



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

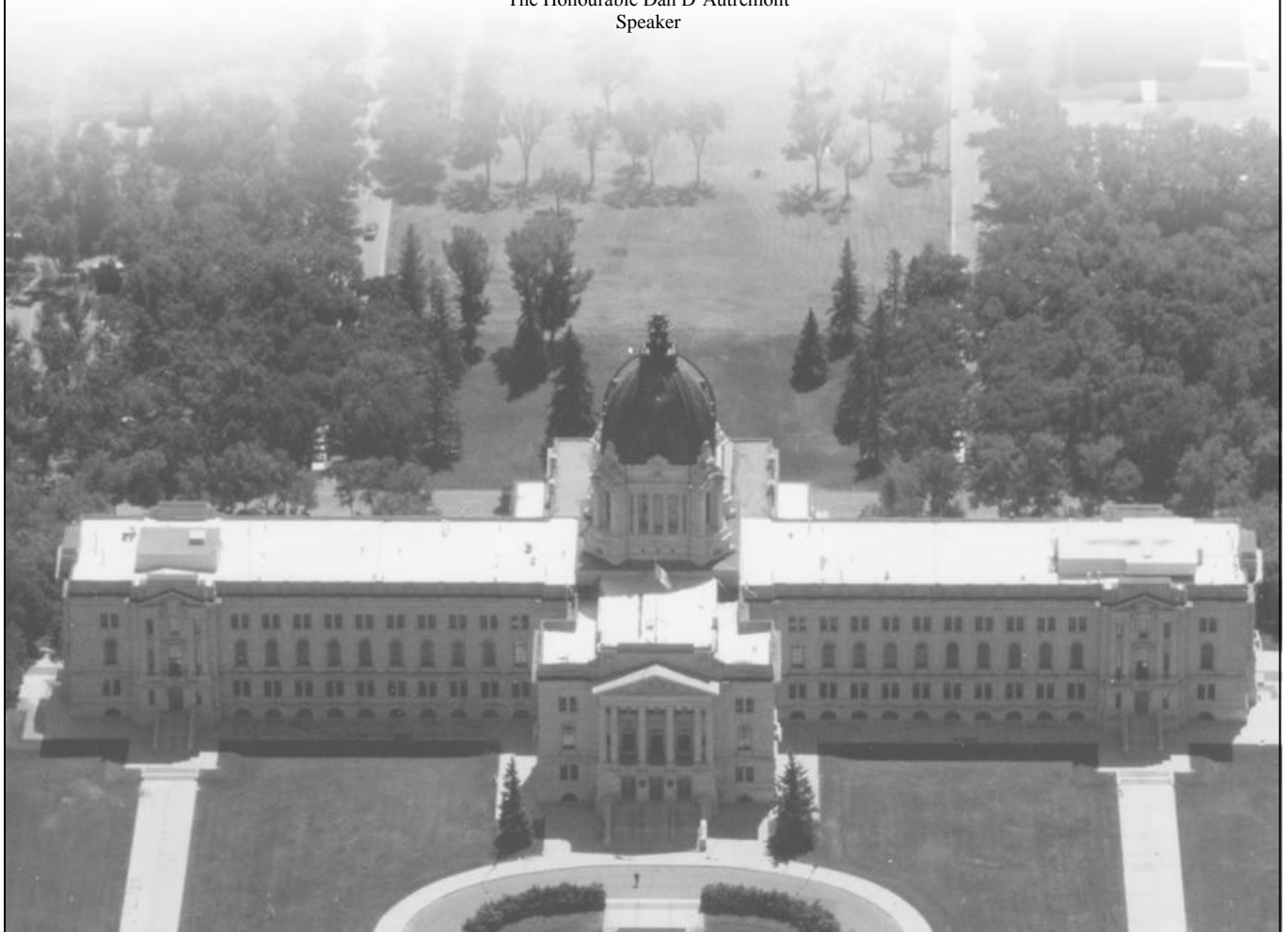
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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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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:** — Presenting petitions. Oh, sorry. Sorry, I'm getting ahead of myself. I was just testing to see if you were ready. I recognize the Deputy Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we're ready, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce a young man seated in the west gallery. I'd like to introduce Michael Kindrachuk. I almost said Peter because that's his dad. But Michael Kindrachuk is a young man, joins my staff as ministerial assistant in Finance, comes from the great city of Saskatoon, having gone to the University of Saskatchewan, obtaining a Bachelor of Commerce majoring in Finance. And I'd ask all individuals in this Assembly to welcome Peter . . . Michael Kindrachuk to — gosh, I am going to have trouble all the rest of these next few months — welcome Michael to his Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. Marchuk:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all the members of the Legislative Assembly, 24 students from Balfour Collegiate, here in Regina, and their teacher, Ms. Erin Harlos.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's important that our students are engaged in the democratic process first-hand, so we commend Ms. Harlos for bringing her students to the Assembly to experience our democracy. Further, Mr. Speaker, as our building turns 100 years of age this year, it's important to note that Balfour Collegiate will turn 82 years old this year and still going strong. Mr. Speaker, I ask . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Almost as old.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members of the Assembly join me in welcoming our students from Balfour Collegiate to their Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

**The Speaker:** — Okay, now we're at presenting petitions. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling for greater protection for late-night retail workers by passing Jimmy's law. And we know that Jimmy Ray Wiebe was shot twice and died from his injuries early in the morning of June 20th, 2011. He was working at a gas station in Yorkton, alone and unprotected from intruders. We know that armed robberies such as the one that took place in Regina on January 23rd-24th this year shows that Jimmy's law is needed to give workers more protection in the workplace.

I'd like to 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.

Thank you.

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

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

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that the 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 are signed by good folks of Regina. I so submit.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand today to present a petition on behalf of my constituents who live in the neighbourhood of Hampton Village. And the petition is about the need for a new school in their area.

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 Saskatchewan can attend school in their own community.

Mr. Speaker, I so present.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

**Mr. Vermette:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition on behalf of trappers of Saskatchewan. The current regulations being enforced are creating challenges that are a concern for 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 resource users.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

It is signed by many trappers and many good people of northern Saskatchewan. I so present.

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

#### Challenges in Northern Saskatchewan

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Having spent some of my formative years in La Loche, Green Lake, Meadow Lake, and La Ronge, I have a soft spot in my heart for northern Saskatchewan. So it's always a pleasure to head north for a visit. I recently joined the member for Athabasca in Ile-a-la-Crosse, Buffalo Narrows, La Loche, and Beauval to learn more about the health and education challenges facing that region. It was encouraging to meet dedicated community leaders, health care professionals, college instructors, and students who are so committed to improving the quality of life for northern residents.

But despite their unwavering commitment to strengthen their communities, there are many significant needs that we as a province must not neglect. I heard much about the social determinants of health, the need to tackle inequality and poverty and ensure that basic needs like housing are met. I heard about the desperate need to improve mental health services, especially to deal with the significant challenge of youth suicide. I heard about the need for new facilities, for better recruitment and retention, and for more education and training opportunities.

As the government finalizes its budget, I hope they will take tangible steps to better meet the health and education needs in northern Saskatchewan because, as a province, we must do better than this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### Telemiracle 36

**Mr. Phillips:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise in the House today to add a couple of notes to the topic of

Telemiracle as it pertains to the Melfort constituency.

During this weekend I noticed that every community in the constituency participated in this remarkable and noteworthy event. However, that is not unique to the Melfort constituency. That is unique to the province. And that happens right across the province, and that is the miracle in Telemiracle.

But what is unique is that Telemiracle was first discussed at a district executive meeting under Melfort's district governor Al Robertson. The city has a very strong tie to Kin, with four district governors coming from that one club in just over 60 years. I myself had the opportunity to serve on a district executive under the late Dale Frier, my personal Kinsmen hero.

I have very strong memories of Telemiracle 1, a time, Mr. Speaker, when I stood with my fellow Kin during the national anthem and realized how special and giving this province is when the total topped \$1 per person. This year, Telemiracle 36 topped \$5.50 per person for every man, woman, and child in this province — a truly remarkable feat. The men and women of the Melfort Kin, the entire Kin family, and all the citizens of Saskatchewan should be justifiably proud.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### International Year of Co-operatives

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The United Nations has proclaimed 2012 as the International Year of Co-operatives to highlight the contributions of co-operatives to socio-economic development, in particular recognizing their impact on poverty reduction, employment generation, and social integration. In fact United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon says, and I quote, "Co-operatives are a reminder that it's possible to pursue both economic viability and social responsibility."

Mr. Speaker, it is impressive that one-third of the province's top 100 businesses are co-operatives with 1 million members in Saskatchewan alone. Now the Saskatchewan Co-operative Association has a lot planned in celebrating this year, including the official launch in January and the Co-operative Week of Volunteering from May 28th to June 3rd where co-ops are encouraged to adopt a community project.

Later this year, there'll be a week of activities in October as part of Co-op Week, and in November, the Saskatchewan Co-operative Association will be hosting the Co-operating to Build a Better West conference in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we know when so many people are dissatisfied with an economic system dominated by profit-driven enterprises, the time has never been better for the promotion and growth of the co-ops. It is imperative we continue to support the co-operative movement here in Saskatchewan.

And I ask all members to join with me in celebrating the Year of Co-operatives, and I hope many are able to attend their many events throughout the year. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Government Whip.

[13:45]

### Physician Recruitment Success Story

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise in the House to draw attention to a physician recruitment success story from my constituency of Biggar. Recently the Heartland Health Region and the town of Biggar have been able to successfully attract a young doctor from Ireland.

Dr. Alison McKee, spouse Gareth, and their one-year-old son Duncan are set to arrive in Saskatchewan this summer. Dr. McKee will begin work in Biggar this June, joining Dr. Muller and Dr. Crane at the Biggar and district health centre. The choice to settle in our province was made very easy for Dr. McKee and her family after being invited to Saskatchewan last October and spending time in Biggar and the surrounding community.

Dr. McKee recently passed her Saskatchewan international physician practice assessment and gave her 12-week notice to her job in Ireland. Her husband, Gareth, also reorganized his computer business to allow him to operate online from their home in Biggar. I'd like to thank the Heartland Health Region, Biggar health committee, Drs. Muller and Crane, and the town of Biggar for giving financial and technical support in recruiting Dr. McKee and her family.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like all members of this Assembly to join me in welcoming Dr. McKee, Gareth, and Duncan to their new home and wish them the best in their future endeavours. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Canadian Challenge Sled Dog Race

**Ms. Wilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to speak today about the Canadian Challenge Sled Dog Race which took place between February 20th and 25th. The starting line for Canada's premier mushing event was located in the RM [rural municipality] of Buckland in the Saskatchewan Rivers constituency. All 20 teams from all of the dogsled race categories successfully finished the 300-kilometre Canadian Challenge. Despite a storm in the Montreal Lake area that blew in the competition trail, the teams were in high spirits, reflecting the true northern grit and tenacity of dog mushing.

The winner of the epic 12-dog race event was Gerry Walker, and the second place finisher was Stefaan De Marie. Stefaan is a resident of Christopher Lake in the Saskatchewan Rivers constituency, and he finished the race with an average speed of 14 kilometres per hour. Stefaan has competed nine times, placing on four separate occasions in the top three finishers. The Canadian Challenge sled dog race is a qualifying race for the legendary 1000-kilometre Yukon Quest.

The dedication of these athletes to their sport and to their animals is complete. The health of athletes and animals require careful planning regarding proper nutrition and proper preparation. Please join me in recognizing these dedicated athletes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Cut Knife-Turtleford.

### Lymphedema Awareness Day

**Mr. Doke:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce March 6th is now recognized as Lymphedema Awareness Day in Saskatchewan.

Lymphedema is a chronic condition of localized fluid retention and tissue swelling caused by a compromised lymphatic system. Our government recognizes that people with this chronic condition cope with discomfort and disfigurement on a daily basis. At present lymphedema is not curable, but with the appropriate management and patient care, the condition may be alleviated. We understand the significant impact lymphedema has on its patients.

Recently the Minister of Health convened a lymphedema working group to review best practices, services, policies, and procedures in the prevention and treatment of lymphedema. The working group consists of representatives from the ministry; regional health authorities; agencies that provide lymphedema services, supports, education, and prevention; the patients who receive lymphedema treatment in Saskatchewan. Right now this group is in its final stages of preparing its advice to the ministry. The working group's findings will help our government and the regional health authorities to explore ways to improve health services for the lymphedema patients.

Quality health and patient-first care remains this government's top priority. March 6th is a day of observance and proclamation to raise awareness of lymphedema, demonstrate understanding of the condition and acknowledgement of the people who live with it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Pharmacist Awareness Week

**Mr. Wyant:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're fortunate in Saskatchewan to have pharmacists who are dedicated to this province. Pharmacists play an important role as important members of our medical teams, experts at answering your drug-related questions and determining if health issues are related to medication.

Mr. Speaker, in a recent Angus Reid poll, pharmacists were determined to be one of the most trusted professions. Mr. Speaker, March 4th to 10th is Pharmacist Awareness Week and this year their theme is, Your Pharmacist - Your Partner in Health. Saskatchewan's pharmacists use awareness week to show patients how they could be more active partners in health care — prescribing medicine, providing emergency refills, renewing and extending prescriptions, and educating the public on expanded health care responsibilities.

This week allows us to recognize the contributions that pharmacists make to the health of Saskatchewan citizens and the ability of pharmacists to improve health care delivery in the

province working with doctors and other health care professionals. Pharmacists are highly valued, and we support them working to their full scope of practice. They're an essential part of any effective health care team. Pharmacists work hard in the province to provide our citizens with extraordinary care every day.

Our confidence in this profession is demonstrated by providing pharmacists with certain prescriptive rights in an effort to enhance health care delivery to the people of Saskatchewan. This is an important step in recognizing the value we place in pharmacists.

For that dedication, I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking our pharmacists for their ongoing commitment to the high-quality care that they provide and wish them all the best for this week. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### QUESTION PERIOD

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

#### Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The mandate of the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission is to “promote and protect the individual dignity, fundamental freedoms, and equal rights of Saskatchewan citizens.”

On January 25th, 2012, this commission escorted six highly skilled front-line staff from their building without any notice or chance to say goodbye to their colleagues. The resumés of these staff clearly indicate that they have the skill sets that the Chief Commissioner is looking for under his new vision. The commissioner's actions are not in line with the mandate of the commission to protect individual dignity. To the minister: is he prepared to direct the commissioner to follow his own human rights mandate?

**The Speaker:** — The Minister of Justice.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, I can advise the House and the members opposite that the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission is one of the leading commissions in the country. They have, under the leadership of Chief Commissioner David Arnot, taken great strides forward. They have amended their legislation. They have adopted a four pillars approach. As part of that, there was some staffing changes that were necessary. They are an independent agency and, Mr. Speaker, I understand that they worked through outside counsel as they made the changes. And I understand that things were done in accordance with all relevant law and in accordance with best practices that were adopted.

And, Mr. Speaker, we fully support the actions that were taken by the Human Rights Commission. They were done appropriately, properly, and with dignity and respect for the employees that were affected. And I understand that packages were offered to the employees. The employees, I understand, accepted them. So, Mr. Speaker, the issue is one where it's a situation where things change over time and the process is taking place as it should, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would say that the Human Rights Commission may have been the leading commission in Canada, but I think with actions that we're seeing happening right now, that may not be the case any more.

\$1.7 million of taxpayers' money is being spent annually on salaries at the commission. In December of 2011, the Chief Commissioner applied to the Saskatchewan Labour Relations Board to remove three in-scope staff out of scope. As a result of that application and the layoffs in January, there are now seven management positions supervising 10 front-line service providers, and two of those are retiring at the end of this month. So the ratio will then be seven management to eight staff as of April 1st.

To the minister: do Ministry of Justice cutbacks and austerity measures apply only to front-line workers and not management salaries?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, we don't direct or give advice to the Human Rights Commission as how to do their staffing. Chief Commissioner Arnot is a responsible, respected individual and works well with his staff, understands the law, seeks outside opinions where necessary; does not obtain legal services from the ministry, in fact uses outside counsel. And, Mr. Speaker, we receive notes periodically advising us as to what has happened.

And, Mr. Speaker, part of the transition that's taken place is in keeping with the four pillars approach that's been adopted so that there is better opportunities to do mediation and early resolution, to adopt an education and an advocacy model. And, Mr. Speaker, the other part of it is to ensure that complaints are referred to the Court of Queen's Bench. We are fully supportive of that taking place, Mr. Speaker, and the process that is there, we understand, is done in full compliance with all legal requirements.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's disappointing when our minister won't intervene even when ministry money is being misused in this way. Based on freedom of information requests, we have learned that \$100,000 was recently spent by the commission on contracts for communications and a further 100,000 was spent on curriculum development. Does the minister think it is appropriate for a commission under his fiscal responsibility to spend \$100,000 on public relations?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, the Human Rights Commission is providing services on a variety of educational measures through our school system and, Mr. Speaker, they have asked for funding for that. The province has supplied funding for that. Part of the initiative that they have taken with that requires them to use some of their resources for public

relations and to ensure that there is good public support and the public understands that. It is something that's done within the scope of their budget and it is not something that we take issue with in government. We believe it's something that they've got a role, dealing with advocacy and ensuring that the public is aware of what is taking place. And, Mr. Speaker, it is money well spent when they are using the money for purposes of advancing the causes of the Human Rights Commission and, Mr. Speaker, we are supportive of them in doing that.

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

### First Nations and Métis Employment and Education

**Mr. McCall:** — Lots of questions, Mr. Speaker, lots of questions. I rise to ask a question of the First Nations and Métis Relations minister, Mr. Speaker. It's concerning the situation with unemployment in the province for First Nations and Métis people. For First Nations and Métis people, the unemployment rate is three times that of the rest of the province. For First Nations alone, it is four times the level in the rest of the province. The situation is so serious that the Premier even expressed concern on his way out the door to Ireland last week, Mr. Speaker.

I guess my question for the government to start with is this: when are they going to get serious about engaging First Nations and Métis people in employment and educational opportunities in this province?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations.

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you very much for the question, Mr. Speaker. I think it took until the second last day of the last session to get a question. It's nice to get one on the second day of session.

I can assure the member, Mr. Speaker, that First Nations and Aboriginal employment in Saskatchewan is indeed a top priority for this government. Mr. Speaker, in fact, year over year stats bear this out, Mr. Speaker. In January 2012, Aboriginal employment was 40,600 — up 6,200, some 18 per cent — year over year increase, Mr. Speaker. Youth Aboriginal employment, Mr. Speaker, an important component in that regard, was up by some 1,400 people, again an increase of 17.3 per cent, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take credit as a government for those increases but, Mr. Speaker, where the real credit has to go is to the private sector in this province for the work that they have done. The Camecos, the Potash Corporation, the potash industry, the mining industry for example, Mr. Speaker — that is indeed who is making this great progress.

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

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well I'll agree with the minister on one score. When it comes to gains in First Nations and Métis employment and education, it certainly doesn't have anything to do with the actions of that government. In fact the opposite is the case, Mr. Speaker.

Their flagship initiative when it comes to improving educational and employment outcomes for First Nations people in particular, Mr. Speaker, they had a big MOU [memorandum of understanding] signing last May in this building, and part of that plan was to appoint a task force that was to go out and do the work on better engaging First Nations on the employment and educational front. That task force was to have been in place this summer. Can the minister tell us if that task force has yet been struck?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the minister of First Nations and Métis affairs.

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Indeed that task force is an important component going forward. It'll involve people from the private sector; it'll involve people from government; and it is something that we are moving forward on, unlike what members opposite did for 16 long years in northern Saskatchewan and across the province, Mr. Speaker. Very shortly we will have more information to share with the House on the members of this commission and the good work that they're going to do, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. McCall:** — Well again, Mr. Speaker, we've got a situation that's very serious. We've got a circumstance where First Nations unemployment is four times the provincial level. We've got a task force that was announced with much ballyhoo by the members opposite last year, Mr. Speaker. It's coming up, in a few short weeks, the year anniversary of the signing of the MOU for that, and yet no task force.

Professor Eric Howe has said that this is a \$90 billion proposition for the province of Saskatchewan if we can fully engage First Nations and Métis people in the employment and educational opportunities of this province. And all we get from this government is plans to make plans. When is this government going to take this situation seriously? When are they going to work with First Nations and Métis people to ensure that they have the employment and education attainments just like the rest of the people in the province?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the minister of First Nations Métis affairs.

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you very much to the member for that question. I have Mr. Howe's report right here. And indeed what he does say is First Nations employment is a significant economic challenge in the province, but it is also our greatest economic opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, that is the difference between this government and that party when they were in government, Mr. Speaker. We are providing the opportunity. When I meet with leaders in northern Saskatchewan, when I meet with First Nations people across the province, what do they say? Well they want to participate in the new Saskatchewan. They want to participate in the hope and vitality of what's going on in this province. And, Mr. Speaker, be rest assured that's what this government is going to do. We are going to make them part of the success

going forward in this province.

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

### Support for Rural Women

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this government recently proclaimed March as Rural Women's Month. We're pleased to see this but, Mr. Speaker, actions speak louder than words. To the minister: what is your government doing to provide programs, supports, and resources to rural women since we know they are the lifeblood of their communities?

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

**Hon. Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to answer a question about rural women and the work that they've been doing, not just today but for many years as they grew the province.

Mr. Speaker, last year we had the opportunity to have the very first women's build in Regina. And I can tell the members opposite that we had professional women come out from right across Regina, had the first ever trades, professional, business women standing together and saying, you know what? We can do the type of thing that was done in rural communities. We can do it in Regina, and we can have the fastest women's build with the most labour ever in a women's build.

[14:00]

Mr. Speaker, to the members opposite, we also know that in rural Saskatchewan we have women working as farmers. And the education that is important for them, not only the basic education but farming education . . . We see women graduating from agriculture school, we see women in engineering, we see women in all of the trades, and we know that women continue to be the lifeblood of rural Saskatchewan.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Mr. Speaker, unfortunately we learned from a recent national study that Saskatchewan has the highest per capita rate of domestic violence in Canada, and this of course includes many women who live in rural Saskatchewan. To the minister: other than issuing a news release about Rural Women's Month, what is your government doing to assist rural women who are experiencing domestic violence?

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

**Hon. Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Speaker, the issue is addressed on many fronts, and first of all, and one of the most important ones, is making sure that we have women employed and have an opportunity to live their own lives. We have 5,600 more women employed in Saskatchewan now than we did in 2008. Wages for women have grown by 11 per cent in the past two years. And we have the second highest rate of women in the workforce.

Mr. Speaker, we know that there were 114,000 people that were taken off the tax roll. Fifty-nine per cent of those were women. Mr. Speaker, we increased the minimum wage and we increased the active families benefit and we introduced a grant for low-income students with dependent children — \$200 a month.

Mr. Speaker, women are part of a growing economy in this province, and we understand that making sure that they have the family support around them is important to us. Mr. Speaker, there's more work to do, and we're working with the women.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't think the minister heard or understood the question around what this government is doing with respect to domestic violence.

The organizations that work with women and women who are experiencing domestic violence have some very key things that they believe this province should be doing to address domestic violence. Front-line workers and women who have lived through partner violence tell us the housing crisis across the province is making the situation worse. Women are choosing not to leave violent situations because they have nowhere else to go given the desperate housing situation. We know that social housing and other options are in short supply, especially in smaller communities.

To the minister: what is your government doing to increase social housing stock in rural Saskatchewan so that women facing violence do not feel that their only choice is to live with an abusive partner?

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

**Hon. Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Speaker, we acknowledge that there is a need to ensure that women have a safe place to go to, so we're dealing with them not only through social services but ensuring that they have a place to be referred to. Mr. Speaker, we have to be making sure that there is affordable housing and social housing in this province. That's why we've invested \$173.6 million into affordable housing to ensure there's places for women to go to. That's 1,924 units, Mr. Speaker, that's available right across the province of Saskatchewan. We've invested money in to make sure that we've upgraded some of the social housing and affordable housing so they have places to go as well, Mr. Speaker. And besides the homes, we have to ensure that they have supports around them, the needed supports to ensure that they can continue their education and that they have the professional people around them to help them go through very complex situations.

So, Mr. Speaker, I live in rural Saskatchewan. I know that there are places that women can go to and should go to and that they are being supported by a government that knows that women are an important part of our province.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With all due respect



to the minister, she's saying that the organizations that work directly with women who are facing violence and those who are living it, who are calling for an increase of social housing, are wrong, that they are not imagining, this is not what . . . Social housing is what the Provincial Association of Transitional Houses in Saskatchewan is asking for. You should perhaps read the report.

So we know that there are not enough social housing units available, particularly in smaller and rural communities. We've got emergency and transition housing, but these are only short-term solutions and are time limited. So where does she suggest women escaping violence should go to build new and healthy lives for themselves and their children in the communities that they consider home?

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

**Hon. Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Speaker, many of the women know that if they are going to be escaping violence, they have to go away from their own small town. Because with confidentiality we know that you can't move from a small town into another house down the street because that doesn't give you the opportunity to escape the violence.

We know that we have places like Nipawin and Humboldt and Melfort there that actually will be ensuring that they work with social assistance and bigger centres to take the women to adequate shelters. We know, Mr. Speaker, that we have built a number of shelters, that we have increased the number of shelters, that we increased the rates for them. And making sure that there is more money for the women who have dependent children is very important as well, Mr. Speaker.

In this area, ensuring that there is education on violence against women is important, and the agencies that are working with women are also in contact with our office. Mr. Speaker, this is an important part of making sure that women are a huge part of the province as we go forward.

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

### Relations with Municipalities

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The recent SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] convention was a prime opportunity to consult with the municipal leadership. In fact in many ways it's the point of the meetings. The Premier and the minister chose not to share their plans to off-load their share of the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] funding on to property tax payers. The Premier also told delegates that they would not be getting any more money in the budget for their crumbling infrastructure, money from the government over above the revenue sharing that's already in place. But he neglected to mention that property tax payers will take another hit for their policing costs.

To the minister: he didn't tell us in the election and he didn't tell us at the SUMA convention. Why did he choose not to disclose the government's plans to cut services and off-load costs?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the minister responsible for

municipalities.

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well to the first part of the member's question — thank you for the question — this year alone, in this budget, municipalities will see a 9.5 per cent increase in revenue sharing, Mr. Speaker, 9.5 per cent. And next year, Mr. Speaker, 15 per cent increase being set right now today, Mr. Speaker. So they understand that. Under that particular government, that party when they were in government, Mr. Speaker, they saw clawbacks to the hundreds of millions of dollars across their term. This government provided predictability. What they wanted, they're going to get, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Mr. Speaker, we can hear those same old stories, but the members opposite keep putting out press releases that say the economy is booming. But municipalities are facing increased pressure. Little would explain the government's attempt to now off-load the cost of the RCMP on to the already stretched property tax payers.

Now SUMA vice-president of towns, Rolly Zimmer, had this to say, and I quote, "I am somewhat surprised to hear, surprised by the Premier's statement, to hear that the government is in fact considering increasing the cost of RCMP policing to our municipalities."

Well, Mr. Speaker, paying for crime and safety strategies should be a priority. Why did the minister fail in his duty to consult with Saskatchewan municipalities and inform them that their policing costs are going to be off-loaded to them?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the minister responsible for municipalities.

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since 2006 there's been an increase to policing costs to the rural municipalities and other municipalities in this province, which this particular government saw that in 2007 when we formed government. We absorbed that cost, and today we still are, Mr. Speaker.

We also, with the good work of the Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing, and the policing community in this province, we've increased the police officers by 120 new officers in the first term, Mr. Speaker. And with the good work of my colleague in Wood River, there have been implementation of specialty task forces, specialty SWAT [special weapons and tactics] teams, other resources provided to policing services to ensure the safety of the public in this province, Mr. Speaker.

And those kind of cases, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to us taking on the responsibility of keeping taxes low, we will do that. We provide the money to the municipalities unconditionally and we ask them to just wait for the budget and see what other kinds of things we'll be putting forth to support municipal services in this province.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Some of those stats are cold comfort to the city councils, the town councils around the province, about how they are going to justify the rate increases that they are going to have to do this spring because of the off-loading.

Yesterday in the rotunda, the member from Saskatoon Silver Springs had this to say in regards to the Saskatchewan economy, and I quote, “We do have one of the hottest economies in North America.” Well which is it? Which is it? The hottest economy in North America or a government that can’t or won’t pay for policing and safety?

To the minister: how does this government go from one of the hottest economies in North America to off-loading costs to municipalities and property tax payers and potentially cutting protection in our communities?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just for the member opposite to know, since we formed government, we have increased revenue sharing to the municipalities by 86 per cent. There’s going to be a \$21 million increase in this budget alone, Mr. Speaker. And you know, when it comes to the municipalities asking for us to provide predictability when it comes to revenue sharing, they asked for it; we provided that. They are at the table now talking about revenue sharing and moving forward. We’re not off-loading costs, Mr. Speaker. We’re making costs sustainable for municipalities and for the taxpayers in general in this province.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know, he can rattle through those stats and we’ve heard them for a couple of years now but the fact is, municipalities will now be facing higher taxes for residents, or reduced safety or policing. It’s a choice that they are going to have to make. And in fact, Mr. Speaker, we read today that Swift Current is now raising property taxes. Swift Current, the home of the Premier, is raising property taxes by some 8 per cent to cover increased RCMP costs — and this is before, this is before the effects of the Premier’s promised off-loading plan.

Municipalities likely will have the least budget flexibility of all levels of government, and I just have to ask the minister: what does he recommend to the municipalities? What do they do? Raise taxes to make up for his financial mismanagement or reduce safety and policing in our communities?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. That member opposite is putting fear into the hearts of the women and men of this province by making those kind of statements, Mr. Speaker. Uncalled for right now. After we’ve increased, after this government took the police officers’ asks in this province for years — which I was a member of, Mr. Speaker — there was a shortfall in funding for police officers. They promised after two mandates, still never met their mandate promise — twice, Mr. Speaker.

We promised 120 new officers. We met that promise, Mr. Speaker. More RCMP officers in Saskatchewan than before working in the streets. More municipal police officers as well.

When it comes to municipal leaders making tax decisions, they know full well that the revenue-sharing piece was predictable for them. They manage their own tax tools with autonomy. If they need to increase taxes, we would hope that they wouldn’t increase them to the point where it’s unbearable, but they see their needs as well, Mr. Speaker. Three levels of government — federal, provincial, and municipal governments — working on infrastructure and servicing costs across this province together. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — I think the municipalities were hoping for predictability. They weren’t counting on cuts. They weren’t counting on cuts. And the minister opposite talks about fear, but it was his government who brought this up about police cuts. So what is it: the hottest economy or are they going to have to make some tough cuts? So the member opposite, the minister has to make up his mind. What is the message for municipalities? Are they going to have to raise taxes or cut programs?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — You know what the people of this province, Mr. Speaker, are going to see on budget day? They’re not going to see campaign promises that’s spending, spending, spending like those guys did over there, Mr. Speaker. We’re going to see a balanced budget. We’re going to see nothing that the opposition campaigned on. We’re going to see sustainable budgeting, sustainable spending, and partnerships and consultation with the municipal leaders, Mr. Speaker. Look forward to budget day. Thank you.

[14:15]

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

#### SECOND READINGS

#### **Bill No. 34 — *The Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation Act, 2011***

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

**Hon. Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at the end of my remarks I will move second reading of Bill No. 34, *The Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation Act*.

This legislation will replace *The Crop Insurance Act*. This Act provides the legislative authority for the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation, SCIC, to administer the crop insurance and AgriStability programs. It also gives SCIC the authority to administer agriculture programs that may be implemented into the future. This would include livestock price insurance as just one example. This is an issue we have consulted with industry

on and continue to work on, Mr. Speaker. Authority for SCIC to deliver the AgriStability program was previously provided under existing legislation on a temporary basis. This was sufficient on an interim basis, but the preferable long-term solution is specific legislative authority for SCIC to administer AgriStability. Our government is simply bringing this authority forward into this up-to-date and forward-looking Act.

Mr. Speaker, our government is continually working to improve programs and services for producers. That is why we have committed to bringing AgriStability home to Saskatchewan to be administered by SCIC in the 2008 Throne Speech. This commitment was fulfilled on January 1st, 2010, when SCIC began processing AgriStability applications for Saskatchewan producers.

SCIC hired 110 new staff at head office in Melville and 30 new staff in local crop insurance offices throughout the province to deliver the program. These staff members are providing local, timely service for farmers and ranchers. Our goal is to create a more timely and responsive program for our farmers and ranchers. Since taking over the administration of AgriStability, we have made progress towards that goal by improving the application processing times. Producers are now receiving their AgriStability benefits quicker than they were in the past.

We are taking steps to further improve service delivery. Earlier today SCIC announced a new online tool called AgConnect which will make it easier for AgriStability applicants to submit their program information. This will further speed up the entire application process.

Mr. Speaker, this new Act will have no effect on the services already provided to producers. We will continue to work to improve the delivery of the AgriStability program for our producers under this new legislation. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I move that *The Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation Act* be read a second time. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — The Minister of Agriculture has moved Bill No. 34, *The Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation Act*. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to stand on behalf of the official opposition today to offer our initial comments on Bill No. 34, *An Act respecting Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation*, Mr. Speaker.

And to those that . . . I know we have a lot of folks that watch the legislature channel and they're asking what's the Athabasca MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] doing speaking about a crop insurance Bill. What's important, Mr. Speaker, is that as we research some of these Bills going forward, we must have somebody from the opposition respond to these Bills at the initial stage. And while we take the Bills back to our office and we contact the stakeholders, we find out more about what the Bill is all about and certainly offer our comments at a later date, probably more informed comments at a later date. And that's one of the roles that I have as one of the MLAs in

opposition, is I must be able to respond to a number of Bills that are coming forward, and some of them are agriculturally based, Mr. Speaker.

Now what I want to point out, Mr. Speaker, in the Saskatchewan crop insurance Bill that's before us, I understand it's a federal-provincial agreement that looks at providing a means and support to the agricultural community. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm going on my history in terms of being involved with the previous government as one of the members that sat around the cabinet table and we talked about, a lot about what the challenges were for rural Saskatchewan, for the producers, and so on and so forth. So any kind of Act that we have that talks about meeting some of the challenges of the agricultural community, of the farm families, and of rural Saskatchewan, it is always, always important to note that many people on our side and certainly on their side understand what agriculture is all about. It's always advantageous for the people of Saskatchewan and of course for each of the political parties.

So it's important that we engage ourselves in these Bills. It's important that we try and understand what they mean. It's also important to be able to stand up and speak on some of these Bills even though you don't have much of a history with the agricultural community, being from northern Saskatchewan and being a hockey player.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would want to point out that some of the issues that we dealt with when we were in government that had a lot of challenges with the agricultural, from the agricultural sector. I can remember the days of the mad cow challenges that we had and how a lot of the discussions around the cabinet really talked about some of the critical need for us to focus on meeting some of those concerns. And that's why it's nice to be able to get up here to speak about some of the impacts and the benefits and some of the Bills that affect and impact the agricultural community and of course rural Saskatchewan and many in northern Saskatchewan. We also have a few people that do a little bit of farming with cow-calf operations and haying operations as well.

In that sense, Mr. Speaker, I think one of the things that we want to make sure is that we give the opportunity to the stakeholders that are out there, people that are familiar with the crop insurance program, and to give us some of the information that is necessary to ensure the Bill meets its stated goals.

There's no question that there are many people out there that are much more astute in the agricultural sector than I am, Mr. Speaker, and fair enough. And that's kind of what I think is really important: that we send a message out, in relation to this Bill, is that there are many organizations and groups of people out there in rural Saskatchewan that have great knowledge and have the great ability to dissect some of these Bills and bring some of those concerns — not necessarily what the Bill is involved with, but certainly what the Bill may not bring forward, some of the omissions in the Bill. We think those are important because every Bill has its strengths, and certainly every Bill has its weaknesses. And every Bill certainly has some of its shortcomings as well.

So that's one of the messages that we want to give is that certainly, from my point of view, getting up and speaking on an

agriculturally based Bill is important for all of us to understand what agriculture's about. And even though we are from northern Saskatchewan, we must do our part to understand what southern Saskatchewan, what the eastern part of the province, and the northern part of the province all have in common. And one of the biggest things is that people, a lot of people, live off the land and work off the land. And they make a great living off the land. And this is one of the common themes that I think I want to touch on when it comes to this particular Bill.

There's no question that the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation I believe operates with the wild rice industry of northern Saskatchewan. So you can see the connect, you can see the connect when it comes to the northern perspective. And that's something that's always important is that as you begin to understand more of these Bills, you're certainly . . . it makes you a bit better and I think a bit stronger MLA over time, and certainly it's something that I want to continue to undertake in this office.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we have a lot of questions on the Bill itself. There is, as I mentioned at the outset, I believe it is a federal-provincial Bill or a federal-provincial agreement that provides all these types of services. And the minister alluded to some of the changes that he wants in the Bill.

And certainly I would maybe ask the minister himself at a later time to give us some of the descriptions of the meetings and some of the groups that he may have met with and what were some of their points and some of their concerns. Like, who did he consult with when it came to the drafting of this particular Bill and certainly also the questions of how much dollars were committed to this? Is this going to improve the efficiency of the crop insurance program? Like, these are some of the questions I think we need to undertake and that we need to certainly ask as time permits. And that's one of the reasons why we're getting up today and making our initial comments to ensure the public out there knows that we are watching this Bill. And we're asking for their timely advice and their participation to make sure it not only meets its goals and objectives, but we are able to point any glaring omissions that the Bill may have missed or may have ignored.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think one of the points I would raise at the outset, we talked about the hog industry, Mr. Speaker. We talked about the cow-calf operation and cattle industry. And I can remember how difficult it was at times for some of these industries when we were in cabinet, some of the great challenges that they encountered along the way. And I can remember where there was a lot of concern when we started operations in the Big Sky hog operations where there's some concerns that the government shouldn't be investing in these kind of operations. And of course you know the challenges when it came to the mad cow issue. There was a lot of money and a lot of issues and a lot of awareness that I certainly came to hear while I was sitting in on cabinet. And it is a very interesting industry, Mr. Speaker.

And that's why it's important that I said at the outset we do our part to try and understand all of Saskatchewan. And even though we are elected from specific regions, I think a good MLA and a good opposition will make every effort to understand all of how Saskatchewan operates. And that's one of

the things that I think that's really, really, really important.

That lesson, Mr. Speaker, I learned, in terms of trying to understand what the Bill is about and broadening your horizons so to speak, was the point that I raised one day when we were talking about highways construction with the then Premier Calvert. And we talked about Highway No. 1 and all the money we were putting into No. 1 to avoid the problems that we had with our Trans-Canada Highway, Mr. Speaker. And this is going back to the point of why talking on this Bill is important. And the question we had is that we have all these pressures from all different sources. Why are we committing all the resources on that particular area? And the premier at the time said, it's important you understand that region. The premier at the time said, it's important that you understand the fatalities attached to the bottleneck on that particular highway. And, Mr. Speaker, we spent a lot of money, a considerable amount of money on highways and highways improvements in southern Saskatchewan because it was the right thing to do. Because you don't just govern for one area; you govern for all.

And that is one of the important lessons that I have learned as an MLA, and that's why today I'm getting up. And I'm very proud to be able to get up and offer a few comments about the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation and some of the changes and some of the ideas that the minister has. Because as we learn these things and as we understand these things greater, it makes the Assembly much more functional and, I would hope at the end of the day, much more intelligent.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think that's one of the things that people out there ought to know, is that we're going to offer comments on every single Bill as opposition members and certainly myself as an MLA. And it's not to purport to know everything, but the whole exercise is to try and understand as many things as you can in your capacity as MLA. Because what you eventually want to do is become knowledgeable in areas that you're weak in and of course to strengthen your skill in areas that you're strong in. And one of the areas that I can clearly note that I am weak in is understanding the agricultural community as best I can.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I do intend to travel quite a bit this summer, health willing and God willing. And one of the things that we want to do is we're going to make sure that we go to as many rural parts of the province as we can as our effort to understand rural Saskatchewan a lot better as a northern and as an Aboriginal MLA. I think people are much willing to share information, that people are very proud of their community, very proud of their farms. They're very proud of their operations. And they're willing to share some of the success that they've had.

And during that exercise, Mr. Speaker, it's one of the things that I think is important that we try and do as MLAs is to go out and do this outreach as much as we can. And I know some people would be amused that we're making speeches on an agricultural Bill. But again I would reiterate the point that I made earlier, that it's important we understand how all of Saskatchewan works, as MLAs, and that's just as kind of a constant effort that must be undertaken. And I will certainly continue doing that type of work.

Mr. Speaker, the minister talked very quickly about how this is going to improve services and how it's going to help the agricultural community. And that's something that we're not going to argue too much about; we know that it's always a work-in-progress. The agricultural part of Saskatchewan has been the mainstay of our provincial economy for years. And we've got to find ways and means in which we can strengthen that agricultural community, not just for the short term but for the long term. And that's what I think the crop insurance corporation Bill talks about and how we can make the necessary changes to become more effective out there in terms of supporting the agricultural community.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I look at some of the issues just around in my area. What does the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation have to do with northern Saskatchewan? As the member from Cumberland will certainly attest to, there is some involvement of the crop insurance program under the wild rice program, and there's a lot of folks that make an incredible amount of money. And I want to kind of centre my comments a bit on the wild rice growers of Saskatchewan. It's not only northern. It's not only Aboriginal, as you know, there's a lot of forest fringe operations. There's a lot of the activities in the far north and I'm just hoping that some of the activity that identified in this Bill are able to . . . does include the wild rice farmers in northern Saskatchewan and in central Saskatchewan as well.

And what the minister should know is that there is different and varying degrees of insurance rates. But I don't know about the services per se because there's a lot of farmers, wild rice farmers, out there that are asking not only for the crop insurance aspect of it — so if they do have a bad crop one crop that they're covered — but to be fair in terms of the insurance rates and to also offer other programs for them because it is a good industry in northern Saskatchewan. We're seeing evidence of that in many, many communities.

And people should know that what happens in northern Saskatchewan is you have people that have, typically they may have seasonal employment, perhaps maybe as a forest fire fighter. But in the wintertime they could do things like trap and they can fish and in the fall they can do wild rice. There's a variety of things that they do. And what they do is they do three or four different things at once, and it really makes them, you know, be able to help their families and pay their bills and so on and so forth.

[14:30]

So the wild rice program itself is incredibly important for the North. And I'm just hoping that this particular Bill, the crop insurance corporation, the Act to amend the crop insurance corporation does have the understanding that, from our prospective and from the northern prospective, that the wild rice industry is actively involved with any kind of determining of benefits and whether they are able to participate in some of the programs that the minister alluded to. I'm hoping, I'm praying that they are included because this is an important part of the agricultural community per se. And there's hundreds of wild rice growers in northern Saskatchewan and in central Saskatchewan, and they employ a lot of people to help them do their harvesting and so on and so forth.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would assume that one of the things you want to do when you're looking at protecting Saskatchewan's interests as it relates to the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation is I really need to also determine under the crop insurance program which people are going to benefit from this particular funding, from this particular change in the Act. Is it going to be people based in Saskatchewan? Because we now know . . . I can remember the time when we kind of released the foreign ownership of lands Act where we allowed more and more people to come in and buy agricultural lands in Saskatchewan. Are they also eligible for some of these programs? Because I know that was a big issue when we announced it; there was a lot of people out there wondering when this was going to be done. And I can remember the . . . I believe the minister at the time was Clay Serby, and if my memory serves me correct — and a lot of times it doesn't, at certain times in the day, but if it serves me correct, Mr. Speaker — I can remember Serby talking about this issue of trying to loosen up the foreign land ownership problems that we were perceived as putting in place for people to come in and buying land in Saskatchewan.

So we kind of tackled that particular issue. So I think over time as an MLA, as a northern MLA, we get subjected to a lot of issues, Mr. Speaker, a lot of issues that are based on the agricultural community, on the economies of some of our producers out there, and it's just an incredible world. There's no question.

As I mentioned at the outset, in Saskatchewan I think agriculture has been the mainstay of our provincial economy for years and years and years. We're considered by the world as the breadbasket of the world, and I think it's important that we embrace that role. And a lot of people take great pride in that, not only the history of the agricultural base in Saskatchewan but the future of how we can really make a big difference in trying to build on this economy and build on the hard work and sweat of our rural communities.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would point out that another good pointer to raise on this Crop Insurance Corporation Act is, as I mentioned, it would be nice to know who is going to be receiving some of these benefits. Because as we know, land changes; the ownership of land changes on a constant basis. I know many farm families struggle with a transition strategy because right now the prices are good, and things are going not so bad, and they do what they have to do. They work very hard. But eventually, you know, as prices will drop — as they rise, they'll certainly drop as well — you begin to wonder about the future. And the crop insurance Act I think needs to reflect that in how they're providing the service.

When I say you need to look at the future, is how many of these farm families will survive 20, 30 years from now if they don't have their children or their grandchildren willing to take over the farm? We know there's a lot of people that aren't willing to take over farm operations, and that of course creates a significant problem in two ways. Number one is the base of the farm family is further eroded and the quality of rural life, not having families, like children and grandchildren around, it certainly is threatened in many ways.

So I think that's one of the things that I observed over time in

some of the discussions I have been privy to around the agricultural community. We want to make sure that whatever we do, whether it's this particular Act, No. 34, is that it's got to be done with a lot of thought and certainly a lot of commitment to the future of agriculture in the community. And part of that basis of that future is of course the farm family foundations.

Now I think one of the things that I would ask in terms of the benefits and the programs that are within the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation now and what the minister is hoping to do, who are the benefactors of that? Is there a specific effort to make sure that any programs, any spending, any services, any support mechanisms that are housed within this particular Act, is it intended to help which particular groups? Is it the farm families? Is it the large multinational corporations that may own farms? Or is it the foreign owners of some of the operations?

Like these are some of the questions we need to break down under the crop insurance program because these are questions that are really important not only to me as a northerner but of course to many people all throughout the province, in urban Saskatchewan and of course the small towns and villages throughout our great land. And that's one of the things I think is really important, Mr. Speaker, is we need to find out exactly the makeup of our agricultural community. Where it was 20 years ago is radically different to where it is now, and 20 years from now, it's going to be even more radically different.

And there's all these discussions, Mr. Speaker, on how we can make sure that we protect Saskatchewan's interest. That's first and foremost in a lot of people's minds. And I look at everything from the big hog operations to some of the corporate farms that are popping up all over the place and of course some of the other aspects of foreign ownership of some of our farms. These are some of the things that there's a lot of questions about. And I as an observer of the agricultural community from a distance, these are some of the things that pop up into my mind because it's something that I think any person that has any kind of support towards the agricultural community should be asking.

So the point I would ask the minister under the Crop Insurance Corporation — we need to know these things as part of our role as an opposition — is to try and find out all the programs that are available, the dollars attached. Who is your intended audience? Who will be the biggest benefactor of some of these dollars and some of these programs? Because while at the outset we think we are going to be supporting farm families, that intended target is admirable.

Of course any government wants to do that. But a lot of times we don't ask the pivotal questions, is that how much of the percentage of support that we're putting under the crop insurance corporation Act, how much of those benefits are actually going to farm families as we understand it, Mr. Speaker, as a mom and a dad or grandpa and grandma and the sons and daughters helping or the grandchildren helping? That's what we perceive as family farms. Is that the way of the past, Mr. Speaker? Does this Act support them or just simply ignores all those arguments and all those processes and just simply says, the crop insurance program is for everyone. It doesn't matter who owns the land or the farm or who applies,

we'll give them the money anyway. I think it's one of the things that we have to look at, Mr. Speaker, that's really, really important to the future of how I view Saskatchewan agriculture in the next 10, 15 years.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we've been again being able to travel to a number of operations and joining other MLAs in touring hog barn operations and being at family farms. You ask a lot of questions because you want to know about their way of life. And it's an amazing experience because a lot of these farm families are very friendly. They want to feed you right away, and they want to show off their farm, and they also want to talk about the history of their family, the history of their farm. Those are the three things I found really amazing in some of the trips that I took with some of my NDP [New Democratic Party] colleagues when we were in government because it was important that we all understood that. People like Mr. Serby and people like our former Premier Calvert made sure as many of cabinet folks went on these trips to understand what this was about, and that's something I'm pretty happy with today.

Now as I mentioned at the outset, when you go to a typical family farm, there's three things that happens right away. They're very hospitable — like I said, they want to feed you — and they're very proud of the history of their farm, and they also want to show off their operation. And there's mixed farming of course, and there's grain farmers, and there's cow-calf operators — there's all these different entities out there. And they all do a lot not only for the land, Mr. Speaker, but they also do a lot for the neighbouring community and of course for our province as a whole.

So these are some of the things I think are really important that we as MLAs do, is we travel to places that we had never been before and to learn of industries we've never been exposed to and to meet people that have been involved with lifestyles that we would never know had we not become MLAs. And that's why it's important that as opposition members, and even as a northern MLA, that you get up and you speak to these Bills because in the long run it helps you not only as an individual but as an MLA.

I think in the long run it does great service to the agricultural community to know that people from all regions of the province, including from the northern communities, from the Aboriginal communities are taking the time and the effort to understand what the crop insurance Act's about, time and effort to understand what their family farm structure is about, time and the necessary attention to understand what their way of life is about. And that's really important for a lot of the farm families, Mr. Speaker. So I think one of the things you want to do in *The Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation Act* is again reach out to the groups and organizations that are out there to say yes.

A lot of times we sit up and we talk about a lot of things that we're comfortable with, we're knowledgeable about, but in the instance where you're unsure about any particular Act, it's important to get up and ask the questions. It's important to get up and try and understand the Bill. It's important to travel to understand the industry. And that's part of the ongoing work that an MLA does, and certainly that's part of our ongoing commitment as the New Democratic caucus, is to understand

rural Saskatchewan and do a lot of work that we've been prompted to over the years by people like Clay Serby, to try and understand that and to try and make a difference for the people out there.

No question that any changes to any Acts, you know, as the minister's bringing forward this particular Bill, Bill No. 34, that there's always reaction. And like as I said at the outset, some of the people might like the changes; they might be happy with the efficiency. But others might say it's not going far enough. Others might say this is what they omitted. This doesn't do any good for our region. These are some of the things that we've got to try and determine and some of the things that we have to understand better. And that's why it's important that we take the time to understand these Bills and we take the time to make sure that we try and make them relevant not only to our life but certainly to our region.

And that's why I made reference, Mr. Speaker, to the wild rice industry in northern Saskatchewan and central Saskatchewan because I know that they are impacted by the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation, and any Bill that comes forward, that they have an impact. But the greater challenge and the greater opportunity for me, Mr. Speaker, is to understand how this applies to rural Saskatchewan, to the producers and to the farm families, and to see whether the benefit is there in the long run, but more so to see who benefits and to see what challenges lie out there for the future of our agricultural communities, of our towns, and of our families.

Now, Mr. Speaker, a lot of people . . . There was a lot of discussion one day on the future of farm land ownership and whether we should allow foreign ownership of farm lands in Saskatchewan. There was a thought process within the NDP that was to try and keep farm land ownership in Saskatchewan to the Saskatchewan people. That was one of the things that I think the NDP were known to try and do, is to protect Saskatchewan people's interests.

And there was a lot of pressure from the right wing, at the time the Saskatchewan Party, to try and loosen up the restrictions of foreign farm landownership. And at the end of the day, in an effort to try and stimulate the agricultural community and to try and make rural Saskatchewan stronger by having investment come into their region, the NDP certainly to a large extent softened up their position and allowed foreign landownership, you know, to increase. And that was a very difficult discussion at the time because, I think in general, we wanted to protect Saskatchewan people's interest, and we wanted to make sure that the farm family model, so to speak, of operating our agricultural lands was something that we would want to protect and we'd want to enhance.

And all these questions came into play, Mr. Speaker. And at the end of the day, I think what's important is, as the Saskatchewan Party would say, let the markets prevail, whether it's a large multinational corporation that end up owning all our farm land and we are simply bystanders and applauding the economy and then the riches that they make. Well that's their position, you know. And that's one of the things that's important for people to know is that, where do we stand on some of these issues? What's our position? What's our fundamental principle behind foreign landownership?

And at the time, as I mentioned, Mr. Speaker, there was a lot of struggle within cabinet as to whether that was a good idea in the long run or whether it was something that we should do to stimulate the economy in the rural parts of our province. And at the end of the day, I think there was some loosening up of our philosophy. Not so much giving up or anything, but certainly saying well, let's try it this way. It's important for the area. They're asking for it. And I think that's what we had done to reach out to the rural part of Saskatchewan.

[14:45]

So there's no question that as the summer is going to be coming in a few short months that we're going to take every effort to try and understand how the agricultural community works, and in particular how this Bill affects or impacts some of the farm families, but also to see whether there's really true benefits here. Because if we have a great program and a great spending budget here, what happens is that, if it's all going out of province to all people that may own some of the operations that are impacted by the Crop Insurance Corporation, if it's all going out of country or another province, then what's the use of putting this money in if there's no Saskatchewan farm family benefit?

I think the majority of those benefits within the Crop Insurance Corporation should be going to farm families that live and have a tradition and a history of calling Saskatchewan their home. I think that's a fundamental belief that we have and a fundamental belief that I have, that if you have any of these programs and investment, that we shouldn't be shooting this money off to some foreign ownership in some foreign lands and they get the lion's share of all the benefits that we as Saskatchewan taxpayers have put on the table to support our agricultural communities. That is one of the main reasons why, and I hope I was able to briefly explain to the people that are listening, one of the main reasons why we need to take a role in understanding these Bills even though we're not familiar with these industries, but more so to point out our philosophy and our position on why some of these programs need to answer some of the questions that we have as an opposition.

I think that's really important, Mr. Speaker, and that's the reason why I'm standing up today as a northern MLA, as a northern Aboriginal MLA, asking questions about this crop insurance Bill that the minister just presented. It is important we do that. Part of the due diligence that we want to undertake as an opposition is to understand these industries greater. And, Mr. Speaker, I think in the long run that's going to serve us well and the people of Saskatchewan very well.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think we want to make sure that we look at the benefits and the benefactors and we ascertain whether these are going to philosophically support what we think is right, which is a good, solid support for the farm families out there. And to again make sure that the monies and the programs that are within this Act will benefit agriculture for years to come and strengthen the mainstay of our provincial economy so that we can say 20 years from now that we're not worried about Saskatchewan's interests being maintained when it comes to the agricultural base, that certainly that that particular aspect has been met with as much vigour and intelligent spending as possible. That's the most, that's the key thing, Mr. Speaker.

So I know I have a few more things I want to add but certainly, as I mentioned, taking the time to understand the Bill and reaching out to the impacted communities, the impacted people, and the organizations that are involved. Mr. Speaker, I move at this time that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 34.

**The Speaker:** — The member for Athabasca has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 34, *The Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

## ADJOURNED DEBATES

### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill No. 19

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Hickie that **Bill No. 19 — *The Assessment Appraisers Amendment Act, 2011*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise this afternoon to provide an assessment and perhaps a bit of an appraisal of *The Assessment Appraisers Amendment Act, 2011*.

The Act sets out to do chiefly three things. And if I might, Mr. Speaker, the second reading speech on the part of the minister was particularly well done, so for those that helped out with the speech, I'd like to say cogently argued and the arguments were quite well laid out. So congratulations on that to whoever held the pen in this speech, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps they could have helped out in the question period for the Minister as well.

But to the Bill itself. Again, one of the . . . In terms of the professional designations — clearing up issues around registration, licensing as opposed to membership of an accrediting body — these things are important obviously when it comes to the proper conduct of a professional designation. And this is certainly the case with the assessment appraisers. It builds on regulations that have been in effect since November 1st, 2002. It again does chiefly three things.

First, it's clarifying the Saskatchewan Assessment Appraisers' Association role in certifying or licensing all assessment appraisers involved in valuing property for municipal property tax purposes, whether or not they are members of the SAAA [Saskatchewan Assessment Appraisers' Association] or not, thereby ensuring the credentials of all assessment appraisers are verified.

Secondly, amendments are put forward to remove requirements related to the residency, employment, and membership including one that exists in *The Agrologists Act* of 1994, which ensures that accreditation is based on knowledge, skills, education, and experience to better comply with the province's

commitments and obligations regarding labour mobility. Again, I would presume that there's been a fair amount of work done not just with the representative bodies there, Mr. Speaker, but to make sure that this jives with the interprovincial trade and labour mobility requirements; you know, be it under what we have in TILMA [Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement] or with the New West Partnership or what have you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Thirdly, amendments to update the Act to the current model used for professions Acts in Saskatchewan continuing the government's practice of refining and updating professions legislation, thereby ensuring it meets the needs of the profession, the association, and the public.

So again to recap, it's about clarifying the role that the SAAA plays, again membership not necessarily being required to be registered and licensed by the SAAA, but very clearly delineating or more clearly delineating the line between those functions; the situation around particularly residency, previously various professional designations that insisted on a residential requirement in the province of Saskatchewan in these times of much greater labour mobility. This is a trend that we see in a great number of professional designations and that need to go to an extra-provincial basis as opposed to one particular province, but again, ensuring that the mandate of the representative body is still clear and enforceable. And thirdly again, refining and clarifying the provisions of the Act to ensure that it meets the needs of the association, the public, the profession. And I guess, Mr. Speaker, this is one piece of legislation that largely fits under the heading of what might be deemed housekeeping.

I note that in making these three points, the minister has stated that we plan to have the regulations developed in further consultation with the SAAA, with SAMA, the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency, as well as the Saskatchewan Institute of Agrologists, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Advanced Education, Employment and Immigration.

There's a claim made in the speech, Mr. Speaker, of consultation that has come previously and consultation yet to come as the Act is further brought forward and developed around its regulations. So if the Bill can live up to its claim of assuring the Saskatchewan Assessment Appraisers' Association with clearer direction regarding accreditation, certification, and membership issues, that would seem to be on the face of it a positive thing, Mr. Speaker. We'll see what other members have to say in this debate, particularly our critic for Municipal Affairs. But this seems to be a positive measure brought forward, and we'll see where it winds up and how the new Licensed Assessment Appraiser of Saskatchewan, the new accredited title under the legislation, work out, work out for people.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I think I would be approaching the conclusion of my remarks. And as such, I would move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 19, *The Assessment Appraisers Amendment Act, 2011*.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Regina Elphinstone has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 19, *The Assessment Appraisers Amendment Act, 2011*. Is it the pleasure



of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

**Bill No. 20**

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Hickie that **Bill No. 20 — *The Planning and Development Amendment Act, 2011*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure this afternoon to join in on the debate and the discussion in adjourned debates as I prepare to speak to Bill No. 20, *The Planning and Development Amendment Act, 2011*.

When looking at this piece of legislation, my thoughts first go to the importance that individuals in this province place to their communities. Whether we live in one of the larger cities, whether we live in a smaller city, whether we live in a town or a village or a hamlet or whether we're on a farm, wherever we may be living here in the province, what is certain is that people love their communities. They love the people, their neighbours, and their family members in a given area. And there's a strong attachment to the place that we live if the people identify with a certain neighbourhood or a certain community. And so we have a real strong interest in what occurs in that community when there are potential changes.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, when considering the types of changes that can occur in a given area, the type of action that people in the province want is an action that is forward-looking, also one that is responsible and keeps a proper long-term view in perspective so that decisions being made when it comes to the planning and the development of particular areas, that the decisions aren't short-sighted, that they're not being made for a short-term gain with potentially long-term consequences that individuals would not want, that would've not been good for our children, for future generations, and also for neighbouring communities. It's important to have the necessary communication between areas in order to ensure that proper decisions are being made.

So this piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, is an amendment to the Act, as the minister responsible identified in his second reading speech. For followers at home, the minister gave his second reading speech on December 14th, 2011 where he outlined some of the goals and some of the objectives that he sought to accomplish with this piece of legislation. And I think, Mr. Speaker, it is a useful speech in the sense that it highlights areas of attention, and it highlights some potential concerns that I think we as an opposition have some questions about as well as people in the province who care about their neighbourhoods and their larger communities.

I think, Mr. Speaker, of my own constituency, which is quite varied in the types of neighbourhoods that are present there — going from very older neighbourhoods, some of the first

neighbourhoods in Saskatoon like Caswell and Mayfair; going down 33rd Street, down through 1960s neighbourhoods like Hudson Bay Park; as well as Westview into the '70s; and then into the '80s and the early '90s, in neighbourhoods like Dundonald; and now with the brand-new subdivision of Hampton Village which is to the north of Dundonald and just south of the airport lands. Most of this area is now built out. There's a few developments that are ongoing in a few pockets.

But between the '07 election and the 2011 election, there were certainly a lot of new homes there and individuals that were new to the constituency, a good number from the west side already, maybe an older neighbourhood. And these individuals wanted a bigger or a newer house or perhaps they wanted to . . . well, they wanted a newer house but also wanted to be close to family members or grandparents for child care in a neighbouring community neighbourhood. Or they simply liked the familiarity of having the shopping and the businesses that they're used to going to on the west side.

I say that, Mr. Speaker, simply as an example to show how important community development is for people, how strong the attachment is that people have to their local area, and that when we are making decisions about the look and the feel of neighbourhoods and how neighbourhoods fit into a community and how that community relates to other communities within a region, it's important to remember that our decisions have to be based on the best interests for the people living in those areas. And yes, there will be a give and take required between communities as planning occurs.

[15:00]

But I think, Mr. Speaker, many of those hurdles can be overcome through proper communication, through compromise, which is a hallmark of the Saskatchewan way, and through strong leadership at the municipal level which has been, as I said, the way that Saskatchewan has developed for many years.

So this, Mr. Speaker, as the minister says, is an amendment to earlier Acts to do with *The Planning and Development Act*, going back to 2007. And we see some changes here, Mr. Speaker, that the minister has chosen to enact. And he states that this has occurred through extensive consultation, and he goes to some effort in his second reading speech to list some of the groups that he has consulted with. And he says that . . . I'm quoting from page 215 of *Hansard* on December 14th, and it says:

The consultations involved municipal governments and associations, industry sector groups, agricultural and environmental agencies, the heritage sector, planning districts, the transportation sector, professional associations, and provincial ministries. Mr. Speaker, the input from these consultations has been instrumental in developing these amendments and will make a substantial contribution to building the future of Saskatchewan's communities.

So I say that, Mr. Speaker, because I do want to emphasize the importance of consultation and the value that comes from it. And it's my hope, Mr. Speaker, that the discussions that occurred with these groups by the minister and/or with his

officials and the agencies, I hope that the information that was given, Mr. Speaker, was well received, genuinely listened to, and then incorporated into the decision-making process. And the minister does make some reference to some of the changes in the legislation that he made based on the feedback that was received, and that's a good thing, Mr. Speaker, if that has in fact occurred.

But it's important to also remember or it's important also to, I would say, remind members opposite that when consulting with these types of groups, it's also important to truly listen to them and take their views into consideration and not simply go through the exercise of consultation for the sake of being able to say in a second reading speech that it occurred. But it's my hope with the minister having said that the consultations occurred with these groups, it's my hope that it was genuine and a very thorough consultation.

There are a number of goals that this piece of legislation attempts to accomplish in some of the different aspects. And as the minister identified in his speech, he said that:

The amendments are designed to provide additional flexibility for municipalities to jointly plan and manage areas of common interest, improve the mechanics of decision making for large district planning commissions, provide the minister with the ability to delegate approving authority status to a district planning authority, provide dispute resolution processes for district planning commissions and district planning authorities, increase municipal flexibility to effectively service and cover the cost of development, and address incidental housekeeping items.

So I provide that list, Mr. Speaker, to give the listeners at home an idea of what this Bill seeks to accomplish, and it is a fairly broad set of objectives that . . . a broad set of changes or at least amendments that are attempting to be made through this piece of legislation. And I would at this time, Mr. Speaker, like to touch on some of those different goals that the minister has identified to see where some of the strengths in the decisions may be but also to identify some of the problems or pitfalls that may be coming through some of the decisions that the minister wants to make through this proposed amendment to the Act.

I'll first address, Mr. Speaker, the one area where it speaks of flexibility for municipalities to jointly plan and manage areas of common interest and to improve the mechanics of decision making for large district planning commissions. So this is the idea, Mr. Speaker, as I read it and understand it, is that we would move from a state where each municipality, each order of government within a local specific geographical area is doing its own planning. But it's an approach, Mr. Speaker, that would allow for better communication, better co-operation, better compromise between groups in a specific area, geographic area, that have a common interest in the area of doing well.

And I think when I say doing well, there's many components to what that looks like. Yes, doing well economically, that is a very important aspect because it provides a tax base so that services can be provided. It allows for jobs so that families, parents can provide for their children. So there's certainly the economic component which we need to keep in mind, but

there's also how we do well from a cultural perspective, from a recreational perspective, and from a social perspective, Mr. Speaker.

So there's a number of components there, and it's my hope that through this process that is being designed that allows for geographical areas to get together and to do regional planning, my hope, Mr. Speaker, is that it would not solely take a 100 per cent economic focus. I think it needs to be broader than that. It can be a discussion about how services can be provided in a given area perhaps. Perhaps a discussion about how some efficiencies can be gained between different groups so that there is not unnecessary duplication. But I think also, Mr. Speaker, when you involve more people together in an area, it allows for communication to occur between groups, and it's through communication that a better understanding of specific needs and concerns can be realized.

In one of the examples that's given in this legislation, it also talks about the interplay that municipalities have with the local First Nation. And I think, Mr. Speaker, it's a good thing to incorporate groups that maybe haven't traditionally communicated to the extent that they should by having more people together under one banner within one region talking, discussing about what they want the future to be in their local area. That's a positive thing because it allows for co-operation, and it allows for sound decisions to be made. And I think it allows for sound decisions to be made because there's a greater understanding and appreciation of the local reality that individual pockets within the community may be facing. So if groups that don't normally communicate a great deal are suddenly put together and have the opportunity to share views and see where both sides can benefit from a positive relationship, that's a good thing, Mr. Speaker.

So I've addressed how it's important when taking a regional perspective on development, how it's important to have an economic focus with development, and how maybe it's important to have a social focus as well in terms of having organizations and groups communicate with one another.

I think it's also important from a cultural perspective, and I say that with respect to our buildings and the way that our communities look and feel. I think we can all think of areas in the province or in our own backyards, Mr. Speaker, where there hasn't been the proper kind of planning or maybe the planning has proven that maybe a little more could have been done at one time in order to ensure that the decisions being made aren't having a negative effect. And from a cultural perspective, the way our communities feel, the way that buildings look, the way that streets and highways are designed has an influence on the local culture. And it's important, Mr. Speaker, within that regional context to also take into considerations of culture.

And as I was saying, we can think of areas where the planning in an area may not feel as tied together as it could be. Maybe there's different types of development or it maybe has a bit of a staggered feel. And I think, Mr. Speaker, by having a regional focus, as the minister identifies in this piece of legislation, that might allow for good types of decisions to be made in the present and going into the future.

And so I do think that is a positive thing to have local people on

the ground who are involved, local municipalities who know their communities better than anyone else much of the time, coming together and talking about what they want their community to look like from an economic perspective, from a social perspective, and from a cultural perspective.

So it's my hope, Mr. Speaker . . . And the minister talks about this in his second reading speech. He says that:

Joint initiatives set the stage for more formal partnerships, and we are pleased to see the beginnings of 12 potentially new district planning commissions as a result of incentive funding from the planning for growth program.

So I think, Mr. Speaker, it's good to provide that type of support to allow local initiatives to take root.

Now that's some of the positive comments that I've made about it, Mr. Speaker, because I do think that gains can be realized by having a co-operative approach. But as with any decision, when there are positives, there also may be some negatives. So while there may be this regional activity, Mr. Speaker, I think it is also very important for the ministry to have the proper oversight still, to still be involved, to still be cognizant of what is occurring in the local areas so that things stay on the rails as they ought to be. Not to question the knowledge and the wisdom of local areas, but, Mr. Speaker, it's always important to have proper oversight because that's the way that a democratic system works, is that there be proper oversight to a situation. So it's my hope, Mr. Speaker, that the minister is aware of that, that the minister is taking proper steps to ensure that that is occurring and is not unnecessarily devolving authority in a way that is not appropriate and still doesn't have checks and balances that may be needed. That leads to another point, Mr. Speaker, where the minister in his remarks talks about how the proposal also provides the opportunity for district planning authority to be granted approving authority status.

So as I read it, Mr. Speaker, it would appear that there is a devolving of responsibility to these organizations in terms of allowing them to make decisions, and that may be appropriate. But it's important to have the necessary checks there as there is with any order of government or needs to be with any order of government or any local authority, one should say, when making decisions.

It's also important, Mr. Speaker, while the idea of co-operation between many groups is a good thing, that you have co-operation at a regional level, I think, is a strength of Saskatchewan and is a positive step. It's also important to understand and realize that not all of the time will everyone get along with everyone, have a decision of what the plan should be, of what the future should look like. From time to time, Mr. Speaker, it may be a reality that within these planning authorities that there is a dispute and I think, Mr. Speaker, it's important that there is a route to resolve that.

It appears that the minister has touched on that somewhat in the planning of this Bill. I'll just provide this for listeners at home where he says:

Where a municipality and a planning district is unable to

resolve a dispute with other members and has requested withdrawal or where a planning district has requested dissolution, the Minister of Municipal Affairs may refer the matter to the Saskatchewan Municipal Board.

So it appears, Mr. Speaker, that there is an avenue there to deal with issues that come about.

Mr. Speaker, another section that is addressed in this piece of legislation, as identified by the minister, has to do with the fees that are associated with development and how development in a local area is paid for and the rules around how a local authority may recoup some of the costs associated with the development that is occurring in an area.

This is an interesting discussion, Mr. Speaker. And it actually touches on some of the topics that we're talking about today for example with who pays for RCMP and what sort of off-loading there may be. So we have heard in recent days and recent weeks a lot of mixed messages from members opposite. We've heard messages where, on the one hand, it said that there's prosperity, and the other hand that there needs to be austerity. And we've heard mixed signals. And I think this is being recognized in the broader public as well in how some of the decisions and proposals that members opposite are making don't always make a lot of sense or aren't consistent in a way that they should be, in a way that would indicate there's the proper forethought and planning occurring.

When we look at the issue of fees, this is being set up in such a way that local authorities and municipalities can recoup some of those costs. And, Mr. Speaker, it ties into a larger policy discussion that perhaps can be had on another day as well to do with who is responsible for paying these types of fees. What is the best source of income for these types of fees? What is the best approach to ensure that people are paying their fair share, to ensure that municipalities are not unnecessarily burdened but also to recognize that there may be constraints from the provincial government.

But what we've heard from members opposite, Mr. Speaker, are very mixed signals when we talk about high revenue, but then there's also talk about large, large cuts. And so it's left many people, and I would imagine some people in municipalities, wondering what is the plan? What is the way forward with this government when such mixed signals are being given to Saskatchewan people?

[15:15]

As with any piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, there is the regular types of housekeeping details that are addressed and that are fixed or tuned up. And, Mr. Speaker, as the minister suggests in his speech, this piece of legislation, this amendment does have that aspect as well which . . . Normally housekeeping matters aren't of a significant nature. And sometimes they're a result of other pieces of legislation being changed, either provincially or sometimes federally, and then therefore it has a domino effect where other pieces of legislation need to be brought up to speed. And it's my hope, Mr. Speaker, that the housekeeping changes here are simply of that nature, that they aren't controversial and they aren't an attempt to hide anything untoward. And I wouldn't accuse members of that, but it's just

my sincere hope always with any piece of legislation that it is what it is and that one does not need to read between the lines for something else that may be there.

Mr. Speaker, I briefly made some remarks about the notion of fees and how this type of development can be paid for or how it ought to be paid for. And the minister identifies a tension here based on the consultation. So in my earlier remarks I said that consultation needs to be thorough, consultation needs to be sincere, and that the minister and his or her officials need to listen to the feedback that is received.

Identified in the minister's second reading speech is a real tension that is identified. And it would appear to me that the minister, at this time, has decided to listen to one group and not listen to the other group to the same extent. Or maybe he's not favouring one over the other but is choosing to park the issue for now in a holding pattern and simply not address it at this time, either because he feels that it's not appropriate to handle at this time or he doesn't have the political will to address the issue at this time.

And I'll read the paragraph from his speech to you to give members and listeners at home an idea of what I'm talking about here. And it has to do with this issue that he has parked for the time being. And so I'm curious as to whether or not it will be coming at a later date or if it will just be sitting there indefinitely. And quoting from page 216 of *Hansard* on December 14th, 2011, it says:

Amendments requested by municipalities and the development industry which have not been addressed within this proposal include the request by SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities], SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association], and the cities of Saskatoon and Regina to expand the list of fees and levies to include fire suppression infrastructure and facilities. Home builders and developers opposed the provisions which they believe do not account for the impact on current and future homeowners, renters, consumer spending, housing affordability, or economic investment into major centres and more broadly Saskatchewan. They also oppose the shift from funding this type of infrastructure and facility through new development rather than general taxation. As a result, this provision has been removed and will be considered in future discussions with the sector and development industry.

So what we see in that paragraph provided in the minister's speech, and as the previous member from Regina Elphinstone stated, complimenting the ministry officials who worked on drafting the speech, I too would like to thank them for their work in outlining this component because I think it is an important tension. And it speaks to a larger policy issue that I don't think members opposite have fully wrestled with and come to a conclusion as to how they want to handle it and who they want to be listening to and what is the best approach. If they were at that position, if they did know what they wanted to do, I think it would've been addressed in this piece of legislation. Because we've seen in other situations on different pieces of legislation, even when there has been opposing views on something, they've been more than willing to plow ahead.

So they're not afraid of ignoring people, but it depends who they're ignoring, and that's the catch. And I think this paragraph here indicates who they're willing to ignore and who they're not willing to ignore. So it has to do with how the infrastructure in a community is paid for and whether or not municipalities are expected to provide for or pay for that type of infrastructure out of general tax levies, or whether the onus should be placed on the developer of an area to provide the infrastructure needed in that area. And as the minister stated in his speech, it's the list of fees and levies to include fire suppression, infrastructure, and facilities.

So we know, Mr. Speaker, as communities grow, it's necessary and important to have fire halls built in the various communities throughout the province, but this is especially the case in the larger centres. And I think of, Mr. Speaker, the neighbourhood I often speak to during the petitions portion of the day, Hampton Village. And this is one such community, Mr. Speaker, where a fire hall is slated to go in right off McLaughlin Road behind the Shoppers Drug Mart, very close to the land that is designated for a new elementary school or schools, I should add.

And so it's this question, Mr. Speaker, how this necessary infrastructure is going to be paid for. I think all homeowners in an area when they move into a specific, into an area, they expect that they have services and that may be, I'll think of Hampton Village, they expect that there's a Shoppers Drug Mart or whatever store. I don't mean to endorse one company over another. They expect that there'd be some basic conveniences there, some larger shopping centres in the area. They expect that they have a decent police presence in the area, and they expect that they have fire services.

And as individuals will know, or at least as I've been told, it's actually . . . There's a requirement for fire halls to be built in expanding areas so that the response time by emergency vehicles like fire is within a certain time frame, so that homeowners are eligible for insurance coverage in the area. Otherwise there are questions about whether or not they qualify for insurance. So it's not really a debate up for question as to whether or not a fire hall should be moved into a specific area; it's something that needs to occur.

And here we have a tension, Mr. Speaker, where the cities, it sounds like the city of Saskatoon, Regina, and at least certain individuals within SUMA and SARM are asking that when a large developer moves into an area that a lot of that cost would be borne by them. On the flip side, the homeowners' association and the builders, it sounds as though they are saying, well actually this would be an unfair, an unnecessary burden placed on homeowners which would affect the cost of our homes, which would be passed on to the purchasers, and would affect purchasing power that individuals may have in a given area and not be a wise step.

The catch is the money has to come from somewhere, and it's not clear to me that the members opposite have decided where they want to get the funding to provide the infrastructure that is required in order that we have appropriate number of fire halls in a growing neighbourhood in a growing city.

So it is interesting to me because, as I said before, members

opposite have been very willing to ignore groups, have been very willing to brush off criticism or brush off opposing viewpoints, whether that's wildlife habitat land, whether that is some of the labour legislation that has been ruled unconstitutional. Whatever the case may be, members opposite are willing to go down that road, but in this instance they paused. And they decided to simply park the issue and to shelve it.

In the meantime, in the meantime in Hampton Village people are moving in. In other communities people are moving in, and they need a fire hall. And so the members opposite, the minister can choose to park the issue if he wants to. But as I said before earlier on in my comments talking about the forward-thinking approach that is needed with development, I'm not sure simply putting one's head in the sand is going to take us to the point where we have the type of outcome that we want and that we need in order to have a strong province. So to me it has been interesting, that tension.

Just connected to this point of providing infrastructure through what source it is paid for and what different communities are doing, I've actually been told that in the new subdivision in the city of Swift Current, the area of land beside the hospital there sort of tucked by the hospital and where Wal-Mart is, I've been told actually in that area that because of the response times to the fire hall, that the codes there within the city, they've determined that there needs to be sprinklers built into the homes in that area which is a fairly clear statement. And if I'm incorrect on that, I'm happy to be corrected. But that is what I have been told by individuals who were involved there on the ground in Swift Current.

And I think it points to an example where, if there isn't the proper type of forward thinking that is there in terms of how we're going to pay for these types of things — if the government isn't willing to make up its mind on how they're going to pay for the things like fire services in a community — municipalities, cities, and towns may in some ways chart their own course by changing codes like that to require that there be sprinklers in homes as opposed to the traditional view that people would want is to have a fire truck show up with a team of highly trained individuals who are serving their community and to extinguish the blaze that way, because it's more effective for actually extinguishing the fire properly and well. But moreover it takes into consideration the saving or the protection of human life in a different way that a sprinkler cannot, and that's why we have professional and volunteer fire services throughout the province.

So again if I'm wrong on that statement, I apologize to individuals, but the source is reliable that told me about it. So it is an interesting point and something I think that the minister should take into consideration as he just parks this item for now and doesn't address it or chooses not to address it.

So, Mr. Speaker, I do thank you and I thank all members for the time and the opportunity to speak to Bill 20, *An Act to amend The Planning and Development Act, 2007*. In my brief remarks this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, I've identified a number of things. I've identified how much Saskatchewan people love their communities. And everyone in the province, wherever we're from, we love where we're from, for the most part. There's

always the exception of people that want to live somewhere else. You know, Regina's a great place, but I really love Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker. But Saskatchewan is a great place because of our communities and the people that live in them. And because we love our communities so much, because we've come from great places, it's only appropriate and necessary that the proper types of decisions about our local communities are being made. And that requires a very long-term view of things. It requires co-operation and it requires communication between the different players and the different stakeholders in a given area.

Some of the talk that the minister has identified in the amendments to the Bill which would allow for regional planning, which would allow for some regional co-operation at basic level, I think, Mr. Speaker, those are good things. Those are good steps. There are the questions, Mr. Speaker, about proper oversight. There are questions about duplication with other regional organizations that may be at work, and so it's important that there still be . . . It's important that there still is a role, I think, for the ministry in this type of work.

It's important to have consultations, and it would appear, Mr. Speaker, that on this piece of legislation that the ministry has discussed it with a good number of stakeholders. And out of that, Mr. Speaker, came a decision, as the minister openly states in his second reading speech that he's simply going to park the issue for now because he's not sure which direction he and/or the government wants to go. I find that puzzling, Mr. Speaker, because as I've said before, it's not atypical for this government to ignore contrary views. They will plow ahead if they want to do something. So clearly here they're listening to someone, or they're listening to one group over another, which perhaps opens up a number of questions and a larger discussion that speakers after me may want to address.

There are a number of goals. As I said, some of them appear to be quite good, some of them appear to be housekeeping, some of them do have some concerns and some problems, but I do thank the minister for a thorough second reading speech and providing the piece of legislation. And I have enjoyed the opportunity to say a few remarks because it has caused me to think about my own community and my own home, and when you're away from home it's always a good thing to think of home. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I would move to adjourn debate. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Tell):** — The member from Massey Place has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 20. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Tell):** — Next Bill.

[15:30]

### Bill No. 21

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 21** — *The Commissioners for Oaths Act, 2011* be now read a second time.]

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Tell):** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. It's with great pleasure I rise this afternoon to speak to the Assembly about Bill 21. This is the Bill, *An Act respecting Commissioners to administer Oaths and making consequential amendments to other Acts*. Sorry, Bill 20. Sorry, 21. Got the right one. Thank you.

This was introduced in the earlier session in December, on December 14th by the Minister of Justice. And he, in his remarks, gave the indications why the government is introducing the Bill at this time. In his opening remarks, he indicates that this is a modernization of the legislation for appointing commissioners for oaths.

Looks like the Bill was really first introduced in the 1970s and has been amended a number of times since. So I think the proposition here is to replace the original Act with a new Act. It's now ordered somewhat differently with some different features, but essentially it's just concerning how commissioners for oaths are appointed. And he's indicating that it's removing provisions that are outdated or unnecessary and there's an attempt to update the language in the Bill.

As many of the members here present know, commissioners for oaths are officials that administer oaths, affirmations, and statutory declarations for many uses in Saskatchewan. Indeed all the members here are commissioners for oaths, and I suspect that it's a common part of their constituency work to assist constituents by signing such declarations and witnessing, I guess, such declarations.

The Commissioner for Oaths . . . It even goes back as far as the 1940s, and I think the idea here is that the modernization that's required really goes in terms of how people outside of Saskatchewan can be appointed as a Commissioner for Oaths. The ministry apparently has gone through a review. I'm not sure what kind of consultation they've done with the legal society and the Law Society or other people that use the . . . or get appointed, but he's indicated that they have reviewed the processes related to appointments and have tried to correct several inefficiencies and felt that more could be done with legislative amendments. So he indicated the big distinction in the Bill between appointments for commissioner for oaths in and for Saskatchewan and without Saskatchewan, he's indicating those concepts are unnecessary in today's mobile society. So by removing the distinction, he's indicating that that's following a lead that's been started in other provinces like British Columbia, Manitoba, and Ontario.

So what the Bill does is it removes, the proposed Bill removes the requirement to be a Canadian citizen or British subject as a qualification for appointment — and a fairly significant change to the requirements in that virtually anyone on the planet could be qualified to be appointed as a Commissioner for Oaths in Saskatchewan. These concepts . . . He said the idea of requiring a Canadian citizenship or being a British subject are outdated and indicated that it may violate the equality provisions of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. I'm not sure what kind of legal research he's obtained on that and he isn't quite very definitive in his comments to the legislature and only is willing

to say that it likely violates equality provisions, but he doesn't indicate on what basis he believes that to be true. So that's something that we might want to take a look at and find out whether indeed the restriction for Saskatchewan citizens and Canadian citizens and British subjects is in fact a violation of the equality provisions of the Charter.

It's funny that this Bill, his remarks in this Bill, are about human rights. As we saw today, there is some question about the operation of the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission, and the minister declined to make comment on that. However that is the commission that does keep an eye on human rights in Saskatchewan, and certainly when people's rights are being violated, that's the place of first instance for people to go. It's well known that the Human Rights Commission exists, and it's important for people to be able to have easy access when their rights are being violated.

Quite often people whose rights are being violated are vulnerable people in society. They are suffering racial discrimination or sexual harassment and are in very vulnerable position because quite often they are in a working relationship where they need their job to feed their family, and in order to have their rights upheld, they have to complain against their employer. So the people whose rights are being violated and that need the Human Rights Commission and easy access to a tribunal, which doesn't exist any more, but some sort of assistance from the Government of Saskatchewan, are finding it more and more difficult to access help when their rights are being violated because of the firings of front-line workers in the Human Rights Commission.

So it's interesting the minister is talking about violating equality provisions of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms when it comes to the definition of a Commissioner for Oaths but he isn't quite as concerned about that when it comes to access to human rights assistance, when people's rights are actually being violated.

I guess that also ties into some activities of a couple years ago where the previous government tried to pass Bills giving marriage commissioners freedom to refuse to marry gay and lesbian couples. And again the same thing applies. These are people who are vulnerable because of discrimination through human rights discrimination, and it was unfortunate that the government saw fit to attempt to restrict gay and lesbian marriages and that the marriage commissioners were going to be given the right to refuse to marry gay and lesbian couples. Fortunately our Court of Appeal saw through that and when it was referred to the Court of Appeal, the minister was required to step down from that proposal, and indeed chose not to go to the Supreme Court of Canada.

I'm hoping that the same kind of thing occurs with the appeal that was recently filed yesterday with the Court of Appeal in relation to workers' rights — again another Charter issue that's importance to a number of Canadians and particularly Saskatchewan people and particularly workers who need the right to assemble as protected by our Charter as it was set out in 1982. And those rights were being challenged and are continuing to be challenged by this government, which is truly unfortunate, Madam Deputy Speaker. So again it's interesting that there's a need for consequential cleanup of technical

aspects of the Commissioner for Oaths Bill but that human rights may be trampled in other areas of our society with attempts by the minister to continue to impede access to rights through this appeal that was filed yesterday. However the modernization of *The Commission for Oaths Act* is probably in order and overdue, so this is what I'll continue speaking on at this point.

One of the things he indicated in his introductory remarks on December 14th was that it also provides a modernized appointment process with as much as possible being done online and electronically. And that's a no-brainer, Madam Deputy Speaker. I think it's really important that we modernize a lot of the processes that we have. The systems are there, and indeed perhaps even some systems of this legislature could be more modernized in a significant way.

He also wants to introduce a concept of more rigorous screening of applicants. And one of the things that I read about when I was looking at the concept of a Commissioner of Oaths is that there is a moral obligation on a Commissioner for Oaths to do the right thing, and indeed there is penalty provisions for those that don't follow.

The minister's indicated that he will also introduce regulations to enable training and evaluation processes before an appointment is issued.

And one of the things that's really difficult when we look at these new Bills where there's additional regulatory control is that we don't know exactly what the regs are going to look like, so then it's difficult to understand how the Bill is going to be implemented. And if you look at the previous Act, there were no regulations, no regulatory powers at all that were addressed. In fact everything was found within the Act.

In this particular proposed Act, this Bill, Bill 21, we find section 13, which is entirely new, and it delegates a lot of authority to the regulatory agency. In fact it's suggesting that:

The Lieutenant Governor in Council ... [can] make regulations:

(a) defining, enlarging or restricting the meaning of any word or expression used in this Act but not defined in this Act;

That's section 13(a) of the proposed Bill.

I find that's very broad and it gives a lot of power to Executive Council to really alter the meaning of the Act itself. And again, I mentioned this earlier but the idea of having the Executive Council have the ability to change words or expressions and definitions is something that I think we need to take account of here on this side of the Chamber because we have to now watch orders in council very closely to make sure that meanings of Acts aren't being altered significantly by Executive Council actions in the passage of orders in council.

Other things that are in this particular section are things like in section (b) that establish "when an appointment as a commissioner expires." So again, Executive Council would have the ability to change the term of a commissioner,

unbeknownst to them. And I expect there would be notification procedures in that regulation if in fact the Lieutenant Governor in Council chooses to do that. Other things that are in the regulations are the application fee. That's not something I have as much concern about because that's typically what you find in regulations, would be things like fees and costs for certain licences.

One other thing the Lieutenant Governor in Council can do under the regulatory section as proposed in the Bill is under (d), where they could establish "eligibility requirements that must be satisfied by a person who applies for appointment as a commissioner." This does raise some concern for me mainly because of the minister's attempt to do that through the marriage commissioners Act. So that's something that we'll have to keep an eye on on this side of the House as well, is to ensure that if any orders in council are passed which restrict eligibility to become a Commissioner for Oaths for things that may impact on people's human rights, we need to be vigilant and watch out for that.

The regulations are also "requiring prospective commissioners to successfully complete an examination." This is a new feature and it wasn't one that was present, I don't think, in the previous Act, at least not on my cursory view of the Bill. Yes, even the fees were found within the Act. They're now being devolved to the regulatory level.

The other requirements that are listed: there is a criminal record check, which makes total sense. I think that's the way of the world these days, is to have a criminal record check. And then of course there's the always ever-present catch-all for the Lieutenant Governor prescribing any other requirement that the Lieutenant Governor in Council considers appropriate. Again that's a typical type of boilerplate regulation which opens up a pretty wide range for Executive Council to make rules that don't always follow the scrutiny of this particular Chamber.

Finally there's a couple more, actually four more regulatory provisions in the proposed Bill. One is prescribing government employees or classes of the government employees who are commissioners by virtue of their office or status. So again this could be the entire public service of Saskatchewan or certain classes, but we have no idea what that class is going to be because we don't see the regulations. So it's really difficult to understand the scope of the Bill without knowing what kind of regulations the Lieutenant Governor in Council will be passing. Again our side is going to have to be vigilant as all these orders in council come through and perhaps raise concerns at those points, but we normally don't see them until after they're passed. So it's a bit of a different world.

And then finally there's the ability to make regulations prescribing persons or classes of persons who are commissioners by virtue of their office or status. Again no description in the Bill of what types of status or office would be considered by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, so again it's difficult to know exactly what that's going to look like.

The Lieutenant Governor in Council will also have the ability to pass a regulation prescribing the words that a person prescribed pursuant to clause (f) shall display below his name. So once they decide who those classes are and who those

officers are, then there will have to be regulations saying how their name is going to be filled out on the oath or the affirmation. And then the boilerplate closes out that proposal, that particular clause where anything, “any other matter or thing that the Lieutenant Governor in Council considers necessary to carry out the intent of this Act.” So again a broad power being devolved down to Lieutenant Governor in Council and the Executive Council, and one that is more difficult to provide comment on and hold the government accountable to because it’s not being discussed here in this Chamber.

The new Bill is set up in five parts, Madam Deputy Speaker, and the first part is of course just the preliminary matters. The second part is the appointments themselves, and in that case now the language is much broader. It doesn’t limit to Saskatchewan citizens or British subjects but indeed appoints any person of at least 18 years of age that the minister considers necessary. So although there’s a very broad scope here, it’s still limited by the minister’s own opinion of whether it’s necessary for them to be a commissioner, and again the regulations will determine when they expire. So that’s a new change to the Bill as well.

Going on, the evidence of appointment that’s being proposed now is under section 5, and a commissioner appointed pursuant to section 3 is to be called a Commissioner for Oaths for Saskatchewan, that hasn’t changed. And they, under every affidavit, declaration or affirmation that they witness, they have to display those words, a Commissioner for Oaths for Saskatchewan, which again is the usual process and is really adopted from the previous Act.

The other thing they have to do which hasn’t changed is indicate when their commission expires — as long as they know because the regulations may have changed it, of course. So what they do is they need to apply to the minister. There has to be a form provided by the minister, and then if they wish to be appointed, they have to go through that process. They have to meet the requirements for appointment as a commissioner. Again, those requirements are going to be prescribed in the regulations, so we don’t know what they’ll look like at this point until we see the regulations.

And the minister can issue any document to indicate that they’ve been appointed. So the minister has to decide what kind of form he will use or she will use that they consider appropriate to indicate that that person has been appointed as a Commissioner for Oaths in Saskatchewan. The document issued pursuant to subsection (3) is admissible as evidence. So whatever the minister decides to use — it could be the back of a napkin, for all we know — but that’s sufficient if the minister says it is, and that can be admitted in court as evidence of their appointment. There’s no other proof required.

[15:45]

One of the things that the Bill does is it updates the fines for misbehaving if you are a Commissioner for Oaths. And that’s found in section 12, the offences and penalties. Under the previous Bill, it was a whopping fine of \$500, period. At this point the first offence is for \$500, but the amendment in this case is for a second or subsequent offence, the fine is doubled to \$1,000.

And so what kind of offences would a Commissioner for Oaths commit? That’s described in the first part of the section, section 12(1). So if you haven’t been appointed, and you purport to be a Commissioner for Oaths, that’s bad. You get fined \$500. If your commission has expired or it’s been revoked and you purport to act as a Commissioner for Oaths, same thing — bad fine. The third thing is that you can’t make a material representation in your application. So if you lie on your application, you are also subject to a fine: \$500 if it’s your first offence.

And finally I think the most important thing is that no commissioner should subscribe his signature before it’s fully completed. And I think there is a temptation, having signed a number of these, that often people don’t understand they’re not supposed to sign it until they are in front of a Commissioner for Oaths. And it’s very important for a Commissioner of Oaths to understand that you don’t sign it if a person’s already signed it. They have to sign it in front of you because you are witnessing their signature. As all the members here are often asked to sign them, it’s probably due diligence and wise to ensure that if you’re asked to sign an oath on behalf of one of your constituents you need to make sure that they haven’t signed it before you witness it — easily done. And as I say people don’t often understand how to fill out these forms. So it’s helpful for people to read through the requirements here.

But again it’s clause 12(4) that says you cannot sign your signature “. . . to an affidavit, affirmation or declaration before it is fully completed with respect to all the particulars being deposed to, affirmed or declared and before the jurat . . . has been completed as to place and date of swearing . . .”

So just a word of caution to all MLAs and everyone else who’s been appointed as a commissioner for oaths that that is an offence under the Act, and you could be subject to a fine of \$500.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I think at this point I’m just going to go back to the minister’s final comments in his introduction to the Bill in December 14th. And he’s talking about the updating of the designation of the types of people who can apply for the appointment and the list of people that are already appointed simply by virtue of their stature or office. Again, as I mentioned, the power to designate someone has been devolved to the regulatory level, but in part 3 there are a number of sections that identify who is by law a commissioner for oaths and not one that needs to apply for the appointment.

So in the first part of the section they describe court officials, and those are people who hold offices of the registrar of the Court of Appeal or the registrar of the Court of Queen’s Bench or their deputies. It also applies to local registrars or deputy local registrars of the Court of Queen’s Bench for Saskatchewan and the local courts; a clerk of the Provincial Court of Saskatchewan; a sheriff or deputy sheriff; or the inspector of legal offices or a deputy inspector. This doesn’t describe our clerks here as court officials, but I assume they would be covered under other clauses.

The second part is of course government officials which will be determined by what the regulations say. So we don’t know what that’s going to be yet, and we have to wait for the regulations.



Other automatic commissioners for oaths include officers in the Canadian Armed Forces — and they have a description here of the ranks that are required before they would be considered to be an officer, or a Commissioner for Oaths — and then finally a police officer, so in this case, a member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police or member of any police service as defined in *The Police Act*. Those are automatically commissioners for oath under this proposed Bill, and that's very similar to the previous Bill.

Now there are other ones who also are automatics, and they're commissioners by virtue of their office or status and they don't have to apply. So this extends to Provincial Court judges, lawyers, and Members of the Legislative Assembly — so the members present here and all our members — officers in the Canadian Armed Forces, court officials, police officers, government officials, and any other person prescribed in the regulation.

So again what I read earlier in section 9 was the definition of court officials — so they're in there — definitions of officers in the Canadian Armed Forces, definitions of police officers. Those are the ones we're certain of. The ones we don't know much about are government officials or the catch-all phrase in 10(1)(h): “any other person prescribed in the regulations.”

So overall it appears that this is a modest modernization of *The Commissioner for Oaths Act*. The concerns of course are that much of the ability to or the authority under the Act has been devolved to the Lieutenant Governor in Council under the regulation authority. And again it's difficult for members on this side of the Assembly to ascertain the extent of that because we don't know what they're going to look like. And until we see the regulations, it's going to be hard to make a full assessment of this Act.

And further these types of positions are positions of public trust, and the concerns about vulnerable people and people that are having human rights abuses being subject to these positions of public trust. And when we see what happened with the marriage commissioners' attempts to have them violate people's freedom of sexual orientation and also the current things we see happening with the labour rights Bills and the Court of Appeal, the appeal to the Court of Appeal to restrict workers' rights to assemble, which is a right protected under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982, we will continue to look to these things as the opposition. And certainly we'll be looking closely at the regulations to ensure that there is no further impingements or infringements on people's rights.

Indeed the minister's concern about the violation, the quality provisions of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in his opening comments on this Bill is encouraging. However I think yesterday's actions maybe take the wind out of those sails a little bit. So we'll keep them and monitor the progress of the regulations as we go along.

So I think with that, Madam Deputy Speaker, I know there's other members here who will want to comment on this Bill. And I think at this point I would like to move to adjourn Bill 21, *The Commissioner for Oaths Act, 2011*.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Tell):** — The member from

Saskatoon Nutana has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 21, *The Commissioners for Oaths Act, 2011*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Tell):** — Carried. Next Bill.

### Bill No. 22

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 22** — *The Commissioners for Oaths Consequential Amendment Act, 2011/Loi de 2011 portant modification corrélative à la loi intitulée The Commissioners for Oaths Act, 2011* be now read a second time.]

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Tell):** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure again that I rise to speak to this Bill. And I'm impressed by its brevity. I must say there's only two, three sections in this proposed Bill, and it's an amendment to *The Evidence Act* resulting from the Bill I just spoke to, *The Commissioners for Oaths Act, 2011*.

So according to the minister when he introduced this Bill on December 14th, he just indicated that it goes hand-in-hand with *The Commissioners for Oaths Act, 2011*, Bill 21. And this one is bilingual because it's amending a bilingual Act, so that's the reason you see it in English and French. And the only item that's being changed in this particular Bill is the reference to the Commissioner for Oaths for Saskatchewan pursuant to *The Commissioners for Oaths Act, 2011*. So again it's comforting to see the minister respecting freedom of language and the human rights associated with freedom to language and respecting the bilingual nature of that.

So just looking at the actual amendment itself, the name of the Bill is obviously *The Commissioners for Oaths Consequential Amendment Act*. And what it does is it changes clause 27(2)(a) of *The Evidence Act* which was repealed, and what they're substituting there is “a Commissioner for Oaths for Saskatchewan pursuant to *The Commissioners for Oaths Act, 2011*.” So we know that then this Bill will come into force on the same day that *The Commissioners for Oaths Act, 2011* comes into force.

There's really not a lot more to say about this Bill, Madam Deputy Speaker. Again we'll watch to make sure that the language rights are protected, and this is one of the Bills where it's obviously being respected and protected, so we're cognizant of that. And I think at this point I am going to say that I would like to adjourn the debate on this particular Bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Tell):** — The member from Saskatoon Nutana has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 22, *The Commissioners for Oaths Consequential Amendment Act, 2011*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Tell):** — Carried. Next Bill.

**Bill No. 23**

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 23 — *The Occupational Health and Safety Amendment Act, 2011*** be now read a second time.]

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Tell):** — I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. It's my pleasure to enter in on debate as it relates to Bill No. 23, *The Occupational Health and Safety Amendment Act, 2011* here today and examine some of the changes that are being brought forward, and certainly through a thorough process in this legislature, be able to examine much of the consultation that's gone on as well with this piece of legislation, both on the side of government but also on this side of the Assembly.

When we're looking at occupational health and safety or OHS, Madam Deputy Speaker, we're talking about something of great importance to the people of this province. And when we're looking at the ability to improve workplace health and safety, this should be of paramount importance and a main priority of any government. And certainly the Act that's put forward here today and some of the changes that stem from the review are certainly some aspects that should serve the best interests of Saskatchewan people.

When we look at damage that has occurred by way of injuries in the workplace and the damage that occurs to families and to workers, Mr. Speaker, their families, it's simply unacceptable. And our best abilities to address this kind of hurt and damage is significantly important. And I guess when we look at the record here in Saskatchewan, it's not a record for which we should be proud of, Mr. Speaker, and that's that we — or Madam Speaker — and that's that we have the second worst record in all of Canada and in fact have 40,000 injury reports annually or claims annually. And simply that's unacceptable, and we need to do better on that front.

That's why this sort of legislation and these sorts of improvements are certainly important. And done so in broad consultation is vital, and I understand that that may be the case on this piece of legislation, and broad consultation across labour and across business, with workers, that's vitally important. And I highlight the aspect with labour significantly on this piece of legislation, and it's important that labour and working people are involved in the construct of these sorts of changes. I understand that they have had some involvement on this front, and I think that serves us well in putting forward a meaningful piece of legislation or bringing forward meaningful changes, and I hope that's what we have here today. And certainly I do see some encouraging aspects contained within this piece of legislation. And we really simply just need to do better.

The one thing I will reference is that I see some comments of the minister in his speech that focus an awful lot around productivity within the economy, Mr. Speaker. And I guess on this front, Madam Speaker, productivity, from my perspective,

shouldn't be the driver of these sorts of changes; it should be the unacceptable hurt and damage caused by workplace injuries and the impact on families.

And I know, Madam Speaker, in those harshest circumstances where we have loss of life, that's what should serve us as motivation to recognize the unacceptable circumstance that exists and resolve us all to commit to do better. I've sat in many and participated and spoke and been witness to many Day of Mourning ceremonies where we've seen those sad stories and heard those sad stories and seen those families that have lost loved ones while in the course of conducting business or conducting their own work, Mr. Speaker, in their workplaces. And those stories are sad; they're unacceptable. And that need be our only motivation and most important motivation for making changes.

[16:00]

I'd like to recognize the Occupational Health and Safety Council, the members of that council, and the work that they provide in review of the Act. They provide a fundamentally important role in reviewing legislation and putting forward recommendations, and I know they don't take that work lightly at all. And I want to thank them for the work that they have undertaken on this review and on the recommendations that will be driving some of the changes in that Act here today. And the members of that committee certainly sacrifice an awful lot of their own time to participate in that activity, but it's certainly in the best interests of Saskatchewan people that they do. And I'd like to simply say thanks to them.

When we're looking at this piece of legislation and some of the changes that are brought forward, there's some different areas that have been addressed. And I see that in the area of enforcement there's some changes increasing the investigative authority of occupational health inspectors. I think that's a positive step and something that's important.

I recognize that there is increased training and supervision requirements within this piece of legislation. And of course, that's so important as it relates to the understanding of workers of those workplace risks and their competence and skills in being able to perform the duty that's before them. And I couldn't stress enough the importance of that aspect as well, and I'm pleased to see some attention paid to that in these changes.

And, Madam Speaker, I recognize that there's some changes to increase fines and penalties with an attempt to create a deterrent from creating unsafe workplaces. And certainly I look forward to examining those deterrents and making sure that those will serve their purpose as well, Madam Speaker.

So when we're looking at this piece of legislation, we need to look at what the intended purpose of the legislation is. What is the problem for which this is the suggested solution? What are the objectives of government on this front? And then does the legislation succeed in finding an effective way to meet those objectives and challenges? And further to that, in our consultation and in our examination and in our scrutiny of this legislation, are there any unintended consequences of this legislation, any problematic aspects that weren't considered in

the construct of this Act or these changes that we should be addressing through this period of time?

On that front, it's going to be so vital that we continue to work with all stakeholders. When I say we, certainly we as the official opposition will engage with stakeholders on that front, but also I say we in a general sense as we as the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan and certainly that of the government to continue that consultative process to ensure that, as this Bill moves forward, that if there's any areas of improvement or any unintended consequences or any opportunities to strengthen this piece of legislation as it relates to health and safety of workers and workplaces in Saskatchewan, that we take every opportunity to do so.

I would like to say again that I think that a different culture may have existed in the creation of this piece of legislation with respect to working people and with labour. I hope that's the case. What I understand is that there was some consultation and working together to make sure that this legislation and its changes, its impacts, were understood. So I hope that that's a culture that we can support going forward, Madam Speaker, on many other fronts as well and certainly as this Bill continues to move forward. And it'll serve all Saskatchewan people to handle legislation in a fashion like this and if we can continue to have that sort of culture.

We've seen in the past this government really move forward in unilateral fashion, creating legislation for which the government hadn't fully understood the consequences and that certainly the stakeholders, the people on the ground that are impacted by changes, certainly not being consulted in that process. And we could of course list the numerous times that that's occurred in education and with the lack of understanding of how it'll impact prospective stakeholders or students or parents, Mr. Speaker. But just the same we can look at it as it relates to labour legislation and a very flawed approach that this government had deployed in the past, Madam Speaker, and in where the result was a sad one, Madam Speaker, where we ended up with a piece of legislation that's been ruled unconstitutional, an awfully, awfully shameful circumstance for this province and for this government and an ugly, an ugly spotlight on a province that I believe prior to this government has had a history of working with Saskatchewan people and with workers and with those individuals and stakeholders who are impacted in constructing legislation and programming in a consultative fashion and with an understanding of those consequences, Madam Speaker.

So if this Bill has, and this Act and these changes have employed or the government has employed a different culture of consultation, then I would say that's a good thing. Now we need to see that continue on through the process of this Bill moving forward. We need to see that applied to other pieces of legislation, the construct of other pieces of legislation in all ministries, and certainly as it relates to other aspects of government, as it relates to formation of budgets or programs or services here in our province.

But the importance of this legislation and making effective change couldn't be, couldn't be more important. It should be a first priority of government. It's a incredibly important priority to the official opposition New Democrats, and to see this sort of

substantive changes and effective changes that bring about the kind of health and safety improvements in workplaces and for workers that all Saskatchewan people deserve. And it's a place that we should always be leaders in the field, as a province, leaders in as it relates to our provincial jurisdiction. And certainly we need to see more on this front.

I do want to just reference that the Provincial Auditor has weighed in as well on this piece of legislation or actually not on this piece of legislation, I should say, but on workplace safety in Saskatchewan and has put forward various recommendations and I think that that's important as well. Now my question to the minister would be and questions through this process would be, has that been considered in the formulation of this Act? Have those recommendations and concerns been addressed through these changes or are they outstanding? And that's an important process for us to understand here at this point in time as we're considering this Act and potential improvements. But we really need to make sure that we take every opportunity before us right here and now as this Bill is here, to make sure that we enhance or strengthen the piece of legislation before us if in fact some of those concerns haven't been addressed.

I'll highlight just a few of the pieces from the Provincial Auditor's report, and this is a chapter, specifically chapter 18, labour relations and workplace safety, and this is from the Provincial Auditor of Saskatchewan, 2011 report volume 2. What I want to maybe just highlight here from this report is some of the statistics that we have on workplace injuries in Saskatchewan, and like I say, this is a very disappointing area for Saskatchewan when we look that we're second worst in Canada and 40,000 injury claims annually in this province. That's not the kind of record that we wish to occupy and certainly the impacts that occur to those being injured and their families are simply unacceptable, Madam Speaker.

So the industries in Saskatchewan with the highest number of injuries as reported by the Provincial Auditor of Saskatchewan in the 2011 report volume 2 would be the health authorities, hospitals, and care homes. And in fact in this case we see 5,034 incidents that were reported in that field, the health field if you will, Madam Speaker. In construction we see 3,928 incidents reported. We see in grocery and department store and hardware, 1,617 incidents reported. In municipalities we see 1,399 incidents reported, and in transportation, courier, and commercial bus, we see 1,385 injuries that have been reported.

Now we talk about these numbers. We start looking at them in a sense of statistics, and I certainly see bar graphs here on the page that highlight the significant number of injuries in Saskatchewan, but we need to also remember the real circumstance that's been felt and experienced by families that have been affected by these thousands and thousands and thousands of injuries in the workplace. How that connects back to individual families, of course we highlighted the gravest circumstance where we have the Day of Mourning recognition where we've had lives lost in the workplace, but we also have many other individuals that have been injured and their well-being and quality of life impeded and compromised in a significant fashion and their relationships hurt and damaged and their livelihoods affected. And that's what we need to picture when we're looking at the many thousands of individuals who have been hurt, who have been injured on the job site. And we

need to of course recognize the statistics but we need to look and think of the stories that go beyond the statistics on a file like this.

Some industries have a higher rate than others of time loss due to injuries, and I would highlight light agricultural operations are actually the leader on this front. An unfortunate category to lead but 2.8 times the provincial average. If we're looking at dairy products and soft drinks that comes in at 2.7 times the provincial average. And in the production of iron and steel, the fabrication of iron and steel, we see an average of 2.3 times the provincial average. Mills and semi-medium manufacturing we see 2.2 the provincial average as it relates to time loss injuries. And then looking again at the transportation sector — transportation, couring, commercial bus — twice the provincial average on this front.

But again, we're speaking of statistics at this level, talking about rates that are two times this or three times that, the provincial average. What we need to recognize is the individual stories behind those and the people that are affected, the families that are hurt and the stress and strain that is placed on so many by way of these statistics that we read on these pages here. And we should be motivated by these stories, by these circumstances, by the unacceptable rates we see in this province, for all of us to do better, Madam Speaker.

Moving along in the report, and it's fairly comprehensive and I would urge the minister to make sure that his ministry has been fully engaged with these recommendations as well and that they've been addressed by way of this legislation that's before us. We do see some new recommendations and findings that have been brought forward by the Provincial Auditor on this front, and one of the pieces hinges around a need for structured response to workplace non-compliance, so the circumstance of where a workplace itself is not providing that safe and healthy work environment that should be expected and deserved to all workers in this province. And I'll just quote from the report here. I quote:

We expected the Ministry to establish a documented, comprehensive risk-based approach for addressing workplace non-compliance. Such an approach would assist the Ministry to consistently:

- assess risk of harm (likelihood and impact of injuries)
- set priorities to address non-compliance
- communicate priorities

Just moving along a little further in the report, "We found the Ministry set and communicated priorities but needed to assess risks using a more comprehensive, systematic approach."

It's important information that's put forward and provided by the independent Provincial Auditor and information that should be acted upon by the minister, Madam Speaker.

[16:15]

A recommendation that comes forward, and I quote, "We recommend that the Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety document and use a comprehensive, risk-based approach to address workplace non-compliance with *The Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993* and related

regulations."

Now it would be our hope, Madam Speaker, that this is addressed in this legislation. We'll be seeking that sort of clarity from the minister in the days and weeks to come, and certainly we'll also be reviewing and scrutinizing this in the Public Accounts Committee.

Moving along, there's also recommendations as it relates to the need to identify causes of workplace non-compliance. Important aspects about communication again and following up on guidance with non-compliance and identifying key causes of non-compliance, and a host of recommendations that stem out of this area that could provide us a better circumstance for workers here in Saskatchewan. These are the kinds of actions and recommendations that we hope are addressed and reflected in this piece of legislation.

There's recommendations as it relates to what's termed the graduated approach is used inconsistently. So when we're looking at this here, what we're looking at is identifying factors influencing the appropriate level of enforcement. That's an important piece, selecting the appropriate level of enforcement and then implementing enforcement. And certainly we see some aspects of enforcement reflected in these legislative changes. What we need to gain is a broader understanding of whether or not those changes in fact are the most effective way to move forward and address some of these concerns and some of the information that's been brought forward in this report.

There's a discussion and recommendations as it relates to more evaluation of results that are required. And specifically this relates to reporting enforcement actions to senior management, the importance of that activity of having that sort of enforcement actions being reported, assessing the effect of enforcement promptly, and following up with further enforcement action as needed — all important areas that we'd like to make sure are addressed in this legislation.

So we have a lot of information that's put forward in this report. We have recommendations that have been put forward to serve Saskatchewan people as well. We've had a consultative process with stakeholders as it relates to workplace safety, and that's something that we're going to continue to follow up on as it relates to this piece of legislation. We'd urge the government to keep an open mind to recommendations that are moving forward. We would refer them to the auditor's report and to make sure that the legislation that's before us here and now is in fact as strong and as effective as it can be and that it responds to the very specific recommendations that are put forward.

And as we go through reports such as the auditor's report and we look at statistical representations of injuries in Saskatchewan and bar graphs and percentages and numerical representations, we need to think as well of those individual lives that are unacceptably impacted by workplace injury across Saskatchewan unfortunately. And we're not talking about a few people. We're talking about thousands and thousands of individuals and of course the hardship that that brings to relationships, to family circumstances, to financial circumstances, to building a future for individual families, and for the many people that when we look at one worker, the loss or the injury of one worker, how many other people are

impacted with that.

And it's an area that should be a top priority for government. It's an area of great importance and of great priority for the official opposition New Democrats. We look forward to continuing to work to better workplace safety and health in Saskatchewan. And certainly this Act steps forward to do that.

It's important for us to recognize that as it relates to workplace health and safety, and occupational health and safety, that we have in fact been leaders for the world on many fronts, Madam Speaker, and some of the development of processes that have served us well that were developed in the 1970s and instituted in the 1970s and that relationship with employees and with employers, with workers, with the individuals that are affected that have allowed us to strengthen legislation. We need to make sure that we continue to push to be leaders on this front and not to accept the unacceptable statistics damage and hurt that we see when we talk about 40,000 injuries in Saskatchewan on an annual basis.

So there's definitely more work to do. It's an important Bill. I want to thank the Occupational and Health and Safety Council and its members for its time and its energy to conduct the review that occurred. And I want to thank those that have been consulted for their contributions as well, Madam Speaker. I want to thank, whether that be unions and labour and working people or whether that's been businesses that have put forward constructive, effective solutions on this front. An important process and the kind of collaborative consultative process that would serve Saskatchewan well to employ on this front, but many other fronts as well, Madam Speaker.

And if we can move forward in that sort of a process in a consultative environment, it should serve us well in understanding the impacts of legislation. Like I say, so many decisions of this government, Madam Speaker, have had impacts on Saskatchewan people that could have been addressed had a consultative process been engaged from day one. And we see that with no consultation going on in the education sector and then direct consequences back onto students and in the classroom, consequences which we could have addressed if we had derived policy in a consultative fashion. And then of course as it relates to a glaring example in labour legislation where this government forged ahead with no consultation on a piece of legislation that was intended to limit and attack the rights of working people, that's now been deemed to be found unconstitutional, Madam Speaker.

Not only an embarrassment for all Saskatchewan people to have a piece of legislation deemed unconstitutional, but egregious in what it's set out to do in its overreach in taking away workers' rights. So this is an opportunity for us to get right the culture of constructing and deriving and building legislation to serve Saskatchewan people, and let's take that opportunity. And I say let's. I say that to the government. I hope that they move forward with this piece of legislation with an open mind, with a continued consultative process to make sure that this piece of legislation is as strong as it can be, that it's as effective as it can be, and that it's serving Saskatchewan people's best interests, Madam Speaker.

So with many more meetings on this front, and I know with

many more speakers that will want to weigh in to this debate, and a lot more consultation on so many fronts and with many stakeholders, and with many more questions that we have of the minister as it relates to this piece of legislation, in general we see some positive aspects of this piece of legislation that certainly we will be supportive of. And when we're talking about expanding the capacity for enforcement, increasing the ability to have workplace health and safety enforced, and making sure that we have that tool to make workplaces comply with health and safety regulations, and to create those workplaces of safety that all workers should expect and deserve in this province — that's a positive step. Is it as effective as it can be? That's part of the consultation that will continue the discussion. That will continue, Madam Speaker.

As it relates to the increased training and supervision requirements, well specifically as it relates to training, Madam Speaker, this is vital for any role that a worker is going to fulfill, whether that's in a manufacturing shop or whether that's on a farm, or whether that's in the duty of the public as a police officer, or whatever capacity somebody's fulfilling in their line of work, we need to make sure that the proper training is provided to make sure that that individual can fulfill that duty with confidence, has the adequate skill or the skill that's required to make sure that safety's there, but that they also are trained and understand the risks within that workplace so that we can minimize, reduce, and eliminate workplace injury in Saskatchewan.

As it relates to strengthening supervision requirements, well this is fundamentally important when we're looking at legislation and when we're looking at changes to make sure that that adequate supervision is provided in workplaces and to make sure that, of course, then we have built-in aspects of enforcement here to make sure that that supervision is in fact occurring as well to the level that it should be. Supervision certainly does assist in reducing workplace injury and is an important part of making sure that's the case. So when we're looking specifically at increased training and supervision requirements and those are both important. On the training side it's about competence. It's about adequate skills.

And with some of the concerns as well with another piece of legislation that was foisted upon Saskatchewan people with no consultation by this government, being Bill 80, which specifically lends itself to a potential deskilling of individuals in the construction industry and the host of safety risks that could be associated on that front. And what we should be striving for is not to deskill industries and to reduce workers' safety. We should be making sure that on all fronts and that we're consistent on this front, that we're making sure we have strength and capacity to train and ensure the skills that are required are there, and that risks of the job site are understood by all workers, Madam Speaker.

So this legislation sets to strengthen certain aspects and sets to strengthen some legislation, and that's important. But we need not look at this in silos and as one piece of legislation. We need to look at some of the previous pieces of legislations that have been put forward, such as Bill 80, that have served in some ways, lent themselves to doing the opposite. And those are concerns, valid concerns that should also be considered when we're looking at sorts of legislative changes on different fronts

as we move forward to correct irresponsible decisions and unilateral actions that have occurred by this government over the past few years.

When we look at some other aspects of this legislation, we look at another area of putting in place deterrents by way of penalties or by way of fines, and certainly those pieces are important to have in place. We need to make sure that we're using the best information available to us as to what the best deterrents are to ensure that we're creating workplaces that are as safe and healthy as we can. And hopefully the fine and penalty structure that's put forward is consistent with that sort of research and evidence, and that's the sort of process that we would then support. But certainly looking at those kinds of deterrents are important.

General comments on this piece of legislation and just a highlight to all individuals that this should be a number one priority of this government and certainly it's a top priority for the official opposition New Democrats, providing those healthy and safe environments. And I think that we need to make sure that it's the unacceptable loss of life, the unacceptable harm to individuals and to families and well-being and quality of life that drives these sort of policy changes, that motivates these kinds of policy changes and less the discussion around productivity. Because while that's an important economic discussion at a business case level somewhere else, the unacceptable damage and hurt and consequences of workplace injuries are motivation enough for a government to act.

So on that point, Madam Speaker, I believe I've covered off some of the comments that I had as it relates to workplace health and safety, the societal . . . and damage that occurs as it relates to workplace injuries, and certainly that we see this as a top priority, that we thank all that have been involved in providing recommendations and input to make sure we have a piece of legislation that's as strong as it can be, as effective as it can be. And we call on the government to work in a consultative fashion as we move forward with this Bill and others, Madam Speaker, to improve it where we can if those opportunities present themselves, and to make sure that as it relates to the safety of workers in Saskatchewan that it's a top priority driven by government in consultation with Saskatchewan people.

But at this point in time, Madam Speaker, I will move adjournment of debate on Bill No. 23, *The Occupational Health and Safety Amendment Act, 2011*. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Tell):** — The member from Regina Rosemont has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 23, *The Occupational Health and Safety Amendment Act, 2011*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Acting Speaker:** — Carried. Next Bill.

[16:30]

### Bill No. 24

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed

motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 24 — *The Advocate for Children and Youth Act*** be now read a second time.]

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Tell):** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Massey Place.

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's a pleasure once again to stand in the Assembly and have the opportunity to make a few comments during adjourned debates this afternoon. And, Madam Speaker, it's a pleasure and honour to be able to speak to this piece of legislation which I see as an important piece of legislation because it addresses an issue that is near and dear to everyone in the province, and that, Madam Speaker, is the issue of our children and youth.

There's not a member in this Assembly, whatever our political stripe, who does not care about the children in the province and care about the outcomes and the futures of youth in Saskatchewan, recognizing that there are some issues, Madam Speaker, that truly do transcend partisan lines, and the well-being of our children and the well-being of youth in the province is one of those issues.

Certainly, Madam Speaker, from time to time there may be a partisan aspect and a partisan element to a particular issue arising in this field, arising in this area. And of course in our political system we express ourselves through a partisan means and debate in this Assembly happens within a partisan framework, and that is a good system that's evolved over many, many years and an effective system, I believe, most of the time. But when dealing with an issue like the well-being of children and youth, I know members on both sides of the House see it as an important one. I know members on both sides of the House want a strong future for youth.

And I know members on both sides of the House want to ensure that children are protected and kept safe in this province. And while, Madam Speaker, that is our goal, we know that too often, because once is too often, too often we as a collective have fallen short of that goal. And there have been instances, Madam Speaker, when children and youth aren't protected as they ought to be. But it's important, Madam Speaker, that we work together. It's important that we have an approach that does put the interest of children and youth first and it's important, Madam Speaker, that the legislative changes we make within the Assembly respect that and reflect that desire that we have in promoting the best interests of children and youth in Saskatchewan.

This is not a unique scenario that . . . It's not a unique situation to Saskatchewan of course. This is a common thing around the world and especially throughout democracies and especially in Canada.

And I give those introductory comments, Madam Speaker, and on a high level we know that it's important. On a local level we most certainly know it's important and I know members in the House know that from our own personal experiences, whether we're parents ourselves, whether we're an aunt and uncle, whether we're a grandparent. We know how precious children are and we know how vulnerable they can be in many situations. And so we know from a personal level because we

all have little ones that we love more than anything.

But we also, Madam Speaker, know it from a professional level because in our constituency offices . . . I'll speak for myself but I know other MLAs have had this experience as well. We've had people coming into our offices with a troubling situation. And the situations vary. Sometimes it's a health concern with a child. Sometimes it's an issue around children in care. Sometimes it's about an educational consideration for a child. Sometimes it's something like bullying. Sometimes it's something like abuse, unfortunately, of all different types.

And I know when I've been placed in that situation as a local MLA when someone has come to me with a problem, I want to do what I can. And at times that can mean reaching out to authorities, law authorities that have a role to play. At times it can mean reaching out to the ministry to ensure that due process has been followed. And at times, Madam Speaker, I think also it involves referring people to the Children's Advocate in order to ensure that due process has been followed, that a child has been treated well, that a child has been treated properly, and children whom we love are in fact treated with the type of care that our society ought to be doing.

And so, Madam Speaker, members will know and individuals will know that as our democracies and parliamentary systems have evolved, there have been many different types of services that are provided to the public by the government. I think that is appropriate, and I think there's a very constructive role that the provincial government will — I'll speak in that context since this is the provincial Assembly — there's an important role that the provincial government plays in serving the needs of people and meeting the needs of people.

And as I identified earlier on with the type of casework that often comes into the Assembly — there are issues to do with health care; there are issues to do with education; there are issues to do with social services — and within all of these areas, Madam Speaker, there are expected policies. There are expectations that families have, and there is a responsibility for the deliverer of the care to be following the rules to ensure that the child's interest is put first and to ensure that mistakes have not been made. And in situations where there is a mistake or where abuse has taken place of some type, it's important that that be identified, that people be held accountable, and that the situation be corrected so that repeat mistakes are less likely and that that individual can have a sense of justice.

So as our system has evolved, we've provided for services to people. And this is what the expectations of Saskatchewan people are in this present day. We expect good schools. We expect — and rightfully so — good medical care. And in situations when a child is in care, we want a proper foster system in order to care for children who may be not in the care of their biological parents or their parents who have custody of them or their caregivers who do.

And so as our systems have developed, so too have the policies to ensure that the proper care and the proper watchdog, so to speak, the proper oversight is in fact in place. And this, Madam Speaker, brings up the issue of the Ombudsman and the role that the Ombudsman plays in ensuring that there is due process.

The idea and the notion of the ombudsman, the origin of the word actually is in Scandinavia, and the root is an old Norse word, believe it or not. And so the term ombudsman is I believe Swedish, or it's at least from the Nordic countries. It has been adapted in some ways to be used in English more appropriately. Sometimes it's ombudsperson or a different ombuds-office and ombuds-something like that. And there are different options. And members are going to be wondering why I'm talking about ombudsmen on a Bill that is addressing the advocate for children and youth, but I mention it because it ties into the evolution of how this office is operated and the types of duties that it has traditionally had.

Originally, Madam Speaker, as the minister identified in his second reading speech, and for listeners at home who are following, this is Bill 24, *An Act representing the Advocate for Children and Youth*. So at one time, as the minister identified in his speech, when the Ombudsman's office was being established, the legislation that enabled it had different components. And the one component was to establish the Office of the Ombudsman. But then within that office, within that legislation — almost as a subset — there was the necessary legislation that made for, that created and bestowed the rights and the role for the advocate for children as well. So while it's two separate offices, it's traditionally been under the same piece of legislation.

And what this piece of legislation is doing is providing unique, stand-alone legislation for the two offices. And I think that's an important step and a good step because both offices, the Office of the Ombudsman and the Office of the Children's Advocate and youth — and I'll get into some discussion about the terminology and the name of the office in a little bit — but both offices serve a unique role because they are addressing a unique population within the general public. And accordingly it's important I think to lend the type of oomph — that might be hard for Hansard to spell — but to lend the type of credibility and to show that it's a serious matter, the Office of the Children's Advocate, in order to have stand-alone legislation. So from my perspective, in my view, Madam Speaker, I think it's fine and appropriate to have stand-alone legislation.

But I made those opening comments about the role of the Ombudsman because I think, as we look at the separation of these two offices from a legislative perspective, it's important to remember the roots of the organization, the roots of the office, and the original mandate. And that, Madam Speaker, is to provide the oversight, to provide that arm's length, stand-alone voice in order to ensure that the rights and the interests of individuals — in this case children and youth — are being considered, are being promoted, and in a sense to right any wrongs that may have occurred, at least by looking through reflection and retrospectively that things could have been done differently. And it's through the mistakes that may occur from time to time that we're able to improve the system for all children in the province.

I think, Madam Speaker, of some of the incidents I've had when individuals have come to my office when it's a concern related to a youth. Sometimes, Madam Speaker, it's a parent who may have once upon a time had custody of their child but don't at present. Sometimes, and this has happened a few times in my situation, it's a family member, often a grandparent

who's had a role with the child, a grandchild, and they're aware of things occurring and they want to ensure that the proper care has taken place. Of course all parents love children, but perhaps the only group that loves children more are grandparents because they've gone through the experience already once having their own children.

Anyway, Madam Speaker, I know when confronted with these types of situations, I could think of sitting in my office and talking to people or I can think of visits I've had to people's houses, either through times of door knocking or different visits for different purposes and hearing these stories. At times, Madam Speaker, as an elected official I want to give good advice, and I want to be able to do so in a way that is most effective to help the situation from all perspectives in order to promote the interests of the child, first and foremost, in order to consider the interests of the family member, and as well to look at how the system can be strengthened to provide better care for that person.

And so, Madam Speaker, there's a number of components here with this piece of legislation that I think are positive steps and steps in the right direction in order to carry on down that path of improving the system. Because we know, as with anything in life, the system is not perfect, but we need to strive for continual improvement and we need to look for ways that the interests of children can be put first and foremost.

There are a number of pieces to this legislation, as the Minister of Justice identifies. He talks about the different components. His opening remarks in his second reading speech did address the issue of how the legislation has evolved and the goals of the institutions where offices have evolved so that it's come to the state where it is now. And I think most certainly that the stand-alone authority of the organization is important because in instances when I've referred people to the Ombudsman, whether it's a parent or whether it's someone else in the community who has a concern, it's important that that individual going to the office feels as though the investigation, the work that will be done by the Office of the Children's Advocate or the Ombudsman, is free from political interference, is a true airing of the facts, is a true and earnest investigation, and is in no way a whitewash.

And that's why I think it's very important that we take time to look at the legislation. It's very important that we emphasize the autonomy and the role of these independent officers of the legislature and the role that they play. That's not to say there won't be interplay, Madam Speaker, in certain situations between the Legislative Assembly, and that is appropriate. I can think of the fiasco that we've seen at St. Mary's in Humboldt with many seniors being treated the way that they were in terms of losing their accommodation on very, very short notice and essentially being told in days that they had to pack their bags and find a new place to live.

Yesterday the minister identified that this issue would be going to the Ombudsman for review. I say that, Madam Speaker, because it shows that whether it's senior citizens or whether it's young people or children, these two offices, the Office of the Children's Advocate and youth, and the Ombudsman, are there for the vulnerable. They're there for the people who may have received mistreatment by government in some way. They're

there to examine situations where individuals have been let down by the system in some way. And it's important, it's so important, that there be the independent oversight, there be the independent review, there be a stand-alone separate entity that individuals can take their concerns to where they could be treated in a fair way and whether the facts can be reviewed and a decision can be made.

So whether it's the senior citizens in Humboldt at St. Mary's who deserve to have a better understanding of what took place in their situation; or whether it's a youth in care, a child in care who has not received the type of care they deserve; or whether it's a child who's not received the type of medical attention, they're having their medical needs addressed in a proper way; whatever the situation may be, however the individual in Saskatchewan may be vulnerable in some sense, it's so very important that the independent office be there to clearly and thoroughly look into their concerns and provide a ruling and to provide advice through the annual reports that are submitted to the Assembly on ways that the situation can be improved.

[16:45]

So I know, Madam Speaker, with the separation of the two offices in a legislative context, I think it is good that reports will continue to be tabled in the legislature because while it needs to be arm's-length, there also needs to be the appropriate oversight of this Assembly. And that's the role of, or that's the requirements for an independent officer of the legislature which they must do, and I think that that is a good thing.

And it's also appropriate, Madam Speaker, that when we as an Assembly select the individuals who serve in these offices at the highest level that it be free from political interference. And I'm not suggesting that has occurred with the Ombudsman or with the Children's Advocate. But unfortunately with other independent officers, I can think of the debacle with the Chief Electoral Officer, and when the decision was vetoed by the Sask Party caucus on who that individual would be. We've seen troubling aspects in the past, past short years where members, especially on the opposite side in the Sask Party, have not respected the role of an independent officer of the legislature and have played politics. And while that occurred with the Chief Electoral Officer most recently here in the province, the fact that it occurred with our elections and we've seen federally some of the funny business that Conservatives are willing to do.

The fact that it also, there was the political meddling with the endorsement of the Chief Electoral Officer here provincially. It causes me and it causes Saskatchewan people to still want to be on guard for actions that may be taken by members opposite specifically with other independent officers of the legislature because when a pattern of action and behaviour is established in one area, it's not outside the realm of possibility that members opposite would want to carry on that behaviour in other areas.

And so I raise that and want to put that on the official record, Madam Speaker, because we have seen troubling things when it comes to the independent officers of the legislature. We have seen troubling things when it comes to political interference that Sask Party members are willing to meddle with and interfere with in the process. And it's my sincere hope that when it comes to children, when it comes to youth, the



members opposite would realize that it's simply not appropriate.

It's not appropriate for a democracy, that is for certain. Whether it's in a federal context with Conservatives, or in a provincial context with small "c" conservatives. But Madam Speaker, when it comes to children surely, surely there ought not to be the type of political interference in the process and in the offices. And so it's my hope, Madam Speaker, that members opposite, if they feel the urging to be involved in that sort of way, if they think back to the type of interference that they did with the Chief Electoral Officer and if they think they want to do that with either the Ombudsman or with the Children's Advocate, I hope they would pause. And I hope some of the more moderate voices in the caucus would speak up and not be willing to go down that path because I think that would be a path that would not be in the best interest of youth here in the province. Not in the best interest of children in this province.

This piece of legislation, Madam Speaker, does a number of things. Since it's replacing a piece of legislation, as identified by the minister and his second reading speech was on December 14, 2011, and it's on page 233 of *Hansard* if anyone cares to go to it and look for the record.

Madam Speaker, the piece of legislation accomplishes a few things as identified by the minister. And I'd like to make a few comments based on the piece of legislation as he sees it. An interesting component . . . Well first and foremost as I've touched on it already, I want to tell you it states that the legislation accomplishes the separation of the two groups so that within the public there can't be the confusion that they are the same organization. Because, as I've already covered in my remarks, on an issue as important as children and youth, it's important to have a stand-alone organization looking after their interests. So that is one step that this legislation accomplishes or will accomplish when and if passed. I'm pretty confident that it will pass.

Madam Speaker, it's important also . . . I'll just note that there's an accompanying piece of legislation because we're dividing two organizations from a legislative perspective. The accompanying piece, I believe, is Bill 25. So for people that are doing research on this now or in the future, if they want to know what the accompanying piece of legislation is, it's *The Ombudsman Act, 2011*, Bill No. 25. And the two pieces of legislation do need to be looked at together because they accomplish two different things. But with one piece of legislation being divided into two, quite naturally it would provide two pieces of legislation.

A very important component, an interesting component, and perhaps a different component, Madam Speaker, is the aspect of the Children's Advocate office and youth conducting research. And this, in the minister's remarks, is identified as a new avenue of activity. It's a new avenue and so I am curious as to the type of research that will be practised by the office; what the nature of it will be; what the scope of it will be; what the purpose of it will be. I think it's a positive development. I think it's a good thing. I think that the Office of the Children's Advocate and youth ought to be informed by good research.

And there's different types of advocacy that the office can do.

Of course, there's advocacy that originates from a specific complaint from an individual, from a caregiver, or a child. Then there's also the advocacy that can take place in the larger context in reporting to the legislature about positive research, in reporting to the general public about positive developments. And so I think that is an important step, and I'm interested to hear more. I would like more of the detail, and perhaps in committee it can be fleshed out somewhat in terms of the type of research that the minister would like to see occur or that the commissioner would like to conduct.

But you know, research is important and it's important that the parameters will be set for it, and that individuals in this Assembly and in the public know what in fact is being researched and what the goals are and what sort of reporting mechanism may in fact be in place. This legislation also, and this would be similar to, I would assume, provisions that are within the existing Act for the advocate or for, I should say, the Ombudsman's office, and that is that allows for jurisdiction, as the minister states:

. . . jurisdiction of the advocate over publicly funded health entities. The Bill more clearly defines the advocate's authority to include regional health authorities, health organizations and affiliates and the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency.

So, Madam Speaker — or pardon me, Mr. Speaker — well we see, Mr. Speaker, is that with the change in the separate stand-alone legislation for it, it's also a change here that the Children's Advocate will have overview of health-related issues. So on the seniors aspect, when we saw the mistreatment of seniors at St. Mary's Villa in Humboldt, and the advocate is looking into that — so it's happening for that group of vulnerable people, for seniors in the province. This legislation, this provision as it's proposed by the minister would allow for investigations and examinations of what has occurred in the health care sector for children. I think that's an important thing and something that people would be mostly pleased with, I would imagine.

Another component allows for the sharing of information, I would imagine to facilitate investigations that may be taking place, so the sharing of information between ministries and the advocate's office.

Another important part, Mr. Speaker, which I think is a good step, a positive step, and I'll read the paragraph so that if there are any individuals involved in service delivery who are listening now or reading later on, so that they're aware of this. And the minister stated this in his second reading speech and I think it's an important point to highlight. So I'll read the paragraph. It says:

This Act also ensures children and youth the greatest possible access to the advocate. Operators of group homes, foster homes, and other facilities will be required to provide the children and youth in their care with information on how to contact the advocate. They must also provide a means for them to do so in private. All communication between child or youth and the advocate are privileged.

So we have an important step here, Mr. Speaker, which I think is a good development. Children will be better informed, one hopes, through this legislation of the avenues they have for clear . . . avenues they have for a review of a situation if they feel they've been mistreated in every way. And when we think of the organizations or the entities that are listed here by the minister such as group homes, foster homes, and other facilities, especially it's important for those youth, for those children to be aware of the Office of the Children's Advocate and youth as a route to address any concerns that they may have, as a route to address any concerns that may arise.

Another component in the minister's speech that is important, and this is to do with the naming of the office. And I think it's a good step. And I would, from my perspective — I won't speak on behalf of all of my colleagues — but I think it's a decent step, and that's changing the name of the office to the advocate for children and youth. And it expands the scope of who is accessible from a perception perspective, I suppose, if I can say that awkwardly. It expands the understanding of who may access so that when information is being shared with children, and if that individual is still a youth but doesn't see themselves as a five- or a six- or seven-year-old child, then they know that this is still an option. So I think it's an important name, it's an important step, and I think it's a positive development. And I think that that reflection is important.

I think, Mr. Speaker, when we're looking at this piece of legislation, there's a few important things to consider. And as I said from the beginning, we most certainly, on both sides of the House, know that children and youth are so very important to our province. They're important to our families. They're important to our communities. And when we think of how precious children are, we as legislators should do everything that we can do in order to ensure that children receive the type of treatment that they deserve and that they need in order to develop into fully functioning and productive humans, people contributing to society. I think that's so very important.

I think by separating this legislation it is important to recognize the traditional roles that the organizations, the two offices have had and the relationship between the two offices, but at the same time to recognize the distinct roles that the two offices will serve in the future. I think that's very important.

So I appreciate the chance to say a few remarks on this, Mr. Speaker, and I look forward to hearing what some of my colleagues may have to say about it. I thank the minister for his second reading speech. I want to thank the work of the Office of the Children's Advocate and youth for the work that they have been doing and will continue to do in meeting the needs of our constituents.

So on that note, Mr. Speaker, I would move to adjourn debate on Bill 24. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — The member from Saskatoon Massey Place has moved adjournment of Bill No. 24, *The Advocate for Children and Youth Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — It now being close to 5 o'clock, this House will stand recessed till 7 p.m. this evening.

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

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