to support the Chief Electoral Officer to make sure that processes are put in place that make it convenient and easy for voters to vote.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill puts it all backwards. And it is not incumbent on the voters; it is incumbent on us to make sure that

we put forward a system that is easily accessible to citizens of this province, that we encourage them to vote and to speak their voice with their vote, and make sure that they are active and have every opportunity possible to be active in the democratic process, selecting people to represent them at whatever the level of political involvement.

Mr. Speaker, there seems to be some real gaps when it comes to this legislation. We're looking at issues that have not been recommended by the Chief Electoral Officer as recommended changes to the elections Act or the municipal elections Act in the province of Saskatchewan. The government has totally ignored those. The government has also ignored, with the provincial changes, a long-standing premise or convention that the opposition is also consulted when it comes to changes for the elections Act.

Now the Minister of Justice made the commitment, is my understanding — I don't sit as a member on the committee — but on BOIE [Board of Internal Economy] that he made a commitment to continue with that convention of having discussions with the opposition to make sure that every member of this Assembly was comfortable with the changes that were being put forward to change the provincial elections Act, Mr. Speaker. And then it was just gone. That commitment was gone. Not only does it make me question the word of the Minister of Justice. I guess from here on in what we need to do is any commitments that the Minister of Justice is making to us, we need to ask for in writing, Mr. Speaker, with it signed. Because this is a long-standing convention in this Assembly, that all members need to look at the changes that are being proposed to the elections Act, that all members need to have time to look at them, understand how they work, have input into the changes that are being proposed, and are in agreement with those changes when they move forward to the floor of this Assembly.

And, Mr. Speaker, what that does is . . . And you will know. They have always said that each of us as representatives of our community are in fact representative of our community. And we represent the citizens of our constituencies, and we have an obligation and a responsibility to go back and talk to those, our constituents, talk about the changes that are coming forward, talk about changes that are being proposed. And, Mr. Speaker, that not only keeps our constituents informed of the changes and the importance of the changes that are happening in this legislature but it also lets us, as legislators, receive feedback from our constituents, people that maybe have worked in a polling station, people that have maybe been a returning officer at one time, maybe people that have worked on election campaigns and seen problems that have happened at polling stations, what works best. Are these changes something that will improve the process to make it easier and more readily accessible to taxpayers to be able to get out and vote? Or is it things that don't solve the problems that are there and in fact cause more problems than they are solving?

Well, Mr. Speaker, we didn't have that chance with this. The Chief Electoral Officer didn't have the chance with this. And when it comes to the municipal partners, there is numerous questions as to whether our municipal partners actually had a legitimate opportunity to voice concerns on local government elections and the changes that are being proposed in Bill No.

162.

So, Mr. Speaker, while this government has disenfranchised so many in our community and ignored so many in our community, Mr. Speaker, the changes that are coming forward in this session of the legislature, changes to the provincial elections Act and also *The Local Government Election Act*, are concerning.

Mr. Speaker, the two pieces of . . . Both pieces are requiring the photo ID, and that truly has become the major point of discussion and debate on both of these pieces of legislation. My colleague, the member from Saskatoon Meewasin, spoke yesterday on the provincial election Act and the changes proposed there and the implications of requiring photo ID, and having the ID and types of applicable ID listed in the regulations.

But, Mr. Speaker, when we look at this local government elections Act and the changes proposed, we would assume that the Chief Electoral Officer would have been consulted on legislation affecting the provincial elections, and that municipalities would have been consulted on legislation affecting municipal elections. But, Mr. Speaker, if you have that assumption, I believe that that assumption would be wrong.

Again, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party government has ignored many recommendations from the Chief Electoral Officer designed to improve the conduct of provincial elections but has introduced photo ID legislation for which the Chief Electoral Officer sees no need. So here we have the person that is in charge of elections in the province of Saskatchewan has never requested this, was never even consulted on this piece of legislation, but the government is going ahead with it anyways. So it has to be some other motive, Mr. Speaker.

[15:30]

And the case in respect to the proposed municipal voting legislation is even more outrageous. Municipal organizations were obviously not consulted on the photo ID provisions, and when the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association considered the matter after the legislation had already been introduced, the president of SUMA wrote to the Saskatchewan Party Minister of Municipal Affairs on April 19th of this year, Mr. Speaker, and asked, and I quote, “. . . the government to remove the voter ID sections via amendments during the committee deliberations.” Now SUMA made this request because voter identification changes, and I quote, “presented numerous challenges” including that they, and I quote again, they “appear to be unnecessary,” and they “raise the possibility of voter intimidation.” Mr. Speaker, I don’t believe I have ever heard the term voter intimidation used in connection to a Canadian election. For sure I’ve never heard it used in an election, a municipal election in Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, SUMA went on to say, and I quote, “They are likely to negatively impact voter turnout.”

So here we are, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we’re not looking at legislation that encourages voting. We’re not looking at legislation that puts the onus on the government or the municipal government to put in place a system that is secure and has safeguards but makes it easy and accessible for voters

to get out and vote. We are looking at a system that is likely to negatively impact voter turnout, raises the possibility of voter intimidation, presents numerous challenges for the municipalities, and appeared to be unnecessary.

Now, Mr. Speaker, where has the cases of voter fraud in municipal elections ever arisen? Do any of these changes, especially the voter . . . or the photo ID, Mr. Speaker, improve the system, make the system safer somehow? Well when we get into more of the consultations that have taken place since the legislation was tabled, and we look at the opportunities and the options of what is acceptable, Mr. Speaker, you will clearly agree with me and say, no, that it does not make it more accessible or encourage Saskatchewan residents to get out and vote.

So, Mr. Speaker, what’s been the response from the Saskatchewan Party government when this letter came to the minister from the president of SUMA? Well the response of the Sask Party government was not to make the changes that SUMA desired, to avoid what they referred to as voter intimidation and lower voter turnout, but to cynically mislead the executive of SUMA into believing that it was too late in the process to make any changes.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we were in estimates the other night. And of course I had a debate with the minister as to whether I could actually ask questions about this Bill or the proposed changes because he said, well it has nothing to do with the budget of Municipal Affairs because any changes to the municipal elections Act wouldn’t take effect until 2012 when the next municipal election was.

But what the minister has been committing to with the municipalities to try and get over their uncomfortableness and dissatisfaction with what’s being proposed and their concerns of what has been proposed by this government is that they are committing to education — we’re not sure what that means; it’s just kind of a general statement — committing to education for what’s required. But also they are downloading onto municipalities the responsibility to change the municipal elections and the processes they follow, which is what this Bill’s all about, and put the requirements of verifying identification and all of the other changes. They are also committing to training people within the municipalities to be able to run elections and to be able to handle the concerns that are raised when these new changes and this new Bill comes into effect.

So for the minister to say, well this doesn’t have anything to do with my budget, we shouldn’t be talking about it at estimate, Mr. Speaker, he’s incorrect. Because if you were committing to provide educational services to municipalities for changes that you are implementing with no consultations, if you are committing to training returning officers and people for the municipal elections to be able to comply with the changes that you are putting in place without consultations with any of the municipal partners and without proper consultations, and you are taking on this commitment then, Mr. Speaker, that has an impact on the budget of Municipal Affairs.

And it’s only right that if the minister or someone in the Saskatchewan Party government has decided that photo

identification needs to be a major point of municipal elections and is required in municipal elections, if they aren't going to listen to anyone and do proper consultations with not only the stakeholders but the population — because, Mr. Speaker, we are stakeholders; the general population in the province of Saskatchewan is stakeholders when it comes to changes in *The Election Act* — then they need to pay for it.

So, Mr. Speaker, there was more than a number of criteria, I think, for this Bill to be applicable to estimates because it does have an impact on the budget of Municipal Affairs.

So, Mr. Speaker, not only did we receive the first letter that was dated April 19th from SUMA, then there was a second letter that came on April 27th, 2011. Now in this second letter from the president of SUMA, to the Saskatchewan Party Minister of Municipal Affairs, it was stated by the president, and I quote:

Based on our recent discussions with your officials, it was our understanding that our interest in making changes to the provisions could not be accommodated within the remaining sitting days of the twenty-sixth Legislative Assembly.

So, Mr. Speaker, this understanding that was communicated by the Saskatchewan Party government could be no further from the truth. This Legislative Assembly sits until May 19th, so the end of next week. The photo ID legislation is not yet in committee and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you know quite well that in committee is where any amendments desired by SUMA could be accommodated. And there's plenty of time to accommodate these concerns of SUMA.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when the minister says to SUMA or someone in the Government of Saskatchewan that there is not enough time to make any changes to this legislation, the minister the other day in estimates argued that we couldn't talk about this Bill because it had no impact on the budget and estimates are to talk about the budget of the specific department. And he said this has no impact on the budget of Municipal Affairs because it impacts municipal elections that don't happen until 2012. Doesn't happen till 2012, but yet the minister says these have to go through right now.

And he won't accommodate SUMA, who is one of their major partners, and in fact many people would say the first level of government as they deal with municipalities. They deal with providing services to citizens on the ground, and many people see them as the first level of government. This minister would not even give them the consideration or respect for concerns they had to set aside this part of the proposed changes.

It's not needed, Mr. Speaker, until 2012. That's the minister's own comments. It's not needed in 2011. It's not needed till 2012. Why can't it be set aside? Why cannot there be amendments made that would make this more acceptable to SUMA, a major partner, first level of government across this province that provides service to citizens? But the minister is not accepting of the idea that he should accommodate everyone. It's kind of — or anyone — it's kind of my way or no way, and that's what the minister has said, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, even though it's not needed for a year or over a year, the minister says no, can't be done.

Now the interesting part about all of this, Mr. Speaker, there's lots of interesting parts and it's been quite a twisted journey going through this whole process.

In December of 2010, there was a press release that was put out by Municipal Affairs and it was about . . . no, it wasn't by Municipal Affairs, it was by SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] that talked about . . . And I didn't bring it with me, Mr. Speaker, but it is a press release that was put out by SGI, and it was encouraging people or letting them know that there was the option not to put a box number on your driver's licence, but to put your actual address or land description as your address. And it always struck me as a little odd why SGI would be doing this. Why would you not add it as part of the criteria for your driver's licence if you're going to go to a demand for photo identification to vote in municipal, in provincial, and it is currently being implemented federally.

And box numbers are no good, Mr. Speaker. We ran into a number of problems in the last two federal elections — three, actually, three federal elections — where box numbers were not accepted as a legitimate address, and people had to have other pieces of identification that may not be a photo ID. But, Mr. Speaker, there's been lots of questions about why not just move ahead with it and put on SGI require, instead of a box number, that you would have your actual residence listed on your identification.

So, Mr. Speaker, when we go onto the Internet on the Municipal Affairs website, there is some consultation documents that have been posted. And it's interesting to see that acceptable identification includes an original piece of ID showing the voter's photograph, name, and address rather than a post office box, as long as the ID is issued by the Government of Saskatchewan, the Government of Canada, or an agency of one of those governments.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's a whole list of cards that are on here. And it's kind of an unusual list. Driver's licence, well that's got my address and my photo on it. Health card doesn't have my photo or my address. Canadian passport has all of it. Certificate of Canadian citizenship has my name on it, but it doesn't have my address on it. Birth certificate doesn't have my address on it or my picture, my group of birth certificates that I have. Maybe the new ones do now, but those little folks aren't old enough to vote. Social insurance number card, that's stretching it there: no photo ID, no address.

Old age security card, student ID card — it's questionable what's in there. Liquor identification card, hospital medical clinic card, credit card or debit card — well my debit card doesn't have my picture on it, nor does it have an address on it. And you could find anyone's wallet or find these cards. I mean there's nothing that would verify it's mine.

Public transportation card, a library card, a library card for heaven's sake — it doesn't even have your name on it, Mr. Speaker. I can show you my library card from the Palliser Regional Library in Moose Jaw. It doesn't even have my name on it. It has my signature on the back, and if you can read my signature, you'll know it's mine. And I guess you'll know it's me if I'm at the book polling station. Canadian Blood Services card — well, Mr. Speaker, that doesn't . . . it has my name on

it, has my blood type on it, doesn't have an address, doesn't have a picture.

So my whole point of this is, Mr. Speaker, this list goes on, and there's another page of secondary options that you could bring with you. So you would have to have a combination of these. I spoke to one person, and they said look, we need to know what's required to go vote in a municipal election. We don't need these long lists that say you can use your library card or a fishing licence or your health card or your blood donor card, for heaven's sake.

[15:45]

Mr. Speaker, this legislation has not been well thought out. There has not been consultations done. And when the minister says to me there has been extensive consultations, then why on earth would an organization such as SUMA write the letter they did on April 19th asking for changes to be made if there had been extensive consultations? Why would SUMA, which is a respected organization and represents probably about 60 per cent of the population in this province, be concerned about voter intimidation, be concerned about reducing voter turnout, and be concerned about the complications that would arise from this legislation?

Mr. Speaker, it's fine. You know, I always remember a very good friend told me once when I was first elected . . . you know, I was all gung-ho about doing all kinds of wonderful things. And this person said to me, you know, if you have the majority you can pass any legislation you want. And you can. If you have the numbers in this House, you can pass whatever you like. You can just pound it through, Mr. Speaker, and as an opposition, we can voice our concern. We can voice the concerns of our constituents. We can write letters to the editor. We can table petitions, but the government with the majority can pound through any piece of legislation it wants. That's the cold, hard facts.

We all know it. We all understand it. But this person said to me, if a government has a majority, they can pass anything they like. But if the taxpayers of the province and the citizens of this province don't agree with it, don't understand it, or don't understand why it's being done, they will have great difficulty accepting it and following it because we're law-abiding citizens. I would say generally the people of this province are law-abiding citizens.

So Mr. Speaker, as a just a note of concern to this government, you cannot keep pounding through legislation. You cannot keep pounding through legislation and expecting people just to sit back and quietly accept it because it won't go on forever.

And, Mr. Speaker, clearly this is a piece of legislation that needs to have more discussion. There needs to be some education done before the legislation is passed, not after the fact when people are struggling to understand why they can't vote or being sent home if at all possible to get other pieces of paper that will verify who they are. Mr. Speaker, photo ID is required in other provinces — yes, it is — but those provinces provide free of charge photo ID for all of their citizens, free of charge they provide for all of their citizens, photo ID.

This government has done no groundwork on this legislation. They have not put in place any of the supporting pieces that need to be there to even make this move towards tighter requirement for identification to be allowed to vote and, Mr. Speaker, that's why you get into the questions of, where on earth did this legislation come from? Why is this even a priority for this government? And, Mr. Speaker, that's why we have read into the record a number of times the quotes out of the editorial that was in the *New York Times*. And it talks about that the "Republican lawmakers across the United States are passing laws requiring citizens to show photo ID before they can exercise their right to vote."

And maybe, Mr. Speaker, I'll insert one of my own words: Republican lawmakers across the United States are passing laws requiring citizens to show photo ID before they are allowed — before they are allowed — to exercise their right to vote. *The New York Times* states that "The clear intent and effect of the photo ID legislation is to lower voter turnout, and particularly participation in elections by groups that traditionally support the Democrats: the young, the poor and [the] African Americans."

And, Mr. Speaker, it's happening here. Mr. Speaker, so when we look at that and we say, okay, the members of SUMA can't identify any types of voter fraud. There hasn't been a huge amount of disqualified voters at the polls or ballots that have been spoiled. I mean, we can go back for a number of years and we can look at the numbers. It's all kept. There's tracking on all of it.

So, Mr. Speaker, well first we have the member from Cannington when he was in this House at 75-minute debate. He says, and I quote from *Hansard*, page 6771:

This change, Mr. Speaker, was originated by SUMA with a request to the government that these changes be put in place for voter ID to become part of the requirements necessary to vote in municipal elections. We responded positively as a government to that request, Mr. Speaker.

But when asked, SUMA, SUMA said no. Our only request was for the extended terms for municipal councillors to go from three years to four years, but any voter requirements for voter ID originated from the provincial government, or from somewhere else that they weren't aware of. So, Mr. Speaker, that's why the questions, that's why the concerns.

And I want to state again, Mr. Speaker, once you've laid out these requirements in the legislation, with details to be included in the regulations, it is the government's prerogative to change at any time regulations, and the citizens of this province will not know about it until after it is law and in force.

So, Mr. Speaker, there are red flags up everywhere with this piece of legislation. There are contradictory statements that are being made by the people holding the pen and writing the legislation and those that are holding the bag and going to have to implement and follow this legislation. And, Mr. Speaker, when we look at the comments by the member from Cannington, when we look at the comments from the minister in estimates and in this House, and when we read the letters from SUMA, clearly, Mr. Speaker, this has been

take-it-all-or-nothing dictate that has been given to SUMA and to the municipal partners.

And, Mr. Speaker, I use the term partners lightly because I do not believe that they have actually been partners in this and that the minister is saying to them you take it all or nothing. And, Mr. Speaker, this piece of legislation and the process that it has followed has left a terrible taste in the mouth of many, and I'm sure it will not be forgotten by many, Mr. Speaker. And with that I'll end my comments.

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the Minister of Municipal Affairs that Bill No. 162, *The Local Government Election Amendment Act, 2010* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Principal Clerk: — Second reading of this Bill.

The Deputy Speaker: — To which committee shall this Bill be referred? I recognize the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Hon. Mr. Hickie: — I so move this goes, this Bill be moved to Intergovernmental and Justice.

The Deputy Speaker: — This Bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental and Justice. I recognize the Government House Leader.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, with much deliberation, I move that this House do now adjourn to go to committees.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried. This House now stands adjourned until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.

[The Assembly adjourned at 15:56.]

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