



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

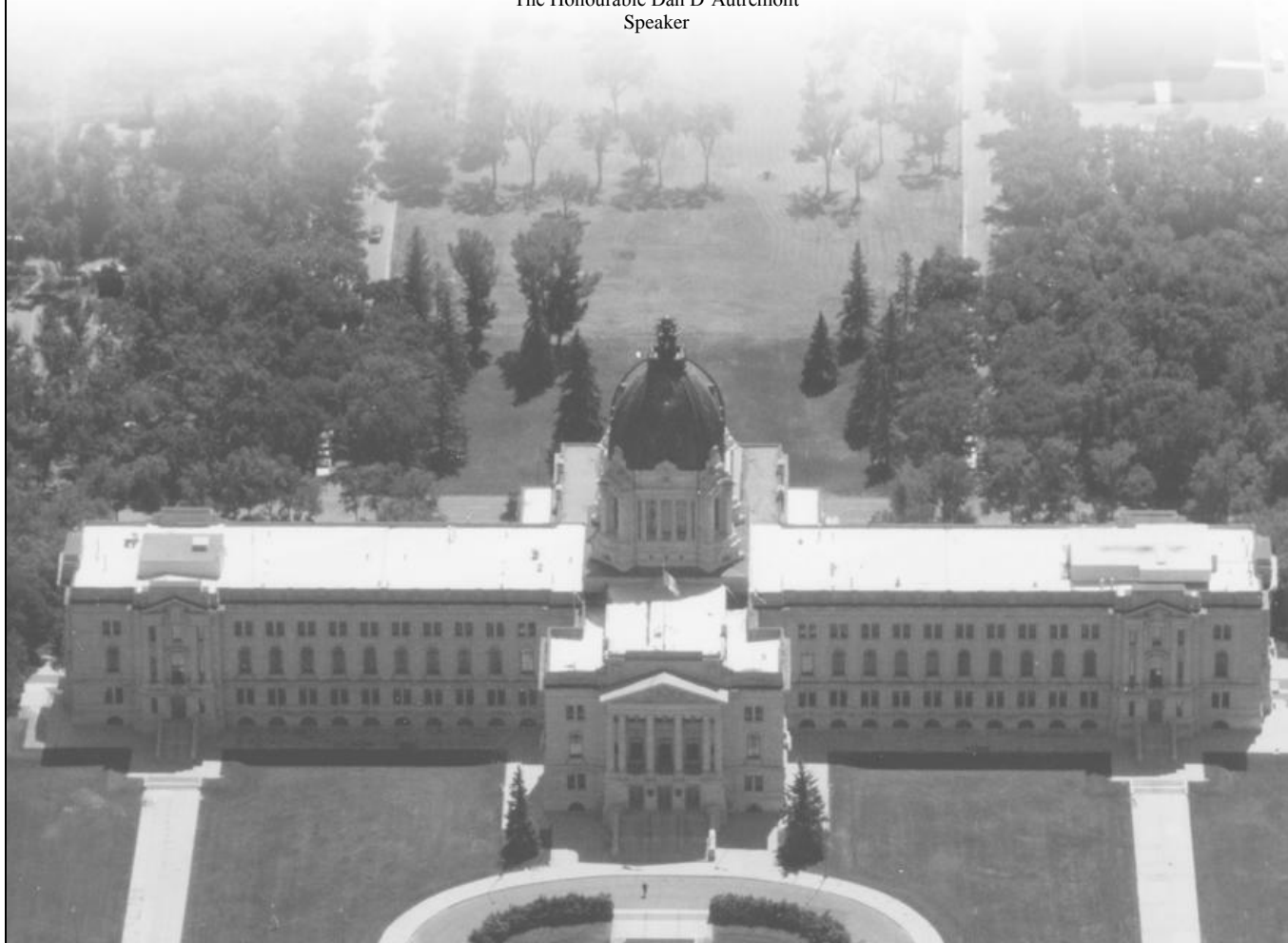
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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)

Published under the  
authority of  
The Honourable Dan D'Autremont  
Speaker



**MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**

Speaker — Hon. Dan D’Autremont  
 Premier — Hon. Brad Wall  
 Leader of the Opposition — John Nilson

<b>Name of Member</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>	<b>Constituency</b>
Belanger, Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Hon. Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Boyd, Hon. Bill	SP	Kindersley
Bradshaw, Fred	SP	Carrot River Valley
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Broten, Cam	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Campeau, Jennifer	SP	Saskatoon Fairview
Chartier, Danielle	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
Cox, Herb	SP	The Battlefords
D’Autremont, Hon. Dan	SP	Cannington
Docherty, Mark	SP	Regina Coronation Park
Doherty, Kevin	SP	Regina Northeast
Doke, Larry	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
Draude, Hon. June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Duncan, Hon. Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Hon. Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
Harpauer, Hon. Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harrison, Hon. Jeremy	SP	Meadow Lake
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Nancy	SP	Martensville
Hickie, Hon. Darryl	SP	Prince Albert Carlton
Hutchinson, Hon. Bill	SP	Regina South
Huyghebaert, Hon. D.F. (Yogi)	SP	Wood River
Jurgens, Victoria	SP	Prince Albert Northcote
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Krawetz, Hon. Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
Lawrence, Greg	SP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Makowsky, Gene	SP	Regina Dewdney
Marchuk, Russ	SP	Regina Douglas Park
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMillan, Hon. Tim	SP	Lloydminster
McMorris, Hon. Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Merriman, Paul	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Michelson, Warren	SP	Moose Jaw North
Moe, Scott	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Morgan, Hon. Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Norris, Hon. Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
Ottenbreit, Greg	SP	Yorkton
Parent, Roger	SP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Phillips, Kevin	SP	Melfort
Reiter, Hon. Jim	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Ross, Hon. Laura	SP	Regina Qu’Appelle Valley
Sproule, Cathy	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Steinley, Warren	SP	Regina Walsh Acres
Stewart, Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Tell, Christine	SP	Regina Wascana Plains
Tochor, Corey	SP	Saskatoon Eastview
Toth, Don	SP	Moosomin
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

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

**Mr. Tochor:** — Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome, to you and through you to the members of this honourable Assembly, some people who work hard on behalf of those who need it the most to put on annual events that we can all be proud of. In your gallery are — I'm just going to get you to stand and give a little raise here — Craig McGillivray, Kim Lowe, Heather McGillivray, Margaret Manz, Karla Kemaldeen. And they're from the Telemiracle committee.

This year Telemiracle raised a record-setting \$5.9 million. This committee, along with hundreds of fellow Kinsmen and Kinettes, worked throughout the year raising funds, and especially this past weekend at Telemiracle 36 down in Regina. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce you the Telemiracle committee from this past year. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the official opposition, I want to also greet the Kinsmen and Kinettes who are here as part of Telemiracle and say thank you to you on behalf of all of the people of Saskatchewan, and I guess I should say from beyond Saskatchewan as well, who are very proud of the work that you do and have done over many years. So thank you very much.

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

**Mr. Steinley:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And it gives me great privilege to introduce my sister Tanya. She's here from Halifax, and she lives out there with her husband and her two beautiful children. And it's her first time at the Legislative Assembly. And I'm just proud to say that she's here and she's happy to see the proceedings today.

And while I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to introduce my wife, Larissa Steinley. We've been married for three years, and she is the most patient woman I know. So on behalf of the Legislative Assembly, I hope you enjoy your proceedings, and welcome here.

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce two constituents of mine that are attending, to you and through you to the rest of the members of the Legislative Assembly. Joining us in your gallery first, Mr. Speaker, is Judy Buzowetsky. Judy resides both . . . splits her time between Weyburn and Blaine Lake. I think she's fairly well known to members of the legislature as

she usually attends Throne Speech day and often budget days.

Ms. Buzowetsky, Mr. Speaker, has been a member of the University of Saskatchewan senate and board of governors. She has been awarded the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal as well as the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal, Mr. Speaker, and has been very involved in community activities in both communities. So I would ask all members to welcome her to her Legislative Assembly.

As well, while I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I'm also very pleased to introduce Eileen Tunall. Eileen comes to us today from her home community of Pangman where she is very involved in her community and was very instrumental in the 100th anniversary of the town of Pangman and the surrounding RMs [rural municipality] last summer which I had the privilege of attending. So I would ask all members to join me in welcoming these two citizens of our province.

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

**Mr. Doherty:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly two guests in your gallery, seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Lee Elliott and Mr. Kyle Addison. Lee is a prominent businessman in town here, Mr. Speaker, who also gives quite a bit back to his community. He serves on the Prairie Valley school board as well as Vice-Chair of the University of Regina board of governors, and is a good friend of ours. And Kyle Addison is a former student union president at the University of Regina, Mr. Speaker, serving two terms there, and I believe is still attending university and has given quite a bit back to his community as well. So I just wanted to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling for protection for late-night retail workers by passing Jimmy's law. And we know that in the early morning of June 20th, 2011, Jimmy Ray Wiebe was shot twice and died from his injuries. He was working at a gas station in Yorkton, alone and unprotected from intruders. But we know from positive stats that convenience store and gas station robberies are down by a third if we do the right thing. That's by including two people working together or other things like barriers. So I'd read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: cause the Government of Saskatchewan to immediately enact Bill 601, Jimmy's law, to ensure greater safety for retail workers who work late-night hours.

Mr. Speaker, the people signing this petition come from Saskatoon and Regina. Thank you very much.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present petitions on behalf of Saskatchewan residents as it relates to the poor management as well as the misleading, improper, and inappropriate reporting of our finances by this government. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly call on the Sask Party government to provide Saskatchewan people with the fair, true state of our finances by providing appropriate summary financial accounting and reporting that is in line with the rest of Canada in compliance with public sector accounting standards and following the independent Provincial Auditor's recommendations; and also to begin to provide responsible, sustainable, and trustworthy financial management as deserved by Saskatchewan people, organizations, municipalities, institutions, taxpayers, and businesses.

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

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

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

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

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 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, I so present.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Cumberland.

**Mr. Vermette:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of trappers of Saskatchewan. The current regulations being in force are creating challenges that are a concern to our traditional trappers. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to recognize that the experience gained through practical experience be valued, and in so doing to

cause the government to review the current legislation and regulations with respect to trapping regulations and firearm use in consultation with traditional users.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

It is signed by many trappers and community members of La Ronge and area. I so present.

### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

#### Telemiracle 36

**Mr. Tochor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This past weekend, another successful Kinsmen Telemiracle was held in Regina, and Telemiracle 36 did not disappoint. This year's Kinsmen Telemiracle raised a record-setting on-air fundraising record of over \$5.9 million, once again demonstrating the tremendous spirit and generosity that exists in our province.

Telemiracle 36 was boosted by the special efforts of the Saskatchewan people and companies. Potash Corporation started the weekend by announcing they would match donations raised for a one-hour period up to \$250,000 on both Saturday and Sunday, in the end directly contributing \$500,000 and helping to raise a total of \$1 million.

There are also an extraordinary example of individual support for Telemiracle, with a record-setting donation of \$1.4 million made by the late Roy Wudrick of Aberdeen area.

No matter how large or small the donation, all contributions to Telemiracle and the Kinsmen Foundation are greatly appreciated. These funds go a long way in supporting those that require special assistance accessing medical treatment within the province, with all the money raised staying in Saskatchewan.

To quote Joan Steckhan, executive director of the Saskatchewan . . . director of the Kinsmen Foundation, "Saskatchewan in the old days used to do barn-buildings to help their neighbours. Now they do Telemiracle, and it's the same sort of thing."

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Nutana.

#### Rural Women's Month

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to recognize the enormous contribution of women to rural life in this province. From the dawn-to-dusk labour of the First Nations women in the pre-settlement communities to the gruelling work of pioneer women and the present-day contributions of women on the farm, in the village, and on the reserve, we give our thanks.

My grandmother came from Nova Scotia 100 years ago and raised a family of 10 on the homestead. Her generation of

pioneer women endured many hardships — no medicare for them. They were resourceful, however, and built strong families and communities through working together.

I grew up on that same farm. I know full well the contribution that women made to my community. They often shouldered the bulk of parental responsibilities at the same time looking after the economics of the household and the farm business, preparing meals at harvest time — one of my favourite times of the year — driving the tractor, feeding the cows, and participating on things like the rink committee or the church auxiliary. They also contributed to the culture of the communities through music, art, and theatre.

My sister and my sisters-in-law, my friends, our friends are the new rural women generation. The challenges they face are different than some of the pioneer challenges — shrinking rural populations and the changing face of agriculture. Isolation is still an issue and can be dangerous when they're caught in domestic violence. However this generation demonstrates the same tough and resilient mettle that the First Nations and pioneer women of the last century demonstrated.

I ask members to join me in recognizing the strength, diversity, and determination of rural women in Saskatchewan as we celebrate Rural Women's Month.

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

### Nutrition Month

**Ms. Jurgens:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I invite all people in Saskatchewan to think back to a time when they smelled the aroma of freshly baked bread as they walked through the door or heard the crunch of a carrot as they took a bite. With these memories in mind, I rise in this House to announce that March is Nutrition Month in Saskatchewan. The more than 300 professional dietitians in this province, myself included, like to say every month is nutrition month. However in March of every year, dietitians take an aspect of nutrition and highlight it.

This year the Saskatchewan Dietitians Association, or SDA, is making it easy for people to find the answers to their nutrition questions. People can now ask a dietitian via a free service provided by registered dietitians. Research shows that a dietitian is the highly specialized and regulated health professional that is the most trusted source of nutrition advice and nutrition treatment. People will now be able to pick up the phone or email this service to find answers for the nutrition questions they have from a professional registered dietitian.

Mr. Speaker, our government supports efforts to promote wellness and preventative care through education, nutrition, and physical activity. I would like to encourage everyone to ask a dietitian, to get the nutrition answers you need, and to help celebrate Nutrition Month in Saskatchewan.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Scrabble Tournament

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, later this week the member from Saskatoon Nutana and I will be taking part in a Speed Scrabble Tournament at the University of Saskatchewan. This event is a fundraiser for literacy programs in the province, with all funds being directed to READ Saskatoon, Saskatchewan Intercultural Association, and the Central Urban Métis Federation. Each group does tremendous work in providing literacy supports to adults, families, and workplaces in our communities.

[13:45]

Luckily, as social democrats, we have a natural advantage at Scrabble. Child care, Mr. Speaker, is a 17-point word. That's especially impressive if you compare it against other words, another nine-letter word like austerity, which is only 12 points.

However, the competition will be fierce. Some of our rivals include teams from the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] Aboriginal students' centre, the Scrabboriginals, and the University of Saskatchewan Students' Union aboard the USSU Enterprise. Our group is Team MLA, the Masters of the Lightning Anagram.

Our team will have to be mindful not to play Scrabble like politicians though, because acronyms don't score many points, and in speed Scrabble, if you can create many two-letter words, you've got an advantage. Sadly, short and sweet is not always how people would describe politicians.

Mr. Speaker, as we enter this fundraiser — this is the important part, Mr. Speaker — we ask for the support from our colleagues from both sides of the House. The member from Saskatoon Nutana and I just happen to have pledge forms with us. Any donations to Team MLA will be greatly appreciated. I also want to ask all members to join me in offering our thanks to the hard-working volunteers and directors of these organizations and to the USSU [University of Saskatchewan Students' Union] and its Learning Commons Partners for hosting the event.

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

### Engineering and Geoscience Week

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to inform you that the week of March 4th to 10th has been recognized as Engineering and Geoscience Week across Saskatchewan.

Saskatchewan's economy performs as a result of our highly skilled professionals. We are blessed with an abundance of resources, and the extraction of these resources requires skill and expertise as well as innovation to make processes more efficient. Today our province is benefiting from resources such as those found in the Bakken oil play. Innovations that allow us to recover previously inaccessible deposits can be largely attributed to our top-notch engineers and geoscientists. When you drive on a new highway, connect to the Internet, or fabricate a product, you're utilizing fruits of the labours from more than 7,000 engineers and geoscientists in our province.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's future looks bright, and the professional engineers and geoscientists are a big part of our successes. This is a key message of the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Saskatchewan's 2012 awareness campaign. Our government is proud of the contributions of our professional engineers and professional geoscientists to Saskatchewan's economic prosperity, environmental sustainability, and quality of life. To the engineers and geoscientists throughout the province, we thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Saskatchewan Rivers.

### Rural Women's Month

**Ms. Wilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In recognition of significant contributions to this great province, we celebrate the past and present contributions of Saskatchewan's rural women. I am pleased to speak today to recognize Rural Women's Month.

Throughout our province's history, rural women have been the hearts of our communities, playing valuable roles on the family farm and in their municipalities. The contributions of rural women are evident in the great work they do at their jobs, their contributions to agriculture, the education they provide, and the care they give to the young and to the elderly. As well, rural women are terrific volunteers in their communities and Saskatchewan has prospered due to the pivotal role they play in our province's success.

Rural women in the province have and will continue to be major contributors as Saskatchewan takes its place as leader in the new West and our rural areas add strength and vitality to the province. I would ask that this Assembly recognize the hard work and the leadership of rural women in Saskatchewan. The women of our province have been, and will continue to be, critical to the progress of our beautiful province, Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Heritage Award

**Mr. Steinley:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Each year at the city council meeting closest to national Heritage Day, the city of Regina recognizes individuals who have enhanced the quality of life in Regina through a demonstrated commitment to heritage preservation and community stability.

There are nine Municipal Heritage Award categories, and this year a Walsh Acres constituent, Charles Pirie, along with Naomi and Aaron Lynn, received the award in the Preservation category for work done at the Mulligan residence at 2022 Retallack Street. The Preservation category highlights protection, maintenance, or stabilizing the existing form, material, and integrity of a historic place, or protecting its heritage value. Nominations required submission of a written description of the nature and extent of the project, its relevancy to the preservation category, and visual documentation of the work done. In the case of 2022 Retallack, the brick walls and

fieldstone foundation were completely repaired, with the installation of a cedar roof.

Nominations are reviewed extensively by the Regina municipal heritage advisory committee and framed certificates are presented to the recipients by the mayor and community representatives at city council. These awards have been distributed since 1984. Mr. Speaker, I ask that all MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] join me in congratulating and recognizing the hard work of Walsh Acres constituent Charles Pirie on the Mulligan residence. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### QUESTION PERIOD

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

### Provincial Budget

**Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, in the past couple of months the Premier has been telling Saskatchewan people to watch out because cuts are coming in the budget. To the Premier: he's telling Saskatchewan families that nothing is off the table and that there will be cuts to services in the budget. Is the Premier going to do the responsible thing and tell Saskatchewan families today what these cuts are?

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

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd be very pleased to take that question on behalf of the government and respond to a situation that has been under way since November the 7th. We have been working on a budget for the province of Saskatchewan, a budget that comes very shortly after a provincial election in which the people of Saskatchewan sent a very strong message. They sent a message that said that the wild spending spree of the NDP [New Democratic Party] was just not to be accepted at all, not to be accepted.

So, Mr. Speaker, we are going to look at a budget that is going to continue with sustainable spending. It's going to ensure that our economy remains strong. We want to ensure that the Saskatchewan advantage continues, that we remain a leader in this great country, and the budget on March 21st will continue to show that.

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

**Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, the people of this province are concerned that the Premier's been talking out of both sides of his mouth. One minute the Premier is talking about austerity in the budget and having to make difficult decisions. He's telling people to be ready for lots of budget pain. In the next minute, the Premier's all on about a boom, about investment and population growth, and travelling around the world to tell people about that.

To the Premier: is he going to level with Saskatchewan families and tell them if it's a time of prosperity or is it a time of austerity?

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

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, now is the time for leadership in this great province, Mr. Speaker. Now is the time for this province to build, to build on what we have been able to succeed. The people of Saskatchewan have worked tirelessly to move from a have-not province under the NDP to a have province now, Mr. Speaker.

People in this province sent a very clear message to the NDP. The message was, we are not going on a wild spending spree. We are not going to spend three billion or four billion or some analysts have said even five billion dollars worth of promises in the last election campaign, Mr. Speaker. We're not going in that direction.

We're going to ensure that there is a balanced budget to ensure that there is sustainable spending so that, Mr. Speaker, we can meet those challenges of the future. Saskatchewan people want Saskatchewan to be a leader forever, and this government will do everything that it can to plan a budget that is balanced and sustainable.

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

**Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, the people of this province know when this province became a have province, and it's not the revisionist history that those people present across the way. They know that there was \$2 billion in the bank when they took over in 2007, and people are asking, where's the money? The Premier uses lots of slick words, and he takes part in flashy news events about economic growth and prosperity. But common sense Saskatchewan people are rightfully seeing these as diversions for cuts he's made in health care, for cuts in education, for cuts in social services. And now the Premier is signalling more cuts.

To the Premier: is he going to step out from behind the slick words and flashy news events and tell Saskatchewan people whose job is going to be cut? What services are going to be lost? Mr. Premier, we ask on behalf of all of the Saskatchewan people, stop with the fancy words and flashy news reports and just tell us what's going on here.

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

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Since November 7th, Mr. Speaker, there was one really, really obvious cut that was made. That was made by the NDP: they cut their leader, Mr. Speaker. They cut their leader. Because you know, Mr. Speaker, they had an election platform that had promises and promises and promises. Mr. Speaker, the member from Rosemont in fact said, you know, we have to listen to the voters. We have to listen to the voters, and we have to understand that revenue sharing can't be the way the NDP promised it.

Well, Mr. Speaker, within a short while, a number of hours, that member was saying no, sorry. The leader has now spoken, and we will continue to say that our plan is one of spend, spend, spend, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we will present a balanced budget on March 21st. It will be a budget that will move Saskatchewan forward. And, Mr. Speaker, I ask the member to just stay tuned, stay on board, and listen to the budget on March 21.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — A quick fact, Mr. Speaker: one side of this Assembly has a record of fiscal balance, prudence, responsibility. The other side is the Sask Party.

The Sask Party government's third quarter financial report did not paint a true picture of our finances. To say the least, it was misleading. That government has stripped dollars out of our rainy day fund and Crowns, had hidden debt on the books of Crowns and school boards to manufacture a phony financial outcome. The Premier in one sentence talks about record growth and prosperity, and austerity and cuts in the next.

To the minister: how is it that at a time of apparent unprecedented opportunity and economic activity that our finances have been mismanaged to the point that Saskatchewan families are now bracing for cuts?

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

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the first four years of our government, our government made significant changes to the personal income tax, saving hundreds of millions of dollars for the people of Saskatchewan. We've made changes to the education property tax, saving hundreds of millions of dollars, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, you know the last year that the NDP . . . the full fiscal year of 2006-2007, the debt of the province of Saskatchewan for Crown corporations and the public debt was \$10.8 billion. Today, Mr. Speaker, that number has fallen to \$8.1 billion, Mr. Speaker.

So he wants to know, the member from Rosemont, the member from Rosemont wants to know where the money has gone. The money has gone into the hands of people of the province of Saskatchewan. It's started to deal with the infrastructure deficit that that government left us. And, Mr. Speaker, it lowered the debt by \$3 billion, saving the property tax payers millions of dollars of interest costs.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — The Finance minister over there seems to be a little on edge here today, Mr. Speaker, and I can understand. But as a small reminder, the last time this side of the Assembly was in government it left billions in account, a red-hot economy, and billions in surplus, Mr. Speaker. That was our record.

Two years ago the Premier said he was cutting the civil service by 16 per cent over four years. A plan to reduce services, yet our population is growing, straining programs and infrastructure whether in the classroom, health services, or as it relates to housing.

To the minister: be straight. How many Saskatchewan people will lose their jobs, and what programs and services relied upon by Saskatchewan people are being served up on the chopping block?

[14:00]

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

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think the people of Saskatchewan sent a very clear message on November 7th. Sixty-four per cent vote said that this is the plan that we want to see followed, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite stands and says, you know what? They got it wrong again. The people of Saskatchewan got it wrong. We're the only people to lead this province.

Mr. Speaker, last year, this past fiscal year that still has another 26 days left, I guess, in it, Mr. Speaker, we encountered mother nature that was not as kind as it could have been — 360 million more dollars were allocated to deal with the flood conditions in this province. Mr. Speaker, we met that challenge. We met that challenge of providing additional dollars to ensure that the PDAP [provincial disaster assistance program] claims were met, that ensured that farmers were compensated accurately, Mr. Speaker. And you know what, Mr. Speaker? We're still going to end up with a balanced budget and in fact a surplus, Mr. Speaker, for '11-12.

We're going to do the same in '12-13. It's going to be sustainable spending that is fully, fully funded.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, I don't know how he says that kind of stuff with a straight face. Three straight deficit budgets as verified by our independent Provincial Auditor, and that's what our Finance minister tries to project to Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker.

The Premier is cutting jobs for Saskatchewan people. The Premier is telling Saskatchewan people to prepare for cuts in programs and in services. On the other hand, the Premier's spending \$150,000 to fly to Ireland. He's spending \$700,000 to increase the number of MLAs, and he's wasting millions on a high interest loan scheme in education.

To the minister: how does he justify this sort of spending at a time when he's telling Saskatchewan people that they deserve less, that program cuts should occur? How does he square that circle?

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

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Mr. Speaker, as I said, it's still a few days to budget day, and we will disclose all of the relative material. But you know, Mr. Speaker, the member from Rosemont makes an interesting comment. His very first comment was that the Q3 [third quarter] results showed information that was hidden. It was hidden. Mr. Speaker, we were very upfront. We said that we were going to take \$325 million from the Growth and Financial Security Fund, and we were going to pay down the debt. We did that. The member opposite says, stands in this house, and he says we've clouded things by taking the money out of the fund to do something, I guess pay for the flood damages.

Mr. Speaker, it was a promise in the budget that we would lower the debt by \$325 million. We said we were going to take the money from the Growth and Financial Security Fund. And,

Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what we did. What we said we were going to do, we delivered, Mr. Speaker. We keep our promises.

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

#### Accommodation in Seniors' Facility

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Health: does he think it's acceptable to evict senior citizens in their 80s and 90s from public facilities with just days notice?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is referring to St. Mary's Villa in Humboldt. I've been aware of that situation, Mr. Speaker. The Saskatoon Health Region is in charge of that area of the province, of course, and has moved in this direction.

I certainly have not been satisfied by the way that that procedure has been conducted. The health region, I think too, is looking at it retrospectively, saying that it wasn't handled properly. The CEO [chief executive officer] from the health region has apologized to the families. I want to, on behalf of the provincial government and the Ministry of Health, apologize to those 10 families that were in assisted living housing in Humboldt. I want to apologize as to how this has rolled out. It simply is unacceptable. We have worked very hard over the last three and a half to four years to put patients first in our health care system, Mr. Speaker, and this is an example where patients weren't put first.

Mr. Speaker, that is why I have asked, with the board Chair, Jim Rhode, from the Saskatoon Regional Health Authority, to call the Ombudsman. We sent a letter to the Ombudsman to investigate this and put forward recommendations so this does never happen again.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, we welcome the investigation of the Ombudsman, but we question why it has taken so long. If there was a sincere feeling, Mr. Speaker, on members opposite that what happened was incorrect, why has it taken until now for the Ombudsman to be called in to look at this situation?

Let's look at the timelines, Mr. Speaker. Family members tell me that the seniors who resided at St. Mary's Villa in Humboldt were given their eviction notices on February 15th. Originally families were told that they had until the end of March to move from the facilities. However, on very short notice they were told that they had to be out by February 21st, given just days to pack their belongings and find a new location.

My question to the minister: when was he informed, when was the Health minister informed about the evictions, and why did he choose not to intervene and ensure that these seniors were treated with respect?

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



**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, as I said we are not happy, our government is not happy with the way this had rolled out, the timelines. In fact the CEO of the health region also commented on the timeline factor. That's something that needs to be looked at.

You know, when you have people that have been living in a facility and they are up in age, to kind of turn over their world in a week is probably not satisfactory at all, Mr. Speaker. That's why we want an independent investigation into this through the Ombudsman's office that can look at how the whole procedure rolled out, Mr. Speaker, and put forward recommendations that will help us and guide other health regions into the future, if anything like this happens into the future so that proper notification is given, so that proper communication is given. Just from looking through and being briefed on this issue a number of times over the last week or so, I think probably one of the biggest faults in this whole process was clear communication. And that's something that we should be able to correct very, very easily, Mr. Speaker.

It is unacceptable that it rolled out the way it was. That's why our government is taking steps to investigate so that we can help health regions into the future deal with these situations much more timely and professionally.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, the minister is correct in his statement in saying that the timelines need to be looked at. I did not hear in his response any answer as to when he was informed about the evictions and why he did not choose to intervene and ensure that these seniors were treated with respect.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's common sense here in the province that individuals, seniors who built this province, deserve to be treated properly. Seniors living in their 80s and 90s on very fixed incomes, some with health challenges, deserve to be treated better. Here's a quote, Mr. Speaker, from one of the families in speaking about the situation:

The stress on these elder seniors this week has been unbelievable — first being given less than a week to come to terms with moving from what they considered their final homes, then the stress of a disastrous move.

We have a typical response in the minister here from the Sask Party front bench. They're always there for the happy press release. They're always there for the positive story. But when there is a problem, it's always someone else's fault. There always needs to be an investigation done on somebody else. It's never the minister who is responsible. It's never a clear indication as to what the minister knew and why he did or did not act.

Question to the minister: why did he allow this situation to be managed so horribly?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, in case the member opposite didn't hear, I apologized on behalf of myself, the

government, and the Ministry of Health. The way this was handled was not acceptable.

We are taking responsibility. That's why we've called in the Ombudsman to have a look at it. Our government had promised in an election that we would have a health care ombudsman. What we have done is put extra funding into the Ombudsman's office to look into health issues. This would be one of them. This is a classic example why we need an independent officer to look into this. The Chair of the health region agrees as well. The CEO of the health region has apologized.

It's not that anyone is trying to shirk their responsibility here — not at all. What we want to do is . . . This has happened. It was unacceptable. Most all will agree with that. Let's look at how we can make sure this never happens again.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, if the minister is so concerned about the well-being of these seniors who were forced out on short notice, why does he make news of the Ombudsman doing an investigation minutes before question period? Why was action not taken earlier? To me it indicates that the minister is more concerned about his own political neck as opposed to making sure that the residents there are treated well and treated with respect.

Mr. Speaker, one of the family members had this to say about the situation:

They're feeling pushed around. They're feeling manipulated. They're feeling that they aren't getting straight, honest information. The only transparency here is the velvet glove covering the iron fist . . .

Mr. Speaker, these are individuals who built this province, the individuals living in the facility. My question to the minister: can other seniors in the province expect this type of treatment? Can other seniors in this province expect the iron fist, or will they be treated with respect and dignity?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, over the past four and a half years that our government has been in place, we've worked with seniors across this province, making sure that they have the proper care, the proper facilities to live in, Mr. Speaker. We've had, I think, a strong record — more to do, more to learn, Mr. Speaker.

This is an example where that didn't go correctly, Mr. Speaker, but I can tell the members opposite a little bit about respect, and respecting seniors. Just after I became the Minister of Health, I toured a number of long-term care facilities like the one in Watrous that, under that government, had pails on the front floor, Mr. Speaker, whenever it rained because water was coming through the roof. That's the respect that those members opposite had for seniors. I went to Rosetown where people were living in a basement, that only . . . The second exit for that place was up a spiral staircase, Mr. Speaker. That's the respect that those members had for seniors.

We will not take a lesson from those members opposite on who has respect for seniors, Mr. Speaker. We're replacing 13 new long-term care facilities. Mr. Speaker, we've doubled the senior income plan, something that they didn't touch for 16 years, Mr. Speaker. We won't take lessons from the members opposite.

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

### Essential Services Legislation

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today we're very disappointed to learn that the Sask Party government has waited until the 30th day to announce that they'll be appealing the Court of Queen's Bench ruling essential services legislation unconstitutional. To the minister: what has changed over the last 30 days that today the minister announces the government will be appealing the ruling?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We'd indicated when we received the judgment some four weeks ago that we were going to be looking at it with a view as to whether it was appropriate to appeal it or not appeal the decision. That's why the courts allow for a 30-day appeal period. And we have reviewed the matter carefully. The judgment contains things in it that we do not agree with and, Mr. Speaker, we have chosen to file a notice of appeal. And for the benefit of the members opposite, we are working at the same time to try and improve and rectify problems that exist in the essential services legislation.

But, Mr. Speaker, make no mistake about it, this is a government that is absolutely committed to essential services legislation. The people of this province deserve to have legislation in place that ensures their safety and security when they travel on highways and when they seek medical help, Mr. Speaker. Those are the commitments that we are making to this province.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party has spent taxpayers' money hiring and consulting with lawyers to draft a piece of legislation that the Court of Queen's Bench ruled unconstitutional. Now the minister says the Sask Party government will spend more taxpayers' money and tie up more of the justice system time appealing the decision.

To the minister: what exactly are the costs that Saskatchewan taxpayers will pay?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, I can advise the members opposite that the litigation is conducted by staff lawyers within the Ministry of Justice. I can advise the members opposite as well that those are the most competent lawyers in that area, I think, in Canada. They have reviewed the judgment carefully, and they are proceeding with the appeal and will deal with it in the ordinary and usual course, Mr. Speaker.

We feel that the judgment that came down, with great respect to

Justice Ball, created a new constitutional right, a constitutional right to strike. While we support workers right to strike, we do not think it should be something that is embodied in the constitution of our country and as such, Mr. Speaker, we have chosen to appeal that portion of the judgment.

Mr. Speaker, we are a government that remains absolutely committed to essential services legislation. When it comes to snowplow operators, when it comes to health care workers, we want to ensure that the citizens of our province are appropriately and adequately cared for. And, Mr. Speaker, I believe that that's something that organized labour in our province wants to ensure happens as well.

[14:15]

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Yes, as the minister talks about, he's concerned about this new right to strike that somehow he has a question about it being in the constitution, but what I just want to read from the ruling is page 128 or page 129, section 280:

I have determined that the rights to bargain collectively and to strike are protected by section 2(d) of the Charter. *The Public Service Essential Services Act* infringes on those rights . . .

To the minister: can he explain why he is spending yet more taxpayer dollars dragging out a legal fight that is driven by pure ideology instead of common sense that is clearly in the sense of Saskatchewan people?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, I commend the member opposite for his careful reading of the decision. The quote that he has made from the decision is exactly the portion of the judgment that we have chosen to appeal. It is the portion of the judgment that creates a constitutional right to strike. It is something that does not exist in Canadian jurisprudence now nor has it ever existed in the past.

Mr. Speaker, we have a number of other provinces that have contacted us expressing concern about this new-found constitutional right. Mr. Speaker, Justice Ball is well-known and is highly regarded in this province, but in this case he has created an issue, an area of law that we do not feel existed before, and we are concerned with that and how it will impact the province as we go forward.

Mr. Speaker, it is our intention to appeal this, and also at the same time to work with the workers of our province to try and ensure that we get an essential services package piece with legislation that we can go forward with that protects the public and also adequately protects the workers of our province.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Athabasca. Why is the member from Athabasca on his feet?

**Mr. Belanger:** — I would ask for leave to introduce a guest, or guests.

**The Speaker:** — The member for Athabasca has asked for leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — The member for Athabasca.

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. With me is a friend today that I want to introduce that comes all the way from Beauval. I understood he moved to the city here, but Rene has been around northern Saskatchewan for years. He is one of the famous hitchhikers of northwestern Saskatchewan. I had the opportunity to pick up Mr. Lafleur on the road a few times and he makes his way throughout Saskatchewan. But I understand he is visiting the Assembly today. He has since moved to the city, so I am sure the mayor of the city would be very happy to have you here, Rene. And with him is his support worker, and her name is Tricia Solie, or Solie. I want to make sure I say it twice to make sure I get it right. But, Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of the Assembly to welcome these two very special guests, Rene Lafleur and Tricia Solie. Thank you.

### TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

**The Speaker:** — I hereby table in accordance with the Board of Internal Economy directive #22 the Members' Accountability and Disclosure Report for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2011.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

#### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill No. 25 — *The Ombudsman Act, 2011*

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 25, *The Ombudsman Act, 2011*. Mr. Speaker, the Office of the Ombudsman was created in 1973 to facilitate the independent evaluation and resolution of complaints about the services provided to the public by government ministries and agencies.

The current legislation governs both the Children's Advocate and the Ombudsman. It has remained substantially unchanged since the creation of the Office of the Children's Advocate in 1994. This Act applies only to the Ombudsman and updates this important legislation in six important ways.

It clarifies the Ombudsman's jurisdiction over health care services in this province and expands the Ombudsman's authority to provide public education, particularly on fairness. The Bill further ensures that a complainant may communicate with the Ombudsman in private, facilitates the voluntary provision of information to the Ombudsman by ministries, government agencies, and health entities. It also enables an entity to reconsider its decision based on a recommendation from the Ombudsman and allows organizations that are not

within the Ombudsman's jurisdiction to request and receive his or her assistance.

Each of these changes supports the work of the Ombudsman. They provide new ways for Saskatchewan people to resolve their concerns about services provided by the government through its ministries, agencies, and publicly funded health entities.

Mr. Speaker, while the Ombudsman has always had jurisdiction over health care services provided by the government, this authority is not clearly stated under the current Act. To highlight the Ombudsman authority in this area, the Bill clearly defines publicly funded health entities, which include regional health authorities, health care organizations, affiliates, and the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency. This new definition, combined with the efforts of the Ombudsman's office to educate the public on its role, will help people deal with health care issues. The Ombudsman has indicated that he will continue to work co-operatively with the publicly funded health entities and quality of care coordinators to resolve issues.

For a number of years, the Ombudsman has provided public education in his role. To provide the public and the agencies within his jurisdiction with a better understanding of how the Ombudsman assesses a complaint and determines his recommendation, the Ombudsman is interested in providing public education on fairness. This new Act provides the Ombudsman with the authority to conduct public education on fairness in government services.

Some of the most vulnerable citizens in Saskatchewan seek out the assistance of the Ombudsman. This Bill contains enhanced requirements that will assist these individuals in contacting the Ombudsman in a private setting.

The current Ombudsman legislation encourages the resolution of complaints through the use of negotiation, conciliation, and mediation. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the vast majority of complaints are resolved without the need for the Ombudsman to begin a formal investigation. The resolution of complaints through non-adversarial methods is further encouraged in this Bill by specifically allowing ministries, agencies of government, and publicly funded health entities to voluntarily provide information to the Ombudsman without needing a formal notice of investigation. Voluntary provision of information allows complaints to be resolved quickly and with few administrative steps. This will benefit the complainant.

In some cases the Ombudsman will recommend that a ministry, government agency, or a publicly funded health entity reconsider a decision that is the subject of a complaint. Mr. Speaker, unfortunately there are instances where, despite the desire to follow the Ombudsman's recommendation, it is not possible because the statutes governing the situation state that certain types of decisions are final. This Bill contains specific authority for the ministry, agency, or publicly funded health entity to reconsider its decision, if appropriate, on the recommendation of the Ombudsman. Again, this provision assists in resolving complaints more effectively.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, the Ombudsman's office has earned respect both inside and outside of government for its good work

investigating, resolving, and reporting complaints about the fairness of services provided by the government. As a result of this respect and positive reputation for resolving disputes, organizations that are not within the Ombudsman's jurisdictions request his assistance from time to time. In the past, the Ombudsman has always had to decline to assist these organizations even in circumstances where it is recognized that he has much to offer. This Bill enables the Ombudsman to provide assistance in appropriate circumstances to organizations outside his usual jurisdiction. The government anticipates that municipalities, school boards, and self-governing professions may contract on a fee-for-service basis with the Ombudsman to review their processes and policies and make recommendations for improvements.

Our province benefits from a strong and independent Ombudsman's office to assist Saskatchewan people in resolving their disputes with the government. Mr. Speaker, this Bill strengthens this role and facilitates the effective operation of the Ombudsman's office. The Ombudsman and his staff were extensively consulted during the preparation of this Bill. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of Bill No. 25, *The Ombudsman Act, 2011*.

**The Speaker:** — The Minister of Justice has moved Bill No. 25, *The Ombudsman Act, 2011*. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

I recognize the member for Athabasca.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise on behalf of the official opposition to give our perspective on this Bill, the Act in reference to the Ombudsman in terms of clarifying his or her role and certainly clarifying the role that he or she or the office would play in educating the public and also to ensure that there are proper resources and staff and support for the Ombudsman.

Mr. Speaker, for those that aren't clear about the role of the Ombudsman, as many times they certainly have the opportunity to investigate arguments and claims against the government through its various agencies and departments and so on and so forth . . . So those that are listening at home and really are trying to understand what the role of the Ombudsman is, it's a much similar role that the MLA may play, although the MLA certainly may bring a more political tone to some of the processes. The Ombudsman is supposed to be completely neutral and certainly try their very best to assist those people that may have a number of concerns with government agencies such as social services, housing, health care issues now as the minister has alluded to, and so on and so forth. So the role of the Ombudsman certainly is there to help and assist people and to investigate claims against the government, and they take this work very seriously.

I know that the Ombudsman has had some busy, busy couple of years under the Sask Party government. And I anticipate, Mr. Speaker, that there'll be more busier times for the Ombudsman as the Saskatchewan Party government starts showing their true colours and starts to begin to show exactly how uncaring they are to the people, and certainly to the different agencies that are supposed to be there to help the people of Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the minister alluded to the current Act that did not really address the Ombudsman role in relation to the publicly funded health care agencies. He talked about the health district, the cancer services, and so and so forth. And, Mr. Speaker, we have to really begin to address the whole matter because we all know that the Ombudsman has made many, many recommendations over time.

As MLAs and as legislators, we know that the Ombudsman has identified some of the weaknesses within government. And as the minister alluded to, or made reference to, there are times that the Ombudsman could be of incredible value and benefit to an issue around health care and some of the lack of delivery points that many of our people suffer through.

So I think it's important to note that I think the ombudsmen have always looked at the notion of trying to make sure that if there is an opportunity for them to play a role, that they're ready, willing, and able to provide that assistance. And this Bill, as the minister pointed out, it really clarifies the role that health has to play in relation to working with the Ombudsman's office.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what I want to point out to the public of Saskatchewan is that this Sask Party government certainly pointed out before the last election that they were going to hire a health care ombudsman — that was the general thrust and direction that the Sask Party mentioned — and that they had done that with great fanfare saying then, at the time, that the NDP weren't taking care of all the health challenges of the people of Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, they touted having this health care ombudsman. And now, several years later, they're changing their mind again. And that's exactly what the people of Saskatchewan are beginning to realize with the Saskatchewan Party government. They say one thing that is intended to sound good in public, but the reality is they do the exact opposite, Mr. Speaker.

So when the minister talks about increasing the role in terms of the Ombudsman's office and the staff and the resources to include health agencies that the province works with, then I begin to understand, begin to ask the question . . . Well there's two questions I have. The first one is, how about the resources and how about the powers and how about the ability for the Ombudsman to assume the additional duties and additional responsibilities for health care that they were talking about several years ago? So I would assume that when you're talking about a health care ombudsman as was touted by them a couple of years ago, that I think you need to have a separate ombudsman for health care and health care alone, Mr. Speaker. That's what they spoke about and that's what they promised the people of Saskatchewan. Now what they're saying, we're going to roll into the current Ombudsman that does all the other work and all the other agencies, well this Ombudsman is now going to take care of the health care matters.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan really don't like that kind of activity at all because they were promised a separate health care ombudsman, Mr. Speaker. And the key thing on this front is now we're seeing that they're not going to be doing that. They're going to simply roll over the health care responsibilities to a current Ombudsman who is overworked already and may be overworked very quickly once people begin to realize what the Sask Party has planned for the people of

Saskatchewan.

[14:30]

Now, Mr. Speaker, when he spoke about clarifying the health role, the minister was fairly direct when he said, you know, investigating publicly funded health agencies, and he made reference to the cancer clinic and of course the health districts. Now, Mr. Speaker, how about the private clinics that these guys are bringing en masse to Saskatchewan? We see a lot of private clinics popping up all over the place and, Mr. Speaker, we ought to begin to ask, is this part of a larger scheme that the Saskatchewan Party has in bringing forward their ideology of taking away the role of government when it comes to health care? And this is kind of concerning to me as well is, if it's only about the publicly funded health agencies, where does the private clinics, where does the private practices, where does the private operators in the province of Saskatchewan, where do they fit in relation to this additional duties that the provincial Ombudsman has?

So, Mr. Speaker, it's all about making sure that the Bill, when they get up and make some of these statements, that as the official opposition, we have to make them account. We have to make them account for some of the things that they said when they were in opposition, for some of the things they said after they became government. Now we're seeing after the election that really the true agenda is coming out, that they never did have any plan for a health care ombudsman, Mr. Speaker. They never did have that plan in place. It sounded good. We'll tell the people of Saskatchewan we want to do this, that the health care ombudsman would be somebody that would fight for the people against all these other groups that might, including government, that may not have served them well. That was their angle. That was what the current Minister of Health was saying, that we need a health care ombudsman to fight for our people when they're not served well.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what we're seeing now, as I mentioned, is a watered down version, an incredibly watered down version as proposed by the Minister of Justice, and certainly in trying to clarify the role of the current Ombudsman by saying, well maybe the original deal we had with the health care ombudsman, well maybe that was a bit too much. Now we're going to water this thing down. We're going to include the health care matters in with the current Ombudsman in addition to all the work that the current Ombudsman work. Here's another big stack of concerns and complaints as it relates to the health care field, and this is now part of your new duties.

Now, Mr. Speaker, people in Saskatchewan are a very, very intelligent breed and they will begin to realize exactly what is happening. It's the same old, same old, say one thing and do the exact opposite, that the Saskatchewan Party has been known to do. And, Mr. Speaker, this is yet another example in Bill 25 of how they're going to simply roll over health care responsibilities and complaints over to the current Ombudsman as opposed to creating their own health care ombudsman as they promised before the election.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in northern Saskatchewan . . . And you have to be very careful in this regard because these health challenges are faced all throughout Saskatchewan. I want to make sure that

people note that issue as well. But in northern Saskatchewan we know that the Ombudsman has had many cases where they've been engaged, they've been involved in, whether it's a social services dispute or a child care dispute or whether it's even the housing concern, that they've been engaged. Now in northern Saskatchewan we look at some of the challenges that we have in our region, whether it's overcrowded housing or youth suicide or whether it's just the drug challenges that some communities face. And you look at all the positive things that people want to do. Now if there's a concern about the lack of service, do they go to this Ombudsman who's already overworked and under-resourced and understaffed and say, well here's a problem we have with health, is there are no services? What role does the Ombudsman then play in this regard? Does this mean that the Ombudsman can now turn around and say, okay, Sask Party government, you promised this, you better deliver that?

Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister's alluding to the fact that they may have this opportunity. And underline the word "may" because in the language and the legal context the word "may" is radically different than the word "shall" because may is obviously an opportunity whether they want to engage themselves or not — they have the choice — whereas the word "shall" means you have no choice but to engage yourself and to be critical of the government where criticism is well deserved.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think it's really important that we take a few moments to tell people out there that it is not something that we take lightly. Our role in the opposition is that we want to make sure that the government is held to account. We're going to do this with every Bill they bring forward. We're going to make sure that we approach the appropriate people and the appropriate agencies to make sure, to make sure, Mr. Speaker, that they know that they have a role to play as well.

And whether you live in northern Saskatchewan or southeastern Saskatchewan or in the middle of the province in the cities or western Saskatchewan, we want you to be engaged and involved with as many of these Bills as possible because the input from people are really, really important.

And this Ombudsman Act, as I mentioned at the outset, when the Sask Party was in their election mode, we wanted a independent ombudsman for health care, period, because it's needed for all the health care work and all the challenges with our health care system, and Lord knows there are many challenges. It'll continue being a challenging area, Mr. Speaker.

And that the ombudsman concept, people of Saskatchewan embrace. As I mentioned at the start, they like that concept. And they said, yes, that sounds like a good idea. But now, Mr. Speaker, fast-forward to after the election. What does the Sask Party do? They say, well we're not going to create that office. We're going to simply slide it under the current Ombudsman, and this current Ombudsman will have all the additional work of dealing with health care. But guess what, Mr. Speaker? None of the resources, none of the staff, and certainly none of the power.

So once again we're seeing how the Sask Party operates, Mr. Speaker, and in particular *The Ombudsman Act*, Bill 25, really has a lot of work ahead of it. And people are not happy, Mr.

Speaker. They are not happy with the manner in which they're being dealt with.

Now, Mr. Speaker, part of the Bill the minister alluded to was educating the public in terms of the role of the Ombudsman and certainly what their office can or cannot do. And certainly I think educating the public on many fronts is really important. It's really important, as I try to do in trying to deal with some of these Bills. I try the education process to the Assembly so people know what the Ombudsman is about and know what the ombudsmen do and so on and so forth.

Now what I hope happens, Mr. Speaker, in the process of educating the public as the minister alluded to in Bill 25, that there is no undue influence or pressure from them to tell the Ombudsman that you can't deal with this particular issue or you can't deal with this particular client or you can't bring forward this kind, this kind of concern. I want to re-emphasize that the Ombudsman office is an independent office of the Assembly. It is not somebody that the Saskatchewan Party government should try and muzzle or interfere with — that they have to remain independent as possible.

Now in that independence, Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the question: is that if the minister alludes to the fact that the current Act is going to allow the Ombudsman to look at the health care challenges and bring forward some of the concerns, is the lack of a service, Mr. Speaker, is that considered a challenge? Is that something that the Ombudsman can freely criticize this government about, Mr. Speaker? And obviously I think that's only fair that that occur.

And the second point is on the process of educating the public. These are some of the questions the public needs to ask. Just how independent and how powerful is the Ombudsman in correcting two or three things, Mr. Speaker? One is to ensure that these complaints are addressed seriously because people's lives and health are at stake. And number two is to make sure that they have the ability to hold this government to account in its own forum by way of, by legal means if necessary to make sure that these concerns are addressed. And the third point, Mr. Speaker, is to make sure that the lack of services is also included in the bailiwick of concerns that they can deal with. Because, Mr. Speaker, it's not just about a surgery that was held up. It's not just about an appointment that was not honoured. It's also about the lack of services out there throughout rural Saskatchewan, throughout our cities, throughout our towns and villages, and of course throughout our North.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of questions we have on this Bill, a lot of questions: everything from the impartiality of the Ombudsman's office, the additional duties, and certainly the additional strain that the current Ombudsman is now going to assume under this Act because health care is now part of his job. And we've got to ask all the questions, Mr. Speaker. The people out there have to ask all the questions. How many staff does the current Ombudsman have? How many staff does he have? How many additional staff will the current Ombudsman get to ensure that health care is properly addressed? And, Mr. Speaker, I can almost guarantee you that when all is said and done and the dust has settled, that the Ombudsman will not have the proper resources and manpower to adequately address, as part of his expanded role, the whole challenge around health

care in the province of Saskatchewan.

That's why the idea of a health care ombudsman was probably not a bad idea, Mr. Speaker. They said it, but guess what, Mr. Speaker? They aren't going to deliver it. And that's the sad reality of this particular government, Mr. Speaker, and that's why as opposition members our job is to hold them to account. When they say things during the election, when they make misleading statements after the election, our job is to stand up and say, hold it; that's not what you said. And no matter how they twist the words and no matter how they try and recant and no matter how they try and deny, and deny that they ever said or promised to do this, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan know. The people of Saskatchewan have heard what they've said. They know what's going on.

And the reality is, is that sooner or later, the people of Saskatchewan — and I suggest it's going to happen a lot sooner than those guys across the way think — that they're going to realize the fact that the Sask Party says one thing and does exactly the opposite. And that stuff, Mr. Speaker, that action, that activity catches up to you sooner or later. And, Mr. Speaker, on this side of the Assembly, we are just waiting for that to occur when people of Saskatchewan do the shift and say all of a sudden, well you guys had great promise and hope, but guess what? They didn't deliver, and they watered down a lot of the things that they said that they would deliver, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it's kind of contrary too as well when I listen to my colleague, the member from Saskatoon, when he talked about the whole notion of the essential services Act. Now the Ombudsman, in relation to the essential services Act, he might not want to offer an opinion on whether this Bill was fair or not, but the justice system said it was unfair. It infringed on certain rights.

Now how does the essential services Act relate to the Ombudsman's role on health care, Mr. Speaker, the expanded role? So is now the overworked, understaffed Ombudsman is now dealing with the overworked and understaffed health care workers who are now dealing with the frustrated and angry patients who are supposed to be first? And you can kind of see the myriad of problems and the whirlpool of challenges that the Ombudsman, who I'm assuming would want to be engaged in this, and he's got to try and figure out what the situation is now.

And out of respect for the genders, Mr. Speaker, when I say he . . . I believe the Ombudsman is a gentleman now, and obviously it may be a lady some day, and I hope that day comes. But for now I'm saying he, not out of disrespect to our female gender but certainly that it is a he.

So how does he begin to get engaged with this process? And as you can see, Mr. Speaker, it becomes more and more confusing, more and more challenging, more and more daunting. And yet perhaps between the Patient First Review, between increased funding for health, between the health care ombudsman, all of a sudden we're seeing that what is being said across the way, it's not happening, Mr. Speaker. And like I said before, they say one thing and do the exact opposite, and the people of Saskatchewan have long, hard memories. And, Mr. Speaker, this is yet another Bill that I think is really, really important that people pay attention to.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I noticed the words that the minister spoke about negotiations, conciliation, mediation — all these really nice fancy words. And he also talks about there's fewer steps that this Bill will present to the Ombudsman to reconcile or to deal with some of the challenges or points that they're engaged with. So if a patient comes in or a person comes in and has some issues with the Ombudsman who wants their help, then the minister says there's fewer steps that they have to take now.

Well, Mr. Speaker, you've got to be very careful when the government says there's fewer steps. What people would think at the outset, well fewer steps means more efficient; I'll get my answers sooner. Well not so. Not so, Mr. Speaker. Not under this government. Fewer steps for them means there are less opportunities for the patient and the complainant to come back and appeal any kind of decision that the government makes. There are probably less avenues of support for them at the immediate front.

And, Mr. Speaker, there's probably less power for the Ombudsman because obviously they're stressed to the max and they have less manpower. Guess what? They can't deal with some of these issues on top of your issue. So what happens? Fewer steps — saying well we looked at your case; nothing can happen. Therefore, sorry, the answer's no.

[14:45]

Now the person might want to say, well I want to appeal that decision; I want to keep fighting this case. Well there's no provision for that because as part of this whole notion of fewer steps, Mr. Speaker, it is not meant to protect the complainant nor the patient nor the people. It's meant that it's less cumbersome for government to say no to the people under these fewer steps than it is, say, if you had layers of protective steps that would ensure that the public was actively allowed to pursue things like appealing some of the decisions or second round of hearings and so on and so forth.

So, Mr. Speaker, you've got to be very, very careful. And the ministers use different words. When he uses the words, "if appropriate," that's one of the words I always get a kick out of. Because when he makes the reference to the Ombudsman, he says, well if appropriate, the Ombudsman shall do this or shall do that. But if appropriate for whom? For the province or for the Ombudsman or for the patient? Like how does this work? Or the complainant? And that's where you've got to be very careful.

I indicated at the outset, when you look at the words shall and will, or shall and may, there's two different contexts there from a legal perspective, from what I understand. Because when you have the word "may," it means there's opportunities, options available. But if you have the word "will," guess what? You don't have many opportunities. The law has to be followed.

Well in this case when you use the word, "if appropriate," what does that mean? What does that mean? Is there any kind of legal action that this individual has after they get told no? The fewer steps that are allowed in appealing, guess what? It may be they're not allowed to go to the court system any more because it's not considered appropriate by the government.

So all these things, you've got to be very careful because any time the Saskatchewan Party meddles in labour laws, any time they meddle in things like the Ombudsman's Act or any time they meddle in things like *The Election Act* — and the list kind of goes on — it's not for the good of the people. It's simply that they're providing themselves with more and more insulation, more and more protective layers as a government, as they begin to cocoon themselves against any problems that the average citizen or person may have by using some of these Acts in place and using terminology like, if appropriate.

So, Mr. Speaker, I just don't buy anything that this particular minister has presented in terms of some of his Bills because I go back to *The Election Act* where people had to provide ID [identification] before they voted, Mr. Speaker. That was brought forth by that minister and that government. Now we all say, well that's kind of their voter suppression tactics. Like they must have got a handbook from the federal government, Mr. Speaker, because that's exactly what occurred. And a good example of that, Mr. Speaker, when I walked in to vote, all the people in there knew me, and I said, well I come here to vote. They said, well you can't. I said, why not? I'm the candidate. Well we need your ID. Well, Mr. Speaker, I had to go home and get my ID and show it so I could vote.

Now that voter, that voter suppression tactic that that minister brought forward didn't work with me because I happen to have a licence and I happen to have a photo ID. But there were many people in our communities and all throughout Saskatchewan, as a result of that voter ID issue that there's a lot of suppression of vote, Mr. Speaker, in key areas. And there's no question that as long as that minister provides information and brings forward Bills and Acts of that sort, then we will judge all future Acts that that minister brings forward with the same kind of scrutiny and certainly the same kind of attitude that we did under *The Election Act* that he presented to this Assembly as part of his work with the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker.

Now what I think is really important is that it's totally unfair that we do that, but if you're bringing forth a Bill with your name on it, then guess what? That Bill is yours. And by complying with the direction of your political masters to put this in place, from the justice perspective, then guess what? You ought to have known or should have known the implications of *The Election Act*, and certainly now with *The Ombudsman Act*, that what you are trying to do is overload the Ombudsman just to be . . . to dress up what your original plan was, and that was to create a health care ombudsman. You didn't do it. Now once again you're trying to slide it under the door, put it under *The Ombudsman Act*, and that's simply not fair.

So I'm thinking, Mr. Speaker, as we go down these . . . go down this process, we watch very carefully what this particular minister does because, despite the glowing words and the promise of some great things to happen, Mr. Speaker, we're finding that there are some underlying themes that is contrary to fairness, that is contrary to good judgment, and certainly, Mr. Speaker, is contrary to the people of Saskatchewan's idea of what government should be like.

Now, Mr. Speaker, *The Ombudsman Act* is something that we watch very carefully. It's one of the avenues, or venues if you will, that people have. And we will often try and encourage

them to go through the processes that are out there, including coming to the MLA office or the Ombudsman office. And a lot of the times, they do good work. But what you've got to watch now, Mr. Speaker, is in the future. We obviously know that when they're allowed to do the health care stuff that there is going to be increased pressure on the Ombudsman's office. There's going to be increased pressure. Now does that increased pressure, is there a way that they could address it by staffing? This Bill doesn't identify that, Mr. Speaker. It does not identify it at all. And we need to ask the questions.

And I can remember, Mr. Speaker, that the Ombudsman does annual reports to the Assembly, and what they do is they identify the casework that they worked on. They obviously don't have people's private names on there — they'll use fictitious names or they'll use initials of some sort — but they will present the report to the Assembly every year. And they will say, and last year we've had 600 to 700 complaints against the government. And next year it could be 400 complaints. The following year it could be 1,100 complaints. It just bounces up and down, Mr. Speaker, depending on what happens in any given year.

And they also identify in this annual report what areas, what areas that had the greater amount of concern brought forward to the Ombudsman's office, Mr. Speaker. And I can remember Social Services was quite high up there. Health care I think wasn't addressed so much there, but I think there's a lot of pressure on health care from that, you know, from that particular office. And as you can see, Mr. Speaker, every year the government and the people of Saskatchewan can review the Ombudsman report to see whether the arguments and the issues that they're involved with and the complaints that they're trying to address, whether it's increasing.

Now what's going to happen, Mr. Speaker, is because the Ombudsman is going to be able to . . . or has the additional responsibility of health care, and extra staffing is needed. And if he doesn't get it, then what happens is all the other areas will suffer. Whether it's housing issues or whether it's social services issues or whether it's child care issues or justice issues, these issues won't be dealt with. So what I think is going to happen, Mr. Speaker, is that as they're not dealt with and people become frustrated and the Act allows them fewer avenues of appeal and less and less opportunity to go to court against the government, what'll happen is these concerns will never be heard. They'll be addressed, and they'll be shelved and be put away. And all of sudden you're going to start seeing some of the concerns going down — why? — not because they're not there but because they're not being addressed.

And the other factor is if you have health care as part of your mandate and your responsibility, then the health care file will take more and more of your time. It will take more and more of all the resources in your staffing and your focus and less and less time for the other concerns and complaints from various different departments. So you see how, you know, there is an offset in the office to take the additional role of health care. All the other complaints in all the other departments will not get the time of day or the adequate time to begin to address some of the challenges that the people of Saskatchewan might have.

So, Mr. Speaker, I just want to review to the people of

Saskatchewan, so they know, the Ombudsman is an independent office of the Assembly. They investigate concerns and complaints that anybody has for this government. The minister announced changes today to the Ombudsman's Act, which includes the whole issue of having the publicly funded health agencies report to the Ombudsman now, and that's part of their office now.

They have to do all this extra work, and so that's what the minister spoke about today. He spoke about public education and spoke about a lot of things that the people of Saskatchewan may think at the outset is something that might be good. But I can assure them that all this is is simply trying to create an overworked Ombudsman's office that won't have the ability nor the strength nor the recourse to give this government more and more grief, which it should be getting.

You're going to see the increase in complaints and concerns in the Ombudsman's office. And now that they've added health care onto some of the responsibility that he has to look after, that's going to take all the attention; thereby all the other agencies that include social services or housing or highways, they will begin to suffer a lack of attention from the Ombudsman's office. And that's all designed to do one thing, and that's to insulate this government from criticism. It is not to empower the Ombudsman's office. And that's why, Mr. Speaker, we take a great interest — a great interest — in anything this particular minister presents to the Assembly because we've seen his act before and it's not something that we want to support in any way, shape, or form.

So, Mr. Speaker, my other colleagues will certainly have points that they want to raise on this particular Bill. And as we reach out to different groups out there that are impacted by this Bill — to the average citizen, to the average complainant, and certainly to the people that are delivering our health care system — we ask them to participate in this Bill. Look at it online. Contact our office if they have any information and really become engaged with what the Ombudsman's office is all about and to see what extra pressures that are being put on by this minister will result in the Ombudsman's office becoming less effective, more overworked, and with more mandate but of course with a lot less help.

So, Mr. Speaker, on this particular Bill, there's a lot more we have to say. We're going to spend our time that we have to spend to research it, to go out and meet the different groups and bring back what we think are probably good resolutions and certainly amendments to this Bill that we think would protect the people of Saskatchewan on a greater scale. So on that note, Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill 25.

**The Speaker:** — The member for Athabasca has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 25, *The Ombudsman Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

**The Speaker:** — The motion was of adjournment. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adjourn debate on Bill No. 25? All those in favour?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.



**The Speaker:** — Say aye.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Aye.

**The Speaker:** — All those opposed?

**An Hon. Member:** — Nay.

**The Speaker:** — The ayes have it. The motion is adjourned.

**Bill No. 26 — *The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal Act, 2011***

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 26, *The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal Act, 2011*. The purpose of this Bill is to repeal five statutes that are no longer necessary to retain on the books as these laws are obsolete or spent.

The first statute being repealed is *The Collective Bargaining Agreement Expiry Date Exception Act*. The Act was passed in 2005. The effect of the Act was to exempt two collectively bargained agreements from section 33(3) of *The Trade Union Act* which restricted the length of a collective agreement to three years. The two collective agreements were between IPSCO and the United Steelworkers of America, Local 5890; and Shaw Pipe Protection Limited and the Construction and General Workers' Union, Local 180.

In 2008 the government enacted amendments to *The Trade Union Act* which repealed subsection 33(3). As a result, employers in eight unions are able to negotiate collective agreements for a term that is appropriate for the parties. Given the repeal of this subsection of *The Trade Union Act*, there is no further need for this Act to continue in effect.

The second Act that this Bill repeals is *The Communications Network Corporation Act*. This is the Act that established the Saskatchewan Communications Network Corporation or SCN [Saskatchewan Communications Network]. Mr. Speaker, as everyone is aware, SCN was sold to Bluepoint Investments Incorporated on June 30, 2010. The corporation was officially dissolved on March 31st of 2011. Repealing this Act is the last technical step in the winding down of SCN as a government-owned corporation.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of Saskatchewan continues to support the film and television industry through the Saskatchewan film employment tax credit, the Canada-Saskatchewan Sound Stage, and Saskatchewan Film and Video Development Corporation.

[15:00]

This Bill will also repeal *The On-farm Quality Assurance Programs Act*. The Act came into effect in 1998 to provide a way for on-farm food safety programs to be recognized in Saskatchewan. It was designed to enhance the safety and quality of agricultural products by recognizing producer organizations and their designated delivery agents that implemented on-farm quality assurance programs. This was all done before the Canadian Food Inspection Agency agreed to its

role in on-farm food safety or OFFS.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, this Act is no longer necessary as the Canadian Food Inspection Agency has developed policies and protocol for national producer-led OFFS programs. *The On-farm Quality Assurance Programs Act* has never been used given that OFFS programs have never become national in scope. Accordingly we are recommending its appeal.

Mr. Speaker, I now turn to the repeal of *The Soil Drifting Control Act*. This is an old piece of legislation. It came into force in 1941 and gave rural municipalities the authority to pass a soil drifting bylaw on receipt of petition signed by at least 40 ratepayers.

The current legislation has been rarely used and is outdated and no longer required. Mr. Speaker, producers' attitudes towards soil conservation have changed. More than 80 per cent of the cropland in Saskatchewan is planted using zero till or minimum till systems, and that number is increasing every year. These systems protect the soil from drifting. That's why, Mr. Speaker, this Act is obsolete and can be repealed.

The fifth and last statute to be repealed by this Bill is *The Special Payment (Dependent Spouses) Act*. The Act was enacted in 1995 — 1999, rather — and provided for an *ex gratia* payment to widows whose workers' compensation benefits were terminated due to remarriage prior to September 1st of 1985. To receive the payment, a widow had to apply within a two-year period following enactment of the legislation and sign a waiver. Given the limitation on application of the benefits, there is no further need for the legislation. Furthermore, two court challenges to the Act have been dismissed.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of Bill 26, *The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal Act*.

**The Speaker:** — The Minister of Justice has moved second reading of Bill No. 26, *The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal Act, 2011*. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Athabasca.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am again pleased to rise on behalf of the official opposition to speak about some of the statutes that the minister has proposed to do away with, and certainly as people in Northern Saskatchewan say, get them off the books.

And the five Bills that he spoke about, of course the five issues that he's spoke about is the collective bargaining agreement between IPSCO and the steelworkers union; of course the argument we've had around SCN in terms of *The Communication Network Corporation Act*, they're getting rid of that particular Act; and the on-farm food safety programs, talking about CFIA [Canadian Food Inspection Agency] and where CFIA is nowadays; and of course the soil drifting appeal Act; and of course the special payments Act in relation to the widows receiving some benefits from some of their . . . through I believe it was through the national program.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that the collective bargaining agreement, when we look at some of the notes that

the minister spoke about and certainly some of the comments he made in his opening address, we always kind of cringe every time we hear the Saskatchewan Party talking about trying to do things that are right when they talk about collective bargaining. And now they have a statute — and maybe it's benign as could be — but they have a statute, talking a statute about collective bargaining agreement and ending those agreements because of the fact that this all old documentation.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would point out that we have got a lot of information that we want to shift through when it comes to this particular Bill. And we want to see what the history was and whether it sets any kind of legal precedents for any future discussion that might occur. And certainly if, at the outset, if it's simple and pure and as presented by the current cabinet folks, then I would think that people in Saskatchewan wouldn't have a concern with it. But we need to make sure that this is not something that we need to let go by the wayside, and that's why we want to take our time to look at any parts of this Act in particular when it has anything to do with collective bargaining processes, Mr. Speaker.

Now on the SCN piece, Mr. Speaker, the minister alluded to the fact that now that SCN has been sold off by us as a Crown corporation that we don't need it any more. It's gone and this Act should be gone as well. Well that in itself, Mr. Speaker, is a very loud statement as to the intent that this particular government has towards any of our Crown corporations or its affiliates such as SCN. The Saskatchewan Communication Network was a proud, proud entity that served Saskatchewan for many, many years, Mr. Speaker, and it really stimulated the film industry in Saskatchewan. It's done a great amount of good service to many aspiring actors and artists and certainly, Mr. Speaker, to the province as a whole.

And today now the minister, as part of a Bill, a Bill, and it's a very . . . again a Bill that at the outset looks very benign in terms of . . . Well it's *An Act to repeal miscellaneous obsolete Statutes Act*. Well, Mr. Speaker, even though people out there may not know that SCN has been sold, the minister was quite clear today that it has been sold to Bluepoint communications and that now this is just an obsolete statute that we have to get rid of it now. Now, Mr. Speaker, this is a sad day, not only for the people that supported SCN but for the people that thought that Saskatchewan was a great haven for developing our artists and our actors and our actresses and so on and so forth, and SCN was a very sound vehicle to do that, Mr. Speaker. It was a very sound vehicle. We had some great things happening within SCN and now it has become, as he has indicated, an obsolete statute that we don't need on the books any more.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we need to revisit that. And I can remember during the last session we had people from SCN out here that were very disappointed in the Sask Party's choice to cut SCN, to sell off any assets, and again to certainly get rid of it in many ways, shapes, and forms that they said they would. Now, Mr. Speaker, I would point out that the SCN programs itself is enjoyed by many people and we see on the news some of the impacts that it had immediately on our film industry. And the minister indicated that, during his comments, he said that this is not going to impact the film development in Saskatchewan, or the employment film tax credit program is still working, is still there. But the question I have is, how effective is it? Have you

seen any increase in any programming? Have you seen actresses and actors flock to Saskatchewan? Have we seen any kind of programs that will benefit our province, you know, as a whole? And, Mr. Speaker, I don't see any evidence of that.

So despite the minister's assurances that, oh with the film employment tax credit is still there and is still able to use it, so SCN really wasn't necessary, really wasn't needed, well I beg to differ. I think the people of Saskatchewan thought SCN was a great opportunity for us. It was a great, great venue for our actors and actresses and film directors and writers and so on and so forth to use that as the vehicle in which they can ply their trade. And now many of them have picked up and left. And that was a really sad day when SCN stopped operations and they were sold off. And despite the minister's assurances that the film employment tax credit will take its spot and still do wonders for our province, it is not so in any way, shape, or form.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would point out in my final comment to the SCN, SCN's legacy that the Sask Party now wants to wipe clean from their books, that forever and a day, I would remind this minister and that government that SCN was never an obsolete statute. It was a real entity that provided great entertainment and provided great service and developed many great actors and writers and actresses and directors, and it created a great venue for people of Saskatchewan. It created a great opportunity for many of our young people who have since left.

And, Mr. Speaker, they have morphed that into a obsolete statute and that's a crying shame. And that's one of the things I want to point out today to that minister, that perhaps in their world SCN is now an obsolete statute. But in our world and many people's world, it was a great venue, a great vehicle, a great tribute to the people of Saskatchewan and to all the people that utilized it to ply their trade and hone their skills, and many of them have still moved on and have sadly moved on. Some are still here, but most of them have sadly moved on.

And again what you have here, Mr. Speaker, is a film development employment credit, whatever they call it. It doesn't have the same bang for the buck, not in any way, shape, or form. So I am saddened today that this is how the minister views this particular Bill as it's thrown into a lump the future of SCN and the history.

Now, Mr. Speaker, on the on-farm food safety programs, you know, obviously this Bill, as the minister alluded to, is an older Bill. Now that the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, CFIA is engaged, you begin to wonder, well how heavy is their engagement? Does it take over the role that this particular statute that the minister says is no longer needed, this particular law? Does the CFIA, do they have the proper resources? Do they have the farm-by-farm service in which it can do some of this work or is it done on a large scale basis? And obviously many farms out there provide food, not only to their children and to their families and their extended families, but I imagine they must sell some of their crop to different agencies and different markets. Now obviously we think that the agricultural community is very responsible, they're probably the best in the world and they're good at what they do. But is this service that they have right now, is CFIA working with them very closely to

make sure we don't get ourselves into any difficulties over the next year or several years over farm food safety? That's really important.

And when you start moving off and start taking off the books, as the minister hopes to do today, some of these programs that are there, meant at the original introduction of these Acts, meant to protect the public and protect the families, do we have the proper systems in place now to make sure that the farm food safety and the delivery of that safe food is something that everybody watches and everybody takes seriously?

Now CFIA, Mr. Speaker, as you know, they have been all over the news. As you remember, they're involved with the mad cow scare several years ago and they're a pretty active organization. They're out and about all over the place. And certainly I sometimes wonder, the CFIA, how big have they become and certainly how effective have they become? This is always questions that we ask. And obviously when I buy some goods off the markets, whether it's potatoes or eggs, you know, I think that CFIA is probably involved with them in some way, shape, or form and they probably are.

Now on a smaller scale throughout Saskatchewan with many of the farm families, now do they have CFIA's involvement with their operation? Are they given advice? Are they given opportunity to get some of the professional people there to again make their food safer? And if there's any concerns, to address them immediately before they get to, before it's too late? These are some of the questions that you would have off the on-farm food safety programs that the minister, as part of this Bill, also wants to do away with.

So a lot of questions about CFIA's effectiveness in dealing with that issue. We need to know that that's an effective tool. You want to get rid of all those smaller programs that were meant to deal with the smaller farm families on the smaller scale, sale of . . . whether it's produce or meat. If the CFIA's able to adequately fulfill those areas and they have the assurance that they can do that, then perhaps this Bill could go. But, Mr. Speaker, I underline perhaps. If there's no backup plan in place, you be very careful on that front.

The other point I would also make, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the other statute that he's really brought about, was the soil drifting appeal Act. Certainly as you know that there's so many groups and organizations that are actively involved with watching how our land is handled. I mean the soil conservation group is a dynamic group. They've got some great ideas. And I can remember them talking about a carbon storage concept that just kind of blew my mind at the time. And so we look at the soil conservation in general that there's a lot more people, certainly, looking at how we can be more responsible as a province, in concert with the producers, in how we can really watch how we protect our land and, of course, protect the water and the soil and the air and so on and so forth. So there's no question that there's good, good people that are involved with soil conservation.

[15:15]

And again I want to reiterate my points, that if there is no need for this Act because it's an archaic Act, but the new Act has a

group of people that are highly interactive —they're intelligent, they're dynamic, they know what they're doing — if this Act is meant to come under their umbrella . . . And the soil conservation groups out there are really good people. I just remember some of the meetings that, you know, that we had with them. And if they're able to make sure that some of the challenges in this older Act are addressed and that it is assured to this Assembly and to the people of Saskatchewan, then and only then, Mr. Speaker, that you know, we can really say yes, this Bill, some of the areas we're talking about is being covered in other programs and being covered very well. Then and only then, when we get their qualifying comments, that we will believe that this Act is okay to go.

And finally the special payments, Mr. Speaker, that we spoke about in terms of the widows. There's a two-year payment plan in which many of the widows that got their benefits and an *exgratia* payment, as the minister has spoke about. And I don't know if that two years is long enough, but I'm assuming that all the matters that were dealt with. And if it's an Act that needs to go, certainly that's something that we could look at after we have had all the information in front of our members for the next several weeks.

So, Mr. Speaker, in relation to Bill No. 26, I want to point out that whether it's the collective bargaining agreement between IPSCO and the Steelworkers or whether it's SCN's activities, whether it's on-farm food safety programs, soil drifting, of course the special payments we spoke about earlier, it's something that . . . These are programs and ideas that really served Saskatchewan well.

And any time we see any kind of statutes becoming obsolete, we look at who's presenting them and we begin to question them on a continual basis, especially the Saskatchewan Party. When they talk about collective bargaining, when they talk about SCN, when they talk about on-farm food safety, when they talk about soil drifting, we always want to make sure that we pay close attention to what they're trying to do away in terms of wiping them clean from the books. And this is one particular Bill that we want to pay extreme attention to, to make sure that no services are being eroded, Mr. Speaker. So on that note, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 26.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Athabasca has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 26, *The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal Act, 2011*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

**Bill No. 29 — *The Enforcement of Maintenance Orders Amendment Act, 2011/Loi de 2011 modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur l'exécution des ordonnances alimentaires***

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 29, *The Enforcement of Maintenance Orders Amendment Act, 2011*. Mr. Speaker, *The Enforcement of Maintenance Orders Act, 1997* governs the

operation of the maintenance enforcement office. The maintenance enforcement office, or MEO, was established in 1986. It is responsible for recording and enforcing support orders registered with that office. The MEO continues to have one of the highest collection rates in Canada. Last year over 91 per cent of payments due were collected for a record-setting total of \$35 million in collections.

The Act provides the MEO with enforcement mechanisms to help ensure that support payments pursuant to orders and agreements are complied with. The Act also includes mechanisms for the enforcement of orders and agreements not registered with the maintenance enforcement office if recipients choose to pursue enforcement on their own.

Mr. Speaker, the MEO regularly reviews and suggests updates to the legislation to ensure it is offering the public the best possible service. For example the Bill adds provisions for the calculation, collection, and enforcement of interest on outstanding arrears. The MEO is in the process of implementing a new customized computer system to keep track of maintenance orders and the payments owing and received. This amendment will authorize the MEO to charge interest following the implementation of the new computer system in summer 2012. Interest collected will be payable to recipients and will encourage payers to make support payments in a timely manner.

Mr. Speaker, the Bill also adds a new provision to allow the court to order suspension of certain enforcement actions for a period of up to six months. Sometimes payers' circumstances change and they are no longer able to meet their obligations. In those cases, the support order can be changed through agreement or a new court order, but in some cases the payer may be unable to meet his or her obligations for only a short period of time. The new provision will give those payers time to resume regular payments. The suspension order will not affect enforcement already in place with respect to a driver's licence suspension, federal garnishment, federal licence suspension, or a registration in the land titles or personal property registry.

The Bill also adds a provision that will allow the MEO to enforce a maintenance order against assets located in Saskatchewan in cases where the payer lives elsewhere and the maintenance order is being enforced in another jurisdiction. Currently if an order is received from another province for enforcement, the MEO takes over all enforcement against the payer. In some cases, the other jurisdiction may want the MEO to take over enforcement in its entirety but may ask the MEO to pursue a specific enforcement action only. For example, where a payer lives in another jurisdiction but works or owns property in Saskatchewan, the Act currently allows for a garnishment to be placed in Saskatchewan at the request of another jurisdiction, but other enforcement actions are not permitted.

Mr. Speaker, the Bill also clarifies the confidentiality provision with respect to release of information retained in the maintenance enforcement office. Mr. Speaker, the amendments will revise the garnishment provisions to incorporate the new language for the seizure of accounts set out in *The Enforcement of Money Judgments Act*. Updating the language will ensure the consistency for both debtors and creditors.

Mr. Speaker, the amendments will also allow the director of the MEO to complete a demand for information with respect to a recipient. Occasionally the maintenance enforcement office may require information about a recipient such as a new mailing address.

These amendments will extend the timeline for service of a notice of attachment for an RRSP [registered retirement savings plan] from 15 to 30 days. This amendment will put the service requirements for a notice of attachment in line with other service requirements in the Act, which are all 30 days.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the Bill clarifies that agreements filed pursuant to section 7.1 must amend an existing order filed with the maintenance enforcement office. This will not prohibit parties who reach an agreement without an existing order from having that agreement enforced; however, the agreement must be filed with the court and then registered with the MEO.

Mr. Speaker, these amendments will equip the maintenance enforcement office with the necessary tools to enforce support orders. These amendments also confirm the government's commitment to the timely payment of support for children.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of Bill No. 29, *The Enforcement of Maintenance Orders Amendment Act, 2011*.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Minister of Justice has moved second reading of Bill No. 29, *The Enforcement of Maintenance Orders Amendment Act, 2011*. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Athabasca.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I certainly want to thank the maintenance enforcement office for some of the work that they've done, the fine work that they've done.

And I noticed that when we got the Bill, it's a fairly thick Bill. And the minister was very quickly going to some of the points that he's raised. And that's why it's important that we tell people out there that the opposition needs time to go through the Bills, shift through the information, to make sure there's nothing that they're trying to sneak under the table, so to speak. That is something that we want to make sure doesn't happen from our perspective as the opposition.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the MEO, in terms of their role of trying to make sure that there's judgments against parents, whether it's a dad or the mom, that they're working and there's a divorce or some other incident, that if they have to, by way of court order, pay certain amount to their spouse or to their girlfriend to help that person support that child, I think it's absolutely crucial that we continue that work, Mr. Speaker. As you know, there's many, many times that families struggle to . . . having a single parent or an older guardian. And we see that, you know, that really challenges families in general. So from the NDP perspective, we think anything that we can do to support families is really, really crucial to the future success of us as a people and as a province.

Now the maintenance enforcement office is one particular agency that does good work as, you know, as certainly as the

minister spoke about. Now having the highest recovery rate for the country is pretty impressive, Mr. Speaker. It's pretty impressive — 91 per cent of all the claims that the maintenance enforcement office deals with, that they get some kind of response. That's 9 out of 10 cases that they work with, and that's pretty, pretty impressive, Mr. Speaker.

Now when we look at the notion of collecting \$35 million from those processes, then we have to, in our minds, understand that \$35 million is going to families and going to children that may have been subjected to either a breakup in marriage or a breakup in a common-law relationship or some other activity that really threatened the family, Mr. Speaker. So it's absolutely important that we note what the maintenance enforcement office is all about. What they are is they're an independent office that goes after parents or husbands or wives that may have gone through a separation or a divorce and that they're ordered by the courts to make these child payments to the appropriate spouse or parent. And this office does great work.

And now the minister wants to add on a few components to this Bill, to this fairly thick Bill, that talks about trying to have the maintenance enforcement office become a bit stronger in terms of being able to charge interest on the arrears because he mentioned that's coming through in the summer of 2012. And I'm not sure when he talks about the arrears, what type of arrears. Is it a month-by-month arrears? Because when you talk about 91 per cent and \$35 million, how much of that \$35 million is made on time? These are some of the things we would like to know. It's more being curious than trying to be critical.

And I think what's important is that we need to find out what kind of interest is potentially being spoken about here. Is it 1 million? Is it 5 million? Like what kind of scenario are we looking at? And that's why it's important. The principle is not wrong. If people are in arrears for their child support payments and interest is kind of the penalty they'll have to pay, then if that results in better care for the child or a more secure future for that family, then so be it.

The other notion, of suspension of paying for up to six months based on some of the judgments that the maintenance enforcement office gets, you know there are many times there's changing circumstances that many parents, the mom or the dad, may go through. And obviously the maintenance enforcement office, I'm assuming that part of their success rate is because they're dealing fairly with both spouses, both the mom and the dad, and that they're sitting down with them and they're really working closely with them to try and do one thing, and that's make sure that there is some support for the children through their office.

Now if they're asking for a suspension of paying for up to six months, for whether it's the mom or the dad that can't make these payments, and it's something that I think that is probably one of the tools that they would need to make sure that the conciliation and the good work that's being done continues in that this is one of the tools that they would use for the benefit of the families, and I always refer to children, and I think that's probably not a bad thing overall.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it's good to see that there is some

collaboration and co-operation with different . . . Because there's so many different enforcement orders out there, whether people have assets located in Saskatchewan and are working in another province or another country, how does this affect them? That's important to clarify that as well. And the minister spoke about confidentiality being protected. I'm assuming that was a given right from day one. Now the Act is talking about a greater amount of confidentiality, being able to strengthen the confidentiality aspect of the MEO. I think this is important that we offer that opportunity to them. So I would assume that if it's confidentiality that needs to be enhanced, that's another one of the tools that the office of the child maintenance enforcement could use to their benefit. Then I think we should support that as well.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think it's really, really important that people out there know that there is an office. There's single moms out there that need the support or single fathers that need the support from another spouse or ex-girlfriend or ex-boyfriend. And they're able to go to court and able to get a judgment against their partner or their former partner, and that they're ordered to make these payments on a monthly basis, that there is an office that works on making sure that you do get those payments. And as I pointed out that this Bill talks about the child maintenance order and how important this office and the work that the office does and how important it is to the families throughout Saskatchewan.

So I want to just kind of point out again to the people that are listening, the office of the child enforcement office, they collect 91 per cent of all the monies owed to the spouses of the children that are impacted by a divorce or separation. The court orders the payments. The child enforcement maintenance order is followed through with this office, and so far they've collected \$35 million that has gone to families.

[15:30]

Now, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of people that don't realize the incredible powers that this particular office has. Like for example they can suspend your driver's licence, so if you need to have a licence to do your job and to make money, then guess what? If you have a judgment against you for a child or children that you had in a previous relationship and if there's a judgment against you, then guess what? If you don't make those payments, if you don't work with them, then you could lose your licence. And that's something that is very serious to the people out there, and that's why I point out that this office certainly has a lot of tools at its disposal and that perhaps that people ought to pay attention and certainly try and work through the office and try and work on a good plan to make sure you meet your obligations when you're able to meet them, and if you're able to meet them.

So the questions we have certainly are on the interest on the arrears. What happens in that instance? Like what kind of money are we talking about? When people have assets located in Saskatchewan but they live elsewhere, how does that impact us as a jurisdiction? Is there a greater clarity on the rules? Is this covered under the Western Canada trade partnership agreement? Is this part of the deal that they worked on, and as well in terms of the ability to give the office here — the child maintenance office — give them greater tools and greater

strength? And, Mr. Speaker, we can't see how that would be hurtful to the people of Saskatchewan.

That being said, there's still a number of questions that we have. There's still a number of ideas that we think we could propose as we talk about this particular Bill. And like the office itself, like the office itself we want to work with all the parents — the mom, the dad, or in this case it might be a few elderly people in different cases. We want to work with them to make sure what is best for them to at least have the group as happy as possible. And that's our role as opposition because our role is not to blame nor to criticize nor to judge. We're simply here to do one thing, is to work with this particular office to help people meet their obligations and thereby strengthening the children's future. And as the great province of Saskatchewan, what is wrong with that particular scenario?

So on that note, Mr. Speaker, we want to take a greater amount of time to look at this Bill and understand why it's so important to us, and therefore I move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 29.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Athabasca has moved second reading to adjourn debate on Bill No. 29, *The Enforcement of Maintenance Orders Amendment Act, 2011*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

**Bill No. 30 — *The Enforcement of Maintenance Orders Consequential Amendments Act, 2011***

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 30, *The Enforcement of Maintenance Orders Consequential Amendments Act, 2011*.

This Act consequentially amends 11 English-only Acts that refer to garnishments pursuant to *The Enforcement of Maintenance Orders Act, 1997*. In each case, the amendment makes a change to refer to seizure instead of garnishment to ensure consistency with amendments to *The Enforcement of Maintenance Orders Act, 1997* introduced in this session.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of Bill No. 30, *The Enforcement of Maintenance Orders Consequential Amendments Act, 2011*.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Minister of Justice has moved the second reading of Bill No. 30, *The Enforcement of Maintenance Orders Consequential Amendments Act, 2011*. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Athabasca.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again I am pleased to stand on behalf of the opposition to offer our first comments on this particular Bill. Obviously we made some great comments, and certainly we tried to educate as best we can through the different channels that are out there the importance of the child enforcement maintenance office and

how important it is for the future stability of our children.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Bill No. 30 is a consequential action to that particular office. And we have a few questions on that, like obviously the minister was quite short in terms of doing his introduction. And we need to ask the questions. And I picked up the wording: seizure as opposed to garnishment. Now what exactly does that mean in total? When I'm talking about the notion of . . . What kind of money are we dealing with here? You know, we talk about seizure as opposed to garnishment, is this a better tool? Is this a greater amount of money going to the children, as an example?

So it's a consequential amendment to the main Bill. And like anything else, we want to know what the impact is and how this is going to benefit the children impacted by the separation or the divorce. So on that point, Mr. Speaker, it is a very small point, and it's a very small consequential effort here. So I'm going to move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 30, and then that's my motion.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Athabasca has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 30, *The Enforcement of Maintenance Orders Consequential Amendments Act, 2011*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

**Bill No. 31 — *The Enforcement of Canadian Judgments Amendment Act, 2011/Loi de 2011 modifiant la Loi de 2002 sur l'exécution des jugements canadiens***

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 31, *The Enforcement of Canadian Judgments Amendment Act, 2011*.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill will provide for the recognition and enforcement of foreign protection orders in the same expedited manner as is now provided for out-of-province Canadian protection orders. Under this Bill, out-of-country protection orders can be immediately enforced by the police as if that order had been made by the Court of Queen's Bench for Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan will be the first province to introduce this Bill as recommended by the Uniform Law Conference of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, members of this House will recall that in 2008, *The Enforcement of Canadian Judgments Act, 2002* was amended to provide for special rules for the enforcement of Canadian civil protection orders. A Canadian civil protection order was defined to mean an order made in any other Canadian jurisdiction that prohibits a broad range of activity from communication to actual contact that can be used by one person to intimidate, threaten, coerce, or otherwise harass another person. A foreign civil protection order will cover the same subject matter in an order made by a foreign court.

As with the Canadian civil protection order under this Bill, a foreign civil protection order is deemed to be an order of the

Saskatchewan Court of Queen's Bench. As such it can be enforced by law enforcement agencies in the same manner as a local court order, regardless of whether it has been registered in Saskatchewan in the regular manner.

The amendments also extend good-faith liability protection to law enforcement agencies that take steps to enforce an order. The ease of international cross-border travel combined with the severe risk to an individual who cannot obtain immediate recognition and enforcement of a foreign protection order by policing agencies makes the extension of this approach to foreign protection orders a priority.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill and the previous amendments for Canadian protection orders implement recommendations of the Uniform Law Conference of Canada. The Uniform Law Conference previously concluded that where a Canadian court has determined that an individual needs protection, it should be immediately enforceable insofar as that is possible. Rather than presuming the court may have got it wrong or acted inappropriately, the Uniform Law Conference concluded that a presumptive approach should be to respect the order until it is effectively challenged, rather than refusing to enforce the order until it is formally registered or duplicated in Saskatchewan. This Bill will extend that approach to foreign courts.

There are no final financial or property ownership consequences that stem from such enforcement. The order may be challenged substantively the next day. In an emergency situation with an individual potentially at risk, the choice of recognizing orders from foreign states over formalistic approach enforcement requirements is consistent with the principled victims-first approach to this issue. Mr. Speaker, out of an abundance of caution, this Bill does allow for the listing of the regulations of foreign states whose orders will not be enforced. Such steps should be rare.

*The Enforcement of Foreign Judgments Act* is also amended by this Act to coordinate this new procedural option with the existing process for the enforcement of foreign judgments. Mr. Speaker, in my view the balance of interests protecting an individual at risk and the possibility of violence arising from failure to act strongly tilts towards expedited recognition and enforcement of foreign protection orders. Therefore I will invite all members of this Assembly to protect groups for this conclusion and this Bill. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of Bill No. 31, *The Enforcement of Canadian Judgments Amendment Act, 2011*.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Minister of Justice has moved second reading of Bill No. 31, *The Enforcement of Canadian Judgments Amendment Act, 2011*. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Athabasca.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I want to thank the Assembly for certainly taking the time to present this Bill, and all the different groups and organizations that may be watching this Bill, and to encourage them to do one thing, and that is certainly participate in the discussions and bring forward some of the concerns and issues that they may have on this Bill or on any other Bill, Mr. Speaker.

Now what I understand from the Bill itself, that is if there's a

foreign country out there that has a protection order against any individual or person, then we as a province and we as a country would certainly want to kind of accept that ruling and that judgment, and to offer the same protection and the same legal support for any individual that may come from a different country, may come to Saskatchewan as their new home, and to be able to enforce a judgment, a foreign judgment, that they may have in their favour.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure who the intended target for this protection, so to speak, in Saskatchewan saying, look if there's a foreign judgment against a certain individual, not to approach this person while living in our province. We would support that and we would certainly enforce that. At the outset, Mr. Speaker, I'm assuming that many of the people that are moving to Saskatchewan, many of them may need that kind of support. And certainly from the NDP perspective, we think we should do all we can to protect families, not just in Saskatchewan, but throughout the world as well. So I want to point out, Mr. Speaker, that just for the sake of the people who might be listening, the:

**'foreign civil protection order'** means a foreign judgment, or a portion of a foreign judgment, made by the court in a foreign state, except for a foreign state prescribed in the regulations, that prohibits a specified individual from:

- (a) being in physical proximity to a specified person or following a specified person from place to place;
- (b) contacting or communicating with, either directly or indirectly, a specified person;
- (c) attending at or within a certain distance of a specified place or location; or
- (d) engaging in molesting, annoying, harassing or threatening conduct directed at a specified person.

Now, Mr. Speaker, foreign judgment is defined in *The Enforcement of Foreign Judgments Act* and that includes a decision that would, if the decision were a final decision, be a foreign judgment pursuant to that Act.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I am assuming the purpose of the Act today is to make sure that if there is a foreign judgment against person A that we — as a jurisdiction, as a province — that we will respect that judgment against . . . from that particular country or state, and that we'd do all we can to offer our support and of course our protection as a province, as certainly as we would to any other person that has been born and raised in Canada or, for that matter, Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we obviously see a lot of the immigrant community that has come to Saskatchewan, and we see a lot of people from different countries. And whether they are from the States or whether they're from Australia or whether they're from Britain or whether they're from India, we see many of those folks that have made Saskatchewan their home over the last number of years. And we are quite pleased to be able to see that particular group of people join us as a province because they have great skill, they have great contribution to our land,

and that's the basis of how many of our . . . the new countries of Canada and the States were built. They were built on people coming to make this new land their home.

[15:45]

So I think if there is an opportunity under this particular Bill, if that there is some foreign judgment against certain individuals not to contact other individuals — and they may come here to try and create some problems for our new families or our new immigrants — that we would certainly do all we can to support and protect them. Now what's important is that it's part of the ongoing work of making sure that Saskatchewan's a safe place in which you can build your future, in which you can raise your families, and in which you can do great things, that they ought to be safe in their community.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think this particular . . . to enforce the foreign judgments Act is probably one step that is necessary. There's probably other steps that are necessary to make sure that many of these newcomers feel welcome to our community and feel protected by our province. And that they have to, of course, assist us to making sure that people know that this problem existed before they got here, and that's always something that's important that they undertake.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what you want to be also pointed out is that it's a nice opportunity to be able to share the land and share this protection and share this support with our newcomers. But we also must make sure that we respect a lot of the aboriginal community in the province as well, that they be afforded much of the same opportunity, the people that have made the community of Saskatchewan their home, that they be afforded the same opportunity as well.

So this could be a wide-ranging impact Bill that could have a lot of different people involved. I am assuming that there isn't a whole bunch of problems attached to this particular Bill, but to the people that are impacted by it that do have a foreign judgment in their favour, that as a province we want to respect that. And we certainly want to offer them as much support and advice as we can while respective of their particular position and their ability to help Saskatchewan. My only point is that we make sure that we offer it to all groups of people and that it not just be constrained and confined to a select number of groups or people in general.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would point out that the Bill No. 31, an Act to amend the enforcement of Canadian judgment Act, be adjourned. And I think it's important that people understand that this Bill has some good merit to it, but you need to take the time to study it. We need to take the time to ask questions of various people, and we need to take the time to make sure that the impact and the direction that the minister has alluded to in his Bill, that we make sure it's effective and that it stays the course and that it's of benefit to the people we're trying to serve. So on that note, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 31.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Athabasca has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 31, *The Enforcement of Canadian Judgments Amendment Act, 2011*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

**Bill No. 32 — *The Inter-jurisdictional Support Orders Amendment Act, 2011/Loi de 2011 modifiant la Loi sur les ordonnances alimentaires interterritoriales***

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 32, *The Inter-jurisdictional Support Orders Amendment Act, 2011*. Mr. Speaker, this Act establishes the procedure for registration of a foreign support order for enforcement in Saskatchewan. It also establishes the procedure for obtaining or varying a provincial support order where one party resides in Saskatchewan and the other party lives in another jurisdiction. This Act is based on model legislation adopted in all provinces except Quebec.

Since 2004 the national interjurisdictional support subcommittee has monitored the operation of the process in each jurisdiction. In June 2010, the subcommittee recommended amendments to improve the model legislation. Saskatchewan will be the third province to introduce amendments to its legislation, following Alberta and Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, the amendments will require the court to apply the law of Saskatchewan first when considering an application. At present when a Saskatchewan court receives an application pursuant to the Act for support of a child, the court must first determine if the child is entitled to support under the law of the jurisdiction where the child lives. If not, then the court will apply the law of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, it is always easier for a court to apply its own laws first, and in most cases, the child will be entitled to support under Saskatchewan law. This amendment will speed up the process as time will not have to be spent deciphering the law of another jurisdiction.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes it is unclear from the order itself or the court file if an order was made pursuant to federal or provincial legislation. That is important because if the original order was made under federal legislation, the ISO [interjurisdictional support orders] process under this Act is not available. In some circumstances, an applicant may start a variation application and find out several months later that their application should have proceeded under the *Divorce Act*, which is of course a federal Act. Requiring the court to state in the order the legislation under which the order was made will go a long way towards eliminating the need for multiple applications to be made or filed with the court.

During an ISO application, the court in the reciprocating jurisdiction may request additional information from the applicant, and this information must be provided within the time period set out in the Act. The amendments will reduce the time period for providing information from 18 to 12 months. Eighteen months is a long time and can substantially delay resolution of the ISO application which, depending on the jurisdiction, can take anywhere from 3 to 12 months to be heard by the court. Twelve months will still provide the applicant with



ample time to retrieve and provide any additional information required.

Mr. Speaker, the amendments will also add a new provision to establish location services in order to allow other jurisdictions to request a search for a person in Saskatchewan prior to sending an application to the ISO unit. Saskatchewan's ISO unit regularly receives applications from jurisdictions that have reason to believe, but cannot confirm, that a respondent is living in Saskatchewan. After an application is received, the ISO unit may determine that the respondent does not live in Saskatchewan, and the application would then be sent back to the originating jurisdiction while it continues to search for the respondent. Or the application may be forwarded to another jurisdiction where the respondent is believed to be living. Obviously this sending of documents back and forth can delay the ISO process. Therefore adding this new provision will definitely streamline the process.

The amendments will also require that foreign jurisdictions provide proof of their law governing duration of support. When we are dealing with other Canadian jurisdictions, it is relatively easy to determine duration of support. However, when a foreign order is sent to Saskatchewan for registration, determining the law that governs the duration of support is more difficult. This amendment will clarify that in cases where Saskatchewan's ISO unit is unable to determine duration of support in the jurisdiction where an order was made, that duration can be determined by Saskatchewan law.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the amendments will replace the phrase "ordinarily resident" with "habitually resident" to be consistent with the Hague Convention on the International Recovery of Child Support and Other Forms of Family Maintenance. This government is committed to ensuring that support orders made in other jurisdictions can be registered and varied in Saskatchewan with maximum efficiency and minimum delays. This will allow enforcement to begin and support payments to be made for those children who require them.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of Bill No. 32, *The Inter-jurisdictional Support Orders Amendment Act, 2011*.

**The Speaker:** — The Minister of Justice has moved second reading of Bill No. 32, *The Inter-jurisdictional Support Orders Amendment Act, 2011*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion? I recognize the member for Athabasca.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Once again I'm pleased to stand on behalf of the official opposition to offer our initial comments on this particular Bill, Bill No. 32.

At the outset, the minister described what some of the impacts and what some of the aspirations of the Bill were. And, Mr. Speaker, the interjurisdictional support order, ISO, as he made reference, he wants to make a bunch of amendments to the interjurisdictional support order to make sure that the enforcement of maintenance orders that Saskatchewan has, that they are consistent, that there's some clarity, and certainly there is some effectiveness in some of the work that they want to do and aspire to do, Mr. Speaker. So I guess to the people that are kind of listening to this particular Act, what the minister's

hoping to do is to make sure that when you have a child maintenance order in effect for Saskatchewan, that as it relates to other jurisdictions and certainly other countries, that there's a bit more clarity on how we're going to deal with this particular challenge.

And, Mr. Speaker, as we know, that there is certainly all kinds of different laws out there that govern different states, different countries, different jurisdictions, different traditions, and certainly different cultures. And it's really, really difficult to be able to ascertain whether there is continuity under this whole concept of making sure that if you have children, no matter where you're from, that you take care of them or you pay if you're not taking care of them.

Now the policy and the point is pretty straightforward, Mr. Speaker. But the problem we have is that there is so much — there's a myriad of laws and customs and traditions — that it gets really difficult to try and figure out what's best and how best to approach this particular challenge of making sure parents, no matter where they are in this world, have the obligation and by a court order we have the means to enforce that they are paying for child care as they should be.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to see that there is going to be some clarity between the province of Saskatchewan and the federal government on which law would apply in the case of a separation, as the minister spoke about, that divorce court is of course a federal matter. I'm pleased to hear that today. I didn't realize it was a federal matter, but since it is, being able to clarify whether there is a different system in place between a federal process versus a provincial process, and in the meantime if there's all the confusion of who does what and which law applies and which group of people would benefit better under this jurisdiction or that jurisdiction, that's always helpful to the office of the child enforcement folks because they want to be able to have some clarity. And certainly confusion doesn't help anybody at all.

So, Mr. Speaker, if there is some clarity under which law and which jurisdiction applies and there's some good, solid collaboration from Saskatchewan's perspective and there's good exchange of information, then perhaps the clarity will come. But as the minister spoke about, from what I understand is that if there isn't that clarity, there isn't that clear ability to understand exactly what the family should receive, then the Saskatchewan law would apply. I think the minister made that point, and I want to make sure I understood his Bill clearly. So in the case that there is some confusion, then Saskatchewan law would apply.

So when you have inter-jurisdictional dispute over children, then what you want to do is be able to make sure two things happen. Number one is that you follow the person around the world if you have to, to make sure they meet their obligation. And secondly that there is some good . . . that your law is as good as the next person's law or the next country's law, and if it's not as good, then we would use our law as kind of the basis for determining what that child should receive from that parent.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there's also the time in which people can appeal and to hold up the process. And I think time is always a critical issue on these disputes. There's no question that there's

probably a lot of hard feelings and a lot of difficult cases, and there's a lot of emotion to this process. But as you let the thing drag on for a long time, it doesn't do anybody any good. And obviously if you can appeal something and allow it to fester for two, three, four years, then frustration sets in and then anger. And what happens at the end of the day is that this thing drags out and the families and the children get hurt even more.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in terms of appealing, I think location is really, really important because which place are you going to respect as the place that each of the parents or the divorced or separated couple should go to, to make sure that, you know, it's a place where it is as neutral as possible and that it's as comforting as possible to both parties, in particular those that have the children or have custody of the children. I think location is pretty important.

[16:00]

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Bill goes on to make a few other points and I think that's the reason why we have to take the time to understand this Bill, so that the folks that are out there listening to some of the activity on what this Bill No. 32 is about, really it's about amending the inter-jurisdictional support orders to make sure that people that may have a child enforcement order from Alberta or Quebec or Maritimes or the States, that we would work closely with all those agencies to do a couple of things: to make sure the order follows them around; to make sure we have clarity in what their law is compared to our law, and in the event that there isn't that clarity and fairness to their law, our law would apply. And that's exactly what the minister wanted to make as a point in this particular Bill, and of course we have a lot of questions on the Bill.

In terms of the exchange of foreign currency, obviously that we want to make sure that their rate is the same as ours in terms of real money to the folks. Visitation rights, all these things of course, those are all federal matters as the minister alluded to, but under the child enforcement Act, I imagine that exchange rates and all those issues are discussed and that there is certainly a lot of questions around, well where do we meet, and how soon do we have to discuss this matter? What do we do to make this thing work? These are all issues I think that are all pretty consistent and common sense in terms of what the Bill is trying to do.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think there is a lot more we'd like to ask questions on this particular Bill, but at this time I move that we adjourn the debate on Bill No. 32.

**The Speaker:** — The member has moved adjournment of Bill No. 32, *The Inter-jurisdictional Support Orders Amendment Act, 2011*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**Bill No. 33 — *The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act, 2011***

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 33, *The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act, 2011*. This Act was designed to assist tenants in a tight housing market.

Mr. Speaker, examples have been provided recently of landlords imposing substantial rent increases. With current rules and low vacancy rates, it can be very difficult for a tenant to find alternate accommodations within the notice period. To address this issue, Mr. Speaker, this Bill adds to the amount of time between rent increases on periodic tenancies. The notice period will change from six months to twelve months for landlords who do not belong to an approved landlords' association. This would provide tenants with additional time to find alternative accommodations if the rent increase is higher than they can afford. It will encourage the landlords to become members of a responsible and ethical landlords' association. Such membership will permit rent increases to be applied every six months.

One such landlords' association is the Saskatchewan Rental Housing Industry Association, SRHIA. SRHIA requires its members to adhere to a code of ethics. It calls for tenants to be treated fairly. It also has a program, announced in October 2011, for mediation between landlords and tenants if a tenant is faced with a large rent increase. The program also helps tenants find alternative accommodations if necessary.

Mr. Speaker, the effect of this legislation is to provide tenants with either access to a mediation program offered by a landlords' association or additional time to find alternative accommodations. In addition, the amendments clarify that, for landlords who belong to a landlords' associations, rent can be increased more than twice per year, and for landlords who do not belong to an association, rent can be increased more than once . . . cannot be increased more than once per year. This is in line with legislation in most other provinces.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation also provides for a period of time before the first rent increase after a tenancy begins. For landlords who are association members, the first increase cannot be earlier than one year from the start of the tenancy. For other landlords, the tenant must be free of rent increases for 18 months. This will provide some additional stability in the rental market.

Next, respecting fixed-term tenancies, this Bill amends section 55. Fixed-term tenancies are for a specific term such as one year. Currently the tenancy agreement ends at the conclusion of the term unless the landlord and tenant have entered into a new tenancy agreement. However, Mr. Speaker, there is no requirement for either party to notify the other of their intentions respecting a new tenancy agreement. Examples have been raised in which the tenant is surprised to learn that, in entering into a new tenancy agreement at the end of the term, the rent is increased substantially and with no notice to them. The tenant in these situations who has not made alternative arrangements is left with no choice but to pay the increased amount.

By making this section subject to regulations, it will be possible to pass regulations that provide additional rules for notices by either or both the landlord and the tenant for fixed-term

tenancies if necessary. Furthermore, there is nothing at present to prevent a landlord from entering into successive fixed-term tenancies for very short terms to avoid the requirements of section 54. If this becomes a problem, the amendment to section 55 will allow regulations to control that practice.

Mr. Speaker, we will pass regulations pursuant to this authority only after thorough consultations with interested parties. Providing tenants with additional time to make arrangements either for the increase in rent or to find alternate accommodation along with our programs to increase housing availability will ease the burden on tenants while being fair to landlords.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of Bill No. 33, *The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act*.

**The Speaker:** — The Minister of Justice has moved second reading of Bill No. 33, *The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act, 2011*. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Athabasca.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to stand today to offer our initial comments on this particular Bill, *The Residential Tenancies Act*, and the minister certainly spoke about what they had planned to do in relation to trying to be able to control the rent increases that different landlords may have on folks that are being certainly squeezed from, you know, from my perspective in terms of being able to have rents that they could afford.

Now as an opposition, we were hearing a lot of the horror stories of people whose rent are increasing 30 to 40 per cent, and they're being told now that you either pay that amount or you're out. And this is a problem that's all throughout Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. You have probably been subjected to, as many others have been subjected in the political world, that you're getting these concerns and these complaints.

Now what we wanted to do as an opposition is to try and see if there's some solid measuring which we can do to protect the renters throughout the province of Saskatchewan because they are subjected to the whims of, many times, of landlords that can do what they want and when they want.

Now obviously the minister has taken a half measure here by saying, look, we can't increase your rent; we're going to have to . . . without notice. We're going to do that from 6 months to 12 months. Now what that is, Mr. Speaker, while many people may think that's a good step, the problem still persists. The problem will still exist.

And I notice the language that he used when he talked about the landlord may assist the tenant in finding a new spot. Well I can tell you, most of the landlords I know aren't going to help you find a new place if they want you out of there. And what's important, Mr. Speaker, is that they shouldn't be putting language in there that is not going to be of any benefit to the tenant at all, because we've seen that throughout the . . . especially in the cities where this is a growing, growing problem. Rent increases and rental rates are just going through the roof and there's nothing that seems to be addressing that particular challenge.

And the two points that we have that the Sask Party say to these folks that are being subjected to all this unfair treatment and, I say, unfair rent increases, is that let the markets decide and no, they can't increase your rent. We're going to increase the rate or when they can increase your rent from six months to 12 months. Well, Mr. Speaker, that's not good enough. That is not good enough in any way, shape, or form.

And the other thing that's important, they talked about a prescribed rental or a prescribed landlord association. Now the minister made reference to that particular group and we would like to know who selected the group, who created the group, who started the group and how many memberships do they have on this particular group, and are they guided by a code of ethics? Well what are those ethics? We need to see them. And how is the consultation process done when they brought the name of this group forward? Were any of the renters or the tenants, were any of them involved or impacted or involved in the discussion when this issue was brought forward? I can almost guarantee you that they weren't.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there's hundreds of people that I know that have gone through rent increases in the last three or four years. It's just a bit too late when they brought these amendments forward because many of them have either crammed together in an apartment or smaller apartments. Many of them have gone home. Many of them have quit their jobs. Many of them simply can't afford their rent rates in some of the larger centres. And this is a bit too little too late. And, Mr. Speaker, the language is also very benign in terms of trying to hold a lot of the landlords and landlord properties to account for some of the increases that they've had or have subjected too many tenants to. And, Mr. Speaker, that's a crying shame.

Now what I would point out, Mr. Speaker, is obviously we don't like this Bill. At the outset I don't like this Bill at all because all this Bill does, Mr. Speaker, is simply delay, delay, delay. Because eventually the increases are going to come and many families cannot afford those rent increases. And, Mr. Speaker, what that means is that they have to look for a new place that they could afford. And guess what? If there's nothing else that they can afford, then they have to do two things: either give up food or shut off their power from morning till night and then, Mr. Speaker, then maybe only then they can afford to keep the roof over their children's head or the roof over themselves.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we know a lot of the older people that still want to live independently, Mr. Speaker. They want to live independently. They live on a fixed income. Now how does this impact them? How does it help them, Mr. Speaker? Well guess what? If I'm a landlord, I'm not allowed to increase your rent for one year. I'm going to tell you, look, I'm going to give you a year but your rent's going to increase, and there's nothing here about percentage. Are they allowed to increase a certain percentage?

And there's nothing whatsoever that talks about protecting the tenant's rights and to make sure they're not being gouged and to make sure that they have the ability to recover when there are rent increases. It's not an issue of time; it's an issue of affordability. That's what the issue is. And not one, not one word in this Bill talks about the affordability challenge.

It simply talks about the time, Mr. Speaker, and that's a shame. There are hundreds of people — people that are students, people that live on fixed incomes, families that are struggling, low-income families, students, the list goes on — that have no choice but to rent and they're at the mercy of landlords and different businesses like Boardwalk that rents out these places, Mr. Speaker, and they are the ones that own the property. They'll set the rates and there's nothing that the Saskatchewan Party will do or can do to change that.

And that's when we have Bills of this sort come forward, we as an opposition saying, well that's not the answer. Nothing is being solved here. Nothing is being settled here. There is no power to the people in terms of dealing with the rent challenges. Rents are going up. They're going up steady. They're unaffordable. And quite frankly, this Bill doesn't do nothing to address the issue that was brought to this minister's attention. And once again we're getting the same old response of, well we'll handle it. But guess what, Mr. Speaker? Nothing will come of it. It's the same old, same old. They say one thing and they do the exact opposite.

And, Mr. Speaker, I don't know what the solution is overall for trying to get the Sask Party to move on this issue, but we see it every day. We see it every single day where people can't afford the place that they're renting. And what happens is parents subsidize some of the children or the kids going to school, you know, and they work long hours. Some have two or three jobs. Some people skimp on things that are very basic and many of them become the working poor. Because between having a job and child care and rent, now the rent increases, many of them simply can't afford to live.

So, Mr. Speaker, what do they do? What options do they have? And the other options you have is you just have to try and find a different place. And what happens? You find a different place. Guess what? The rent's going to be the same darn thing. The same high price. So really this isn't an option. Okay, the option the Sask Party has is, instead of increasing your rent once every six months, they've got to wait a year now. Well guess what? It buys them six months, but there's no solution at the end of the six months. And that's why when you have these kind of Acts coming forward, we in the opposition really watch very clearly and carefully and we look to it to see if there's the right language in there, and there is no language in this Bill that talks about affordability.

Now I listened to the Minister of Finance rant today about the fact that it took a lot of low-income people off the income tax roll. Well that probably translates to 20 bucks a month, 200 bucks a year for 90 per cent of those families. So stop using that language when you know that the net benefit to the low-income families is minimal. It's maybe 20 bucks at the most.

How about you start talking about rent and affordability of rent for the low-income people and the working poor and the students and the elderly throughout our province? Then people will begin to understand that perhaps you guys understand what they're going through. Not to protect the interests of the real estate market and of course many of the landlords that are gouging some of these people.

So, Mr. Speaker, I reiterate my point earlier that when we talk

about affordability as an NDP caucus, we're talking about affordability. We're not talking about managing time for the landlords. We are talking about affordability for many people in this province that simply can't afford the rent and the rent increases that they are subjected to. Now it's not every six months; now it's once a year. And I made that point earlier. It doesn't matter when it comes. The fact is the affordability matter is what the issue is and that's what we are trying to get this particular minister to do.

[16:15]

And I go back to my point to the people of Saskatchewan as a whole, that they simply don't care. The Saskatchewan Party simply don't care. If you're paying that much rent, guess what? We don't care. Because if they cared, if they had any shred of concern for your issue they would be doing that, they would be working with you and addressing the affordability issue. All they've done with this particular Bill today was simply extend the time. Extend the time. That's all they've done today for a landlord or a landlady to say, guess what? I can't raise your rent within six months. I can do it in a year from now. But it's coming. And the Bill or the Act says I have to help you find a new place. I don't have to. If I want to, I will. Well I don't think I'll find any landlord or landlady who is going to help you find a new location once you've been moved out of your place because you can't afford it a year from now. That doesn't buy a lot of time, Mr. Speaker, but it certainly doesn't address the issue of affordability either.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the association that the minister spoke about in his Bill, I've got to ask — the question is, who set up the association? Are they a volunteer association? Is there an analysis of their members? Like, what do you have to do to be a member of this association? Do you have to be a good landlord and have a nice clean manicured front lawn? What are the parameters for being part of this association? Now once you are part of an association, and say company A is a member of this association. Company A has a tenant. They know this tenant can't afford his unit a year from now, and company B is also in the same association. Well then company A is going to tell his associate, company B, well I'm getting rid of this person and a year from now. They can't afford it so, guess what, I don't think you want this person in your unit too. Because they can't afford my unit at this rate, they're not going to afford your unit at that rate either. So company A and company B, in essence they don't want this tenant at all.

So where does the tenant go? There's no other competing organization or competing association, so what happens here? So obviously they start going to the different housing authorities, the housing associations that are set up for low-income houses. Well their rents are going through the roof as well. They're understocked. They need more stock, and they also need to have more support from the province. Well, this Bill doesn't apply to those guys. It says very clearly in this Bill, and the Minister didn't pull it out, but the Minister . . . I want to point out that as part of the section here on page 2 item 6:

This section does not apply to rent increases made by a public housing authority on the basis of an increase in a tenant's income.

So what that is saying is that the housing authorities that are out there, you're still paying 25 or 27 per cent of your income, no matter what. This rule does not apply to you. So if you live in a housing unit in P.A. [Prince Albert] or live in a housing unit in Buffalo Narrows and you work at the mine and you get a nice little increase, well guess what? They don't have to give you a year's notice here. That doesn't apply to you. Because you're working, making good money, you're going to pay more under the Sask Party government. And, Mr. Speaker, that's another problem is they're very selective as to who they're dealing with.

So the rent increases that we're talking about and complaining about, and we've got petition after petition and concern from different renters and all these different groups of people out there — they're not being heard at all, Mr. Speaker. They're not being heard at all. And I think this residential tenancies Act, Bill No. 33 . . . I want to point out that I think we should start getting the people mobilized. We should start getting the people mobilized and visiting our Assembly, get as many tenants' associations and groups of people in here to start telling this government that, hey, it's not about the time issue that you're talking about in this Bill; it's about the affordability. Like, get it figured out. It's about the affordability of our rent.

Rent is too high. Yes, you can stop the rent increasing from six months to one year, but that's not going to address the problem of high rent. It's simply delaying the inevitable increase that is going to come. And if you have to go to a landlord that is part of an association that you've set up, well we're going to get the same treatment off this company as a company five or six blocks down the road, because they're all part of the association and all part of the Sask Party club.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think what's important is that people of Saskatchewan are seeing all the activity around us. They're seeing a great opportunity for a lot of folks, and yet many of them seem bypassed by the opportunities. And if they do get a job, they get entry-level job, and then their wife goes to work, and then they have to look after children through daycare. They look at the rent and the rent increases. It just gets so hard on families. And the instability that they go through is frustrating, it's maddening, and it's very hurtful to the basis of our families. So the point I would raise, Mr. Speaker, is that this Bill doesn't do any justice whatsoever to that particular matter.

Now the minister can dress this up as much as he wants, you know, from six months to twelve months, but it doesn't address in any way, shape, or form . . . Not one shred of any evidence to address the affordability issue is contained in this Bill — not one word of affordability, Mr. Speaker. And in fact this government goes out of its way to make sure that they point out, oh, anybody living in the housing groups out there that have units, well that doesn't apply to you. They can increase your rent. The moment you get a better paying job — bang — next day your rent's increased. That's exactly what this Bill is saying, as I pointed out earlier.

So if you want to help folks with the issue of rent, the whole issue is affordability and the rate of rent; it's not the timeline. It never has been about the timeline. You need to get that squared away in your thinking as a minister. The message is, it's not

about timelines; it's about affordability, Mr. Minister. And that's a point that I would raise to him in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, because people out there are getting tired of waiting, they're getting tired of being pushed around, and they're getting tired of feeling the constant pressure of not being able to afford a home for their family.

And if you think that the moms and the dads out there, or the guardians or the elders that may have grandkids in their care, imagine the stress and the strain that they go through every day. Every month they know that the 1st of the month is coming and rent is due. And we just seem to be picking up pennies here and there to try and make those payments. And what does the Sask Party have to offer? Oh, they won't be able to increase your rent without notifying you for, not six months now, one year.

So the vast majority of people are saying, well we got a six-month reprieve here on death row, and that's not going to solve the problem because eventually we're going to have to face the eviction notice because you can't afford the rent.

Now how does that impact families, Mr. Speaker? How does that impact the psyche of a dad or a mom or a grandmom? How does that affect them overall? Many of them probably can't sleep at night. Many of them have a difficult time trying to figure things out. Now, Mr. Speaker, a lot of families, an incredible amount of families, suffer through this problem each and every single day in our province. Each and every single day. And has there been any increase in affordable housing units? None. Has there been any issue to address the whole issue of trying to make sure that rental supplements has increased? Minimal. Twenty dollars increase in your rental supplement is not going to cover a \$400 increase in your rent. It's just not going to work.

Now, Mr. Speaker, then you hear the Minister of Finance turning red here, saying we took hundreds of people on low income off the tax rolls. Well whoop-de-do; you saved 20 bucks there. You know, and that's the point; that's the point we're trying to make here. Families cannot afford this government for two reasons. Number one is they're not realizing the issue at hand and number two, they don't care to begin with. And that's the unfortunate reality, Mr. Speaker.

Now I'm fortunate enough to have a home that I can go to, and I can sleep in a nice warm bed and my grandkids and my children are fine. That's because, Mr. Speaker, I can afford — based on the money I make as an MLA — I can afford a decent home and a place for them to live. And I'm not angry at myself for that because that's, you know, I worked for that. But you need to give the other people in this province the opportunity to afford their children that same peaceful feeling. And this government is not doing it, Mr. Speaker. I've not seen one shred of evidence in their five years, and I'm assuming their budget will be around another 10 billion this year.

Five years and 50 billion bucks at their disposal, and, Mr. Speaker, have they addressed affordability and rents? Have they addressed the issue of having a social housing program that reflects those issues and the need? Have they done anything to help the single mom or the working families that are struggling? The answer is no, no, and no. And that's the sad reality, Mr. Speaker, is that this minister doesn't get it.

I've been telling him for the last half-hour that this Bill doesn't do any good to anybody because it just talks about timelines. It doesn't talk about affordability. It doesn't talk about understanding the pressure and strain that these families are under each and every month. It doesn't talk about their rights. It doesn't talk about how they feel. It doesn't talk about a long-term plan or even a vision of how we might be able to address it — a new strategy, a new day. And the answer, Mr. Speaker, is that he has addressed none of those issues.

And that's why I point out to the people of Saskatchewan the whole mantra — and I steal this line every now and then — the whole mantra that we kind of guide our thoughts on as a political movement and certainly as a political party is that this is not a good province for any of us unless it's a good province for all of us. And I want to point out that I've stolen that line. And the answer is absolutely . . . That line is absolutely true.

The fact of the matter is as long as you have your head in the clouds, flying off to all these little events and having a nice secure place to go and sleep, that there's other families that are struggling. And the problem is, is you have the means. As you hear your Premier yapping about all the great opportunity and the wealth and you hear the province saying right across the country how well Saskatchewan is doing, and yet when it comes to families and affordability to rent, you turn your backs to them. You don't address their issue. And about all you can offer them is an extension of the inevitable, which is they can't increase your rent for six months; they can only do it over a 12-month period, Mr. Speaker.

And that is a crying shame. It is a crying shame, and we're trying to tell you once again that affordability is the issue. And I'm going to say it five straight times. Affordability is the issue. Affordability is the issue. Affordability is the issue, Mr. Minister. Affordability has always been the issue. And for the fifth time, affordability is the issue. Affordability is the issue, Mr. Minister, and that's why I think you need to address that issue as opposed to talking about timelines. There are people that are struggling every day, every day to try and keep a roof over their child's head. There are some children that aren't eating in Saskatchewan. Some elders are going without their medicine because they can't afford rent.

And that's my point, is this Bill doesn't do any good to anybody because all you're talking about is simply talking about creating an association of landlords and of increasing the time they have to give you for notice of rent. And the rent increases are a fact of life. Now, Mr. Speaker, if that's a fact of life and we accept that, the next big question is, what is this government prepared to do to address that affordability issue? And the answer, Mr. Speaker, is nothing. The answer is nothing. No evidence whatsoever that they plan on dealing with that matter.

And once again we're seeing the true colours of the Saskatchewan Party. Because as long as their friends are taken care of, then guess what? The rest of us can just watch the parade go on by. And they might want us to cheer. But, Mr. Speaker, it's hard to cheer when you are worried about having a home and a house over your children's head on a constant daily basis.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as you look at some of the challenges with

food prices, some of the challenges they talk about when they talk about the power bill . . . I was on a tour with several of the Sask Party guys when they were talking about the Crowns, the future of the Crowns. And this has a lot to do with this, Mr. Speaker, because every single one of the Sask Party MLAs said the increase in power is coming. That was their mantra. That was their number one song every time we had hearings on the energy future of Saskatchewan. They all sang from the same song sheet saying, the increase in your power bill is coming.

So they're preparing the people of Saskatchewan for those increases. And then people are thinking, well why are they saying that; well they're talking about this green energy and this new energy alternatives. I said no, no, no, they're using that as the guise for what I think they want to do. I think they want to sell off SaskPower to their private buddies. And their private buddies can jack up the prices, and we can say, oh we're looking at green energy as the excuse to jack up the prices.

[16:30]

Now the privatization of the Crowns is something I think they are set on. It's going to happen. It's gradually happening now by stealth. So how does that impact this Bill, Mr. Speaker? You want me to make it relevant? I'll make it relevant. How that impacts is as your power bills increase and food costs increase and your rent increases, then guess what? You can't afford to live in these units any more. You've got to head out down the highway. And I don't know where you're going to head, but you've got a full year. You've got one year to figure out where you're going to live and how you're going to afford to live. And, Mr. Speaker, this is a sad reality when you see this kind of half-baked measures that have zero per cent benefit to the renters that are being impacted by Bills of this sort that do nothing to address the issue.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm hearing now the Minister of Housing chirping from her seat. I am hearing now that under the social housing program, Mr. Speaker, it was our party that decided if people are going to rent units, you know, and they live in these remote and isolated areas of Saskatchewan, the practice was you had the opportunity to actually purchase your home after a set period of time that you were a tenant. I think there's a lot of housing authorities out there that offered this program, whether it was the remote housing program or whether it was the rental to purchase program, the RPO, rental purchase option. These programs were out there to help the families or the working poor.

Now I'm hearing that they're changing their mind, that the Saskatchewan Party is now saying that deal is off. And the minister's chirping from her seat. I want her to clarify that. Is that deal off? And from what we've been hearing from many of the people that have the opportunity to buy out their homes from Sask Housing or from these housing authorities, they're being told, oh no, that program is no longer in effect. And I would suggest to the minister she check with her P.A. office to confirm that because if that's the case, then we're going to organize all those people who've been renting off them for years to begin an action against this government for what I consider is, a legal action I would suggest they do for what I think is a breach of a contract.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think there's a lot of folks out there that are really watching that issue. And I'm glad the minister chirped from her seat because I'm going to remind her that's what the Sask Housing Corporation is trying to do. They're trying to break that contract they had with many people that said, if you rent out this place for a number of years, we'll look at a rental purchase option for you so you can have a home ownership to make you more independent. They're trying to pull that deal off the table. Now whether that's the minister that's doing it directly or some of her party operatives, I don't know. But I would ask the minister to check into that because that issue's coming at her full steam, Mr. Speaker. And we're building up a case as we speak.

So I want to point out again on this particular Bill that I don't see any good, any good out of this particular Bill by simply delaying the inevitable increases from 6 months to 12 months. It's a crying shame that this government doesn't get it. People can't afford their rent and their rent increases, and this is a problem that is persistent right throughout the land.

It's not just in Wynyard. It's not just in Meadow Lake. It's not just in La Loche. It's all over the place, Mr. Speaker, where rents are just way too high and the poor people that are struggling to try and make ends meet are the ones that are bearing the brunt of that pressure and of that pain. And what this minister does and what this government does is absolutely nothing. It's absolutely nothing.

So we've got to figure out . . . And I would suggest to the minister that he put on his innovation hat and try and figure out this thing — maybe talk to his seatmate who is a few seats down from him saying, what can we do to address this affordability issue? You're the Minister of Social Services. What can we do?

And, Mr. Speaker, this is the problem, is they, you know, they put these Bills in place but they don't coordinate, and there's no innovation and there's no excitement to how to deal with the issue. They're just letting this thing sit over there in a corner and hopefully it doesn't get too crazy on us. And that's the point is that I'm urging the people that are renting to start petitions, to start a letter writing campaign, come to the Assembly, speak up for yourselves.

Don't sit at home and complain, because sitting at home and complaining does no good. You've got to come here. You've got to speak up. And I'd say to you, you've got power as a people. Use it and send these guys a message that simply dealing with the time issue is not good enough for our families. We're tired of being pushed around. We're tired of being shown rent increases. We're tired of being treated like we're second-class citizens and we deserve to be treated fairly and respectfully and our issues need to be heard.

And that's the point that I'm trying to raise today, Mr. Speaker, on this particular Bill, because we have tons of people that want to have a lot more comment on this particular Bill. And there's no question that we will bring forward many compelling arguments why this Bill does not match the need that many people aspired it to be from that side because they're way off base and it doesn't deal with the matter at all.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would again encourage those people that are out there to look at the Bill and not just necessarily listen to what the minister and his Bill is trying to say, but where there are glaring omissions and where there are glaring problems, where this Bill does not address those issues, we need to bring those issues forward as well. And the responsibility not just to us as an opposition is to challenge this government and to talk to them about the affordability issues and to tell them your green energy argument that you made for increasing SaskPower rates, we seen through that three years ago.

And, Mr. Speaker, we see through this increase of the timeline. We see through that as well, just a delay tactic. And the only way we're going to get people out here to be heard is you've got to start filling up these galleries. We've got to stop being complacent and sitting at home and complaining about it because if these guys don't see no action, if they don't see no letters being written, they don't see no hands being . . . signing petitions, they don't see no people in the gallery, we don't have these advocacy groups silenced any more . . . But we've got to get up. We've got to get up and speak and start talking about this particular issue because as long as they insult our intelligence with Bills of this sort and we let them get away with it, they're not the problem. All of a sudden we become the problem for not reacting to this matter and not fighting back.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot more to be said on this particular Bill and the ineffectiveness of this Bill and the glaring omissions in this Bill, so that's why I move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 33.

**The Speaker:** — The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 33, *The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act, 2011*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**Bill No. 35 — *The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Amendment Act, 2011/Loi de 2011 modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur l'Assemblée législative et le Conseil exécutif***

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 35, *The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Amendment Act, 2011*.

Mr. Speaker, members of this Assembly will recall that one of the first steps taken when this government was elected in 2007 was to remove the uncertainty that had traditionally existed regarding when provincial elections would be held. To avoid gamesmanship in the choice of an election date, we instead provided for a process, an express provision, that fixed the date for provincial general elections as the first Monday of November in every fourth calendar year.

Mr. Speaker, we remain convinced that fixed-date general elections are the right thing to do. However, as the federal government and the provincial governments have now adopted the same approach, it has now become apparent that a number

of the fixed-date general elections will occur in the same year and in the same few months. In particular, we note that the federal fixed-date general election cycle would see the writ period for the next federal general election overlap significantly with the next provincial general election. It is our view that this overlap has potential to create unacceptable confusion in the electorate and that it will undermine the democratic process for each of the federal and provincial campaigns. Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, we are taking steps to avoid this conflict.

Under this Bill, where the writ period for a federal fixed-date general election would conflict with the writ period for a fixed-date provincial general election, the provincial general election would be moved to the first Monday in the following April. This would create a more acceptable separation between the federal general election and a provincial general election. While it would be our preference not to move our election, we must recognize that if the federal government does not make this change, it remains with the province to avoid this operational conflict.

Under the terms of this Bill, where a fixed-date general election is then held in April, the provincial election would return to being held on the first Monday of November in the fourth calendar year following that April general election. We make this change now at the earliest opportunity in our new mandate to ensure that to the degree possible, everyone will receive ample notice of when the next general provincial election will be held.

Mr. Speaker, if the federal government has not changed their approach and if they do not have an interim general election, this provision provides for a reasonable resolution to the significant operational conflict. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of Bill 35, *The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Amendment Act, 2011*.

**The Speaker:** — The Minister of Justice has moved Bill No. 35, *The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Amendment Act, 2011*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion? I recognize the member for Athabasca.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As the minister spoke about, I wanted to make sure that the folks that might be viewing this program, that what the minister is saying today is that they typically want to hold their elections every four years. As he mentioned, every four years, the first Monday of November of the election year. So in theory we're supposed to have an election in 2015 and it'll be the first Monday. And now they're saying, well the federal government has also the same time frame as us. So what they want to do as the government, we want to move it over to April, six months later, April of 2016. And so that gives them an extra — what? — eight or nine months of a Sask Party government. And so now they're saying, well because we want to avoid all that conflicting schedule with the federal government, we want to move our election date from November of 2015 to April of 2016. Now, Mr. Speaker, the reason they give today is because the federal government is having their election the same time frame as us, in the fall of 2015, and that's not a good thing to do.

Now I'm just trying to figure out why isn't it a good thing to do.

They're confusing me, Mr. Speaker. Because the Saskatchewan Party and the federal Conservatives are tied at the hip. You know, I think they should, they should just, what they should do is they shouldn't try and skew their election date, and I'm trying to figure why they would do that. They should just keep their original date because, see, the Conservatives spend their money on advertising using the in-and-out scheme. Then in theory, them being their cousins, they would benefit from that two months later and they would actually save on advertising and they'd save on messaging. They'd just say, Mr. Harper, you do all the work for us and we'll just come on your coattails and we don't have to spend all that money and we'll be elected the fall just like we hope that you would be. So that kind of, at the outset, why would they do that? Because that's their cousins, you know. And I'm trying to figure out what the heck's going on over there.

And then it dawned on me. Well maybe they might pretend to have a fight because generally people of Saskatchewan want to have a fight every now and then with the federal government. And what would the fight be over? Well there's tons of things we can think about now. As an example, we'd think about the . . . on TV right now with the voter suppression tactics, you know, where they're investigating 31,000 complaints of people that were phoned at their homes and told to go vote at a different place. Well that might hurt the federal Conservatives, so maybe that's why the Saskatchewan Party moved a few months away.

And then, oh we got this other idea. We got this idea, we should change the retirement age from 65 to 67. Well the Saskatchewan Party said, well we better move a few months away from that too. So they're kind of shifting on the schedule here, Mr. Speaker.

So that's what I thought: well maybe that's what they're after. And then I was sitting here thinking about this particular Bill. There's no way, there's no way that I would say that this has nothing to do with gamesmanship. It's all about gamesmanship, Mr. Speaker. That's what it's about. And for them to say that they don't want to conflict with the federal election, there's something going on there that I think eventually people of Saskatchewan will find out about.

[16:45]

Now I'm not going to mention that today, Mr. Speaker. But there is stuff coming up, Mr. Speaker, that you would be very, very surprised to learn about as we go down this path. So I think it's important for people out there to know that there's no way that they're moving the election date because they want to be convenient for the federal election. That's not what this is about. There's something other at stake, Mr. Speaker.

So I'll point out, when you look at the whole gamesmanship, the Bill itself is simply saying one simple thing. We want to hold our elections every four years, on the first Monday of November of the election year. That was what their Bill said originally. Now he's coming along saying, well because the federal Conservatives are going to have their election the same time, we want to move ours further down to April of 2016 — the first Monday of April, I'm assuming, of 2016.



Now, Mr. Speaker, I don't know what the deal is, what the magic timeline on April. But isn't that the year of the . . . a couple of months after the budget of 2016? So the budget will be announced in March, and they want to have an election in April. Okay, now it's beginning to make a little more sense. But because the Conservatives are not sure how they're going to do, they want to distance themselves a bit from their cousins because this thing about 65 to 67 certainly catches a lot of steam and people don't like that.

They don't like that stuff. So they're moving a little ways from their cousins. So right now they're prepared to eat their federal cousins, these guys. You know, that's how bad they are. To retain power, they're ready to throw them under the bus, Mr. Speaker. So this whole notion of avoiding gamesmanship, our collective caucus has started bursting out laughing here because that's the funniest thing we've ever heard this minister and this government say. We want to avoid gamesmanship in the political arena. Yes, right, you know, but anyway, Mr. Speaker, that's kind of why it's so funny. It's so ridiculous it's funny.

So the point I would say to the minister is that, you know, don't use the guise of wanting to avoid gamesmanship as a reason for positioning your party for a couple of months after the provincial budget and to see what happens with your federal Conservative cousins in the fall of 2015 when we all know that you guys are joined at the hips. And you're kind of confusing the heck out of the New Democrats. What the heck are they up to, Mr. Speaker? So I would point out that, like I said to our caucus, this Bill, it's so ridiculous it's funny. You know, and I keep telling folks out there, gamesmanship, we want to avoid that, and that's coming from the same organization that benefited from the federal Conservatives' voter suppression tactics, you know. And that's kind of what I think is important, Mr. Speaker, is that we don't buy that for one instant.

So I'll tell the people in the province of Saskatchewan two or three things. It's all about gamesmanship when the Saskatchewan Party gets up and speaks about being fair. It's all gamesmanship. They talk about being neutral. It's all about being partisan. When they say one thing, they do exactly the opposite. But you see, the problem is that they do so well . . . what they do so well, Mr. Speaker, is they confuse a lot of people. For one minute they say, well it sounds okay, but then we don't see the benefits of that. But that's going to catch up to them, Mr. Speaker. It will catch up to them. Because there's no question that people out there are watching, and they listen and they learn.

So my whole point is, on this particular Bill we know that there are some issues at play and that there are some plans, Mr. Speaker, that they want to put in place that they need a bit more time for. And if anybody out there wanted to think, well gamesmanship, and our potentially third term, want to get the third term; we can't have an election in November of 2015 because maybe that'll be our time when wind's out of our sails a bit as a Conservative cousin, so we want to be distanced from that. The second thing is well, you know, we should try and do it around our election, or on our spending plan. The budget time, oh that's right, budget comes out in March. Well let's have it in April. No, it would have been better if we would have had it in May. It would have given a few more months to kind of drive around and tell people how great your budget is.

So this whole notion, Mr. Speaker, to avoid gamesmanship, like come on, get real. The bottom line, it's all about gamesmanship. It's always been about gamesmanship. And, Mr. Speaker, the people's overall arching message today is that it doesn't matter who's sitting in the government's chair, the economy of Saskatchewan was going to move anyway. And the economy of Saskatchewan is going to continue to move, Mr. Speaker. It's going to continue to build, and I say it in spite of them, but they're standing there flashing their hand, their cue cards saying, we did it. We did, you know.

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan know no matter who was sitting in that Premier's chair, Saskatchewan was going to burst, its economy was going to build. And the only difference was when we came along, we were going to make it a good Saskatchewan for all of us, not a good Saskatchewan for a few of their rich friends, Mr. Speaker. We're going to do it working hand in hand with the business community, with the unions, not just to try and privatize the Crown corporations like they're trying to do. We're going to engage the Aboriginal community. We're going to engage our teachers, not put Bills like the essential services Act in place.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan didn't elect them to fight the unions, nor fight our teachers, nor give away all our resources. They elected them because they thought they had a chance to be heard and to be fair and reasonable with the people of Saskatchewan, but that's not happening, Mr. Speaker. So when a minister says gamesmanship, gamesmanship, you want to avoid that stuff. Well you know, from our perspective, we don't buy that one bit.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think what's important is that when we talk about the election itself, I want to make sure people out there know during the last campaign the NDP sure took a beating, no question about that. There's nine of us remaining, and to the nine of us I'm saying, weather the storm. There's some great colleagues that were lost, Mr. Speaker. But when you talk about gamesmanship — the minister made that in his opening comment — and I looked at that and said, I wonder what these guys done, what these guys done that was so effective in suppressing voters.

Well, I mentioned at the outset, I walked into the polling booth in my home community and there's three ladies there that I've known all my life. And I said, I've come to vote, me and my gorgeous wife come to vote. I voted for myself, hopefully she voted for me too, but I don't know that for certain. And anyway I said to them, can I vote? Can I vote, can I vote? And they said, Buckley, this was the quote, you can't vote without an ID. And I said, but I'm the candidate, you know me. You know me. No, you've got to have an ID. Well, my name's on the ballot here. That's me here. I'm voting. And I had a couple of my cousins behind me. They wanted to vote for me too. And guess what, neither of them had a driver's licence nor ID. And I said, but you guys, you guys know who I am. I'm the candidate. My name's on the ballot there. Oh no. No, you can't. You can't. You need your ID. I said, what do you mean I need my ID? You guys all know . . . No, I need to see your ID. And I said, my goodness. My goodness, I said, is this what it's come down to? Is that how you're going to win elections by these kind of silly notions and these silly rules?

So don't talk to us about avoiding gamesmanship, Mr. Speaker. Because it's all about gamesmanship. And the guys at gamesmanship, Mr. Speaker, slide under that voter suppression technique that they're so good at, and that's exactly what their objective was. And the plan was to decrease the Aboriginal vote, which they've done; to decrease the elderly vote, which they've done; to decrease the immigrant vote, which they've done; to decrease the people that didn't have their voter's licence and that was done. You look at all those folks that are impacted by that Bill, Mr. Speaker. That's exactly what happened, Mr. Speaker.

There was hundreds of people in all the constituencies that didn't vote or were discouraged to vote, so they stayed home. And the bad thing about it, Mr. Speaker, why did they do that? Why did they not have the opportunity to vote freely as we have in this great democracy at all times is because their vote was being suppressed by actions of that particular minister under this voter ID registration Bill that he brought forward. Now, Mr. Speaker, that's not justice. That's not justice. But who it affected, Mr. Speaker, it affected just us. And that was the whole point. It affected a lot of people not only in my community but other communities as well.

And you know the bad thing about it, Mr. Speaker, is that where did this thing come from? Where did this whole notion come from that you had to have voter ID? Well their leader, the Premier said, oh well, there's some discrepancies last election, he said. And the media asked, what discrepancies? Oh there were some. So that ended the story there. There was no discrepancies last election, Mr. Speaker. There was none whatsoever. There were none.

And I happened to listen to this discussion around the whole notion of what's happening in Ottawa right now, you know, where Elections Canada is investigating, investigating some of these allegations of voter suppression. And the problem is one of the former, I believe he was a former Elections Canada CEO — I think his name was Kingsley — he said, on the average we get for a national complaint in terms of after a national election is about 1,000 people, he said. That's par for the course. I think that's the figure he used.

And, Mr. Speaker, on this whole notion of the people getting calls at their home for a variety of reasons, this robo-calling, there are now 31,000 people that have come forward. Now that is what you would call some problems. That's what you would call discrepancy.

Now I challenge the Premier today to say what discrepancies was he talking about. There was no discrepancy. His plan all along, in concert with the Minister of Justice, was to make sure that they got people that typically voted NDP to deny them the opportunity to vote. And that's an affront to democracy, and that's a shame to that office, Mr. Speaker, because you don't do that to people. You don't do that to people. That is just not how it should be done. You should be winning elections clearly and fairly. And you know, the other thing too is that the people out there look at that and they say, oh no. No, we didn't do that.

Well, Mr. Speaker, it is always about gamesmanship. It is all about gamesmanship. And after the robo-caller stopped calling before that, they were calling about the resource revenue

sharing. I think the question was along the lines of, do you think the Indians are getting the ownership of the potash mines? I think press one if you agree with the NDP or press two if you agree with the SaskParty and say no. Well, Mr. Speaker, that's gamesmanship? That's gamesmanship?

So as you are about to embark on your given second term, you throw in voter suppression. You throw in the robo-calling that was done in that front. You run a bunch of negative ads, and that's how the Saskatchewan Party and that's how the Conservatives operate. So when they bring back Bills of this sort. And they say to us, we want to avoid gamesmanship so we're going to move the election six months later than the federal election, which is anticipated to be a few months in our area. It's not about gamesmanship. It's about manoeuvring. It's about posturing, and it's about positioning for the budget that's going to be coming up in March of 2016.

Nothing to do with respect for the federal cousins because, as I said, you guys are tied at the hip. You benefit from both groups of people. But in a heartbeat you throw them in the bus, under the bus. They made a mistake. And that's the sad reality of where elections of this sort come out. And we read some of these Bills like Bill No. 33 . . . Sorry, not Bill No. 33, but the Bill to talk about the changing the election date — Bill No. 35 — and you see that this has nothing to do with being fair, being open, being transparent, or being accountable. It's all about gamesmanship.

We understand that on that end, and we're telling the people of the North, of the South, of the East and the West, and all throughout this land, their time will come. The pied piper will come calling for them. And, Mr. Speaker, when that time comes, their true colours by then would be exposed and their mandate by then — and we hope it's not to a point where it's no return for the people of Saskatchewan — their mandate to privatize the Crowns and bring in private health care and all that those objectives, they'll be on their way of doing that. And only one group of people can stop them, Mr. Speaker, and that's the people of Saskatchewan.

And I pray that they don't focus on those groups who'll be changing their minds, and I pray they're not thinking about that today of how we, how do we suppress those vote changers now. That's probably what's in their strategy right now — change their minds about not voting for us. How do we eliminate them from voting? And I mentioned earlier in my analogy about the movie *The Jerk*, when he was working at the circus, and so what do I do if I knock these balls out? You win everything left of these dolls and everything above these stuffed animals and everything on this side. Pretty soon there's a very little amount of people, and the racer is what they want.

So, Mr. Speaker, we would hope that this Bill doesn't mimic that kind of strategy that the Saskatchewan Party has when he starts talking about elections and how they want to avoid, as the minister said, gamesmanship. Been there. Done that. Seen that 10,000 times from them. And I think after a while it gets a little tiring, Mr. Speaker.

So I would point out, Mr. Speaker, that . . .

**The Speaker:** — It now being after the hour of 5 o'clock, this

House stands adjourned till 7 p.m. this evening.

[The Assembly recessed from 17:00 until 19:00.]

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