



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

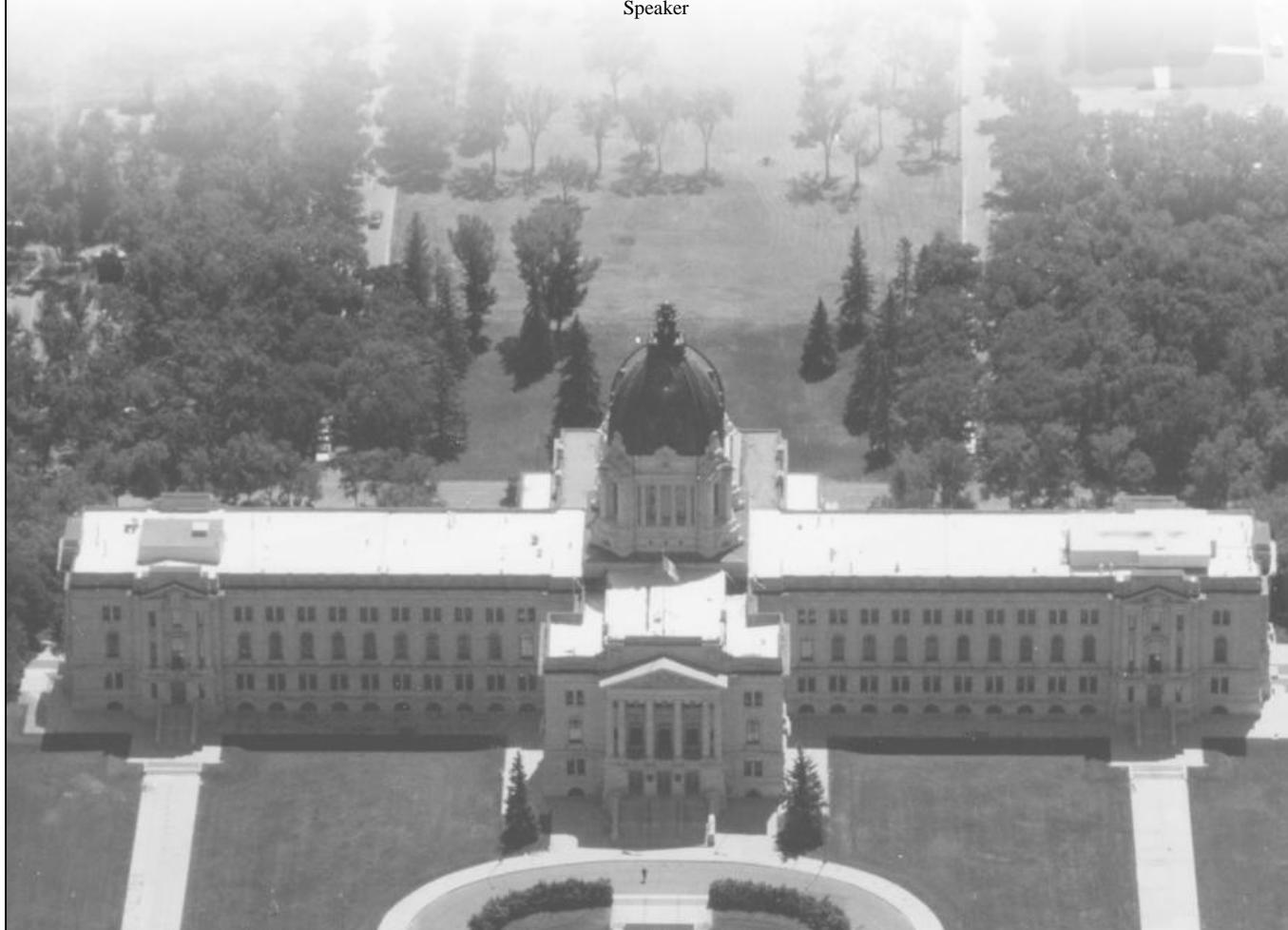
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

DEBATES and PROCEEDINGS

(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

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
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
Brotin, 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

March 7, 2012

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you very, very much, Mr. Speaker. It's truly an honour today to introduce four great individuals from the Humboldt area that are seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. We have a delegation coming from Humboldt and surrounding area to talk about all the exciting development that's happening within Humboldt. There's been increased growth, but there's also a lot of potential for a lot of economic development. So these are important issues, not only for the Humboldt and surrounding area, but also for the province as a whole.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to introduce to you and through you to the rest of the members of the Assembly the mayor of the city of Humboldt, Mr. Malcolm Eaton. We have the reeve of the RM [rural municipality] of Humboldt, Jordan Bergermann. We have a city councillor with the city of Humboldt, Marilyn Scott, and we have a new finance manager for the city of Humboldt, Steve Brown. So may everyone join me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the loyal opposition we would like to join in welcoming the folks from the city of Humboldt, a growing, vibrant city. And we sure appreciate them coming and making their views known to the House.

Mr. Speaker, while I'm on my feet, I'd like to take a moment and introduce a well-respected leader in the labour movement, in the east gallery, Mr. Tom Graham, president of CUPE [Canadian Union of Public Employees] Saskatchewan. I ask all members to welcome him to his legislature. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join with the member opposite in welcoming Mr. Graham to the Assembly today. Mr. Graham has enormous respect within the labour community and the business community at large. And I know we've got some things that will be going on over the next few months and look forward to meeting with him and having some what I hope are interesting, valuable, and productive discussions, and we'll be valuing his input very much. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Doherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the Legislative Assembly, I'd like to welcome a couple of guests in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. They

are two gentlemen seated in the front row: Mr. Robert Tam and Mr. Doug Nanton. And both Bob and Doug work for an innovative pharmaceutical firm called UCB Canada specializing in the therapeutic areas of epilepsy and arthritis.

And Bob, who we affectionately refer to as Tambo, and I used to work together many, many years ago with another pharmaceutical firm, and I haven't seen him in quite some time. They're in town to have some discussions with some Health ministry officials, Mr. Speaker, and it was good to reconnect with him. So I'd like all members to welcome them to the Legislative Assembly.

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — To you and through you I'd like to introduce two women who are making a real difference in our community. Bev Bartok and Sharla Schofield are joining us, and they're from the Cosmopolitan Learning Centre. Bev is program coordinator and Sharla is the human resources program coordinator. The Cosmopolitan Learning Centre provides life skills training and opportunities for community and on-site employment as well as volunteerism and activities for people with intellectual and physical disabilities.

This morning I had an opportunity to announce funding standards for people with intellectual disabilities at their centre. It was really great to get out and to go to the centre and I wanted to thank Bev and Sharla and the centre for being great hosts this morning.

So on behalf of everyone in the province, I want to thank you for your great work. And I'd like all my colleagues to welcome them to their legislature.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan].

Hon. Mr. McMillan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you and to you, I'd like to introduce a couple of gentlemen in your gallery who are from Canada's National Brewers. They're in town to meet with SLGA [Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority]. They represent an industry which is very big partners with SLGA. We have Mr. Bryan Cox, vice-president, and we also have Brian Zeiler-Kligman. So thank you and welcome to the Saskatchewan legislature.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd ask leave for an extended introduction.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Agriculture has asked leave for an extended introduction. Is leave given?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, seated in your gallery, it is my privilege to introduce

some of Saskatchewan's long-serving volunteer crop reporters. We are recognizing these crop reporters for their commitment and service to the agriculture industry in Saskatchewan. For 25, 30, and 35 years these crop reporters have volunteered their time for at least 30 weeks per year, collecting information for the Ag ministry. Every week these reporters collect information about crop development and precipitation within their RMs [rural municipality]. They submit this information to the ministry to meet the weekly crop report deadline.

Mr. Speaker, their work provides a timely and accurate crop report for all farmers and ranchers in the province. I want to recognize and thank these individuals for their dedication to the Saskatchewan crop reporting service.

I would ask that these crop reporters and their spouses wave when I announce their names: 25-year recipients, Mr. Speaker, are Bette and Dennis Reiss of the RM of Francis; Dale Meier, RM of Progress, and his wife, Donna; Harry and Eileen McCorriston, RM of Connaught; Valerie and Gaylord Muller, RM of Frenchman Butte.

Thirty-year recipients, Mr. Speaker: Edward and Charlotte Datchko, RM of Ituna Bon Accord; Jim Hornford, RM of Elfros, and his guest, Charlene Prince; John Hignett, RM of Big Arm, and his wife, Deanna.

Mr. Speaker, there are some crop reporters and spouses who were not able to attend today. They are 25-year award recipients, Brian and Jeanette Becker of the RM of Calder, of my constituency; Walter and Linda Sullivan, RM of Milton; and the 30-year award recipients, Allan and Marion Hardy, RM of Wolseley; Emile and Marie Robin, RM of Leask; Percy Schiele, RM of Meadow Lake, and his wife, Anna.

And I would ask all members, my colleagues, to join me in thanking these crop reporters for their dedication and support to our ag industry in the province of Saskatchewan. Thank you very much.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to say thank you to all of you who work in this important area for the economy of the province. I know that all of us in this legislature have relatives and family or we ourselves have farming or ranching operations. And to actually make . . . know that practical Saskatchewan people are keeping track of the records of the province is an incredibly valuable thing. So thank you very much on behalf of all of us.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Arm River-Watrous.

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I would like to introduce to you Mr. Shawn Bennett from the town of Hanley. Shawn is a high school student, currently in grade 12. He's in a work placement program with Hanley School, and he chose my office to do his work placement. So I would like to welcome him to his legislature, and I hope that I can show him a good example of what MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] do. Thank you.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling for protection for late-night retail workers by passing Jimmy's law. And we know that in the early morning hours of June 20th, 2011, Jimmy Ray Wiebe was shot twice and died from his injuries. He was working at a gas station in Yorkton, alone and unprotected from intruders. But we also know that positive statistics show that the convenience store and gas station robberies are down by one-third since 1999, largely due to increased safety practices, including two people working together on late-night shifts. 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.

People signing this petition come from Grenfell, Esterhazy, Lemberg, and Saskatoon. I do so present. Thank you very much.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to present petitions on behalf of concerned residents from across Saskatchewan as it relates to education in Saskatchewan. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly call on the Sask Party government to make education a top priority by establishing a long-term vision and plan, with resources, that is responsive to the opportunities and challenges in providing the best quality education and that reflects Saskatchewan's demographic and population changes; that is based on proven educational best practices, that is developed through consultation with the education sector, and that recognizes the importance of educational excellence to the social and economic well-being of our province and students for today and for our future.

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

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

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand today to present a petition on behalf of my constituents who live in the neighbourhood of Hampton Village, and I should add Dundonald neighbourhood as well.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is about the need for a new school in the neighbourhood of Hampton Village:

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

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

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to recognize that the experience gained through practical experience be valued; and in so doing to cause the government to review the current legislation and regulations with respect to the trapping regulations and firearm use in consultation with the traditional resource users.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

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

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Special Olympians Attend Winter Games

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, February 27th, I had the honour of attending a very special event at the Saskatoon airport. My daughter Courtney and I, along with the hon. members from Saskatoon Greystone and Saskatoon Silver Springs, were fortunate to be able to send off a group of Special Olympians to the Canada West Winter Games in St. Albert, Alberta.

This was a very personal moment for me. As you know, Mr. Speaker, my daughter Courtney is a Special Olympian in grade 7 at St. Luke School. Courtney joined us at the airport to hand out pins and cheer the athletes on.

There were 27 athletes representing Team Saskatchewan, as well as 14 coaches and mission staff. Most of them were flying out of Saskatoon that morning, some of them for the very first

time. The athletes were proud to show their Saskatchewan spirit, Mr. Speaker. They had confidently worn their Saskatchewan bunny hugs and tie-dyed T-shirts. Some even coloured their hair green.

Mr. Speaker, the Special Olympians train intensely for the Canadian games. When I asked a member of the snowshoeing team what he did to train for his sport, he told me he practised yoga and martial arts, among other activities.

The games ran from February 28th to March 3rd, Mr. Speaker. I am proud to report that Team Saskatchewan did very well. We received five gold medals, four silver, and six bronze. Even though not everyone won a gold medal, we need to celebrate each and every Special Olympian for following their dreams, meeting their goals, and having a great time.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in recognizing the athletes who participated in the games. We are very proud of you.

[13:45]

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

Lifetime of Community Service

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, tonight I'm honoured to attend a tribute dinner to honour Jessie and Gary Carlson for their lifetime of community service and over 50 years of marriage. During their long and successful careers in nursing and agrology and while lovingly raising their three daughters, Gary and Jessie have always made time to volunteer.

Mr. Speaker, here are a few highlights. Jessie and Gary are founding members of Sunset United Church and have volunteered extensively for the United Church of Canada. Gary and Jessie are active members and leaders of the Regina Eastview Rotary Club and the Regina Eastview Inner Wheel respectively. There's more. Jessie has been a lifetime member, board member, secretary, and Chair of Family Service Regina, the treasurer and president of the Regina Horticultural Society, and she's held various elected positions with her Saskatchewan union of nursing locals.

Gary helped found or sustain numerous organizations, including the Saskatchewan Agricultural Hall of Fame, the Saskatchewan Farm Vacations Association, and the Canadian agriculture travel association. He's involved also with the federation of human rights and civil liberties, the Saskatchewan Home-Based Business Association, south Regina leisure centre, and the Regina co-operative day care centre. And he served several terms on the senate and board of governors of the University of Saskatchewan. Jessie and Gary are also solid New Democrats who've worked in the Lakeview riding and also in the federal ridings.

These Saskatchewan citizens are being honoured tonight, and I ask all members to join me in honouring Jessie and Gary Carlson. Thank you.

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

Inspiring Leadership Forum

Mr. Marchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, hearing stories of others' accomplishments and how they reached their goals often gives us confidence to begin pursuing and achieving our own dreams. With this in mind, the University of Regina, which is coincidentally in the constituency of Regina Douglas Park, has established the Inspiring Leadership Forum. The third annual Inspiring Leadership Forum will be held tonight at Queensbury Centre in Evraz Place, allowing women to share insights into what made a difference in their lives.

Keynote speakers include Roberta Jamieson, a Mohawk elder and former chief of the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory in Ontario; Dr. Samantha Nutt, a doctor at Toronto's Women's College Hospital and also the co-founder and executive director of War Child North America; and Gayle Tzemach Lemmon, the author of *The Dressmaker of Khair Khana* and also the contributing editor-at-large for *Newsweek Magazine*. These outstanding women headline the event and will focus their presentations on how they feel leadership has helped influence the world, which is the theme for this year's event.

Attendees will also have the opportunity to ask questions of leaders who were born or currently live in Saskatchewan during a panel discussion this afternoon. The panel includes Regina lawyer, Susan Barber, Q.C. [Queen's Counsel], and Regina Douglas Park's own international jewellery designer, Rachel Mielke, creator and founder of the now famous Hillberg & Berk line.

Mr. Speaker, I would like all members to join me in congratulating the University of Regina and their president, Vianne Timmons, for taking a leadership role in promoting the importance of female mentorship, and thank the organizers for putting on this outstanding event.

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

Rebuilding Dreams

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, it's my honour to recognize a very important community organization, Rebuilding Dreams, a non-profit that works to rebuild and refit homes for families facing adversity. The true visionary behind this group is Mr. Adam Hicks. Two years ago he was inspired to create a housing renovation project that aimed to assist families in need. The reveal of the Rebuilding Dreams second project took place on September 15th at the aptly named Strong family home. I was honoured to speak at the event. And in my short time volunteering on the site, I was witness to incredible community support.

I want to acknowledge the courage and strength demonstrated by the remarkable Strong family after Dia Strong was diagnosed with a rare case of MS [multiple sclerosis]. Dia and her husband Ashton's home couldn't accommodate Dia's wheelchair. The lack of accessibility restricted her interactions with their daughter Kiersten and placed great strain and stress on the family.

Rebuilding Dreams not only rebuilt their home but contributed positively to their lives. This project demonstrates how a community can come together the Saskatchewan way to rally behind a family in great need. I'd like to take this time to recognize and thank the businesses, trades, and neighbourhood volunteers for their dedication and generosity to this project. I ask all members in this Assembly to join with me in commanding Rebuilding Dreams and all the partners for their efforts, and to sincerely wish the Strong family a brighter future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

A Saskatchewan Miracle

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday a storm passing through the central part of our province brought about a Saskatchewan miracle. At 4:15 a.m., Jennifer Mundt woke up in her Biggar home and knew her baby was on the way. In no more than two hours, Jennifer would give birth to a healthy 9-pound, 4-ounce son, Eric John, in the front seat of a three-quarter ton truck stopped on the shoulder of Highway 14 about 18 kilometres west of Saskatoon.

With true Saskatchewan determination, Jennifer and her husband, Jason, had decided to try and make their way to Saskatoon despite the blizzard that had begun earlier that morning. The Mundts left their house at about 5 a.m. but they only made it to Perdue before they called 911. An emergency operator dispatched a paramedic team from Saskatoon, who themselves had to brave the blizzard. Paramedics got to the truck just in time to help with the birth which is officially recorded at 6:28 a.m.

This story is a testament to the expertise and professionalism of our front-line health care and emergency response workers. The emergency operator and the paramedics who responded did an excellent job identifying that with the current weather conditions, they were going to have to deliver on the scene. Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members congratulate the Mundts as well as the paramedics on the safe delivery of Eric John. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Volunteer Honoured with Health Care Philanthropy Award

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the recent accomplishments of someone I rely on every day to perform my duties as an elected member of this House.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to congratulate Laurie Kosior — who not only acts as a volunteer Chair of the annual Moose Jaw Health Foundation Festival of Trees, but also is my full-time constituency assistant — for being awarded the Health Care Philanthropy Award. This award has been created to recognize those individuals, organizations, and companies that have made a significant contribution to patient care at the Moose Jaw Union Hospital. The individuals recognized by this award are also integral to the continued success of the health foundation itself. These individuals truly understand, as volunteer leaders

in this community, that their investment provides the funds to purchase state-of-the-art medical equipment and services that save lives every day and enhance the lives of thousands of individuals in Moose Jaw and southern Saskatchewan at the Moose Jaw Union Hospital.

Now with the announcement of the new hospital in Moose Jaw, they are helping the Moose Jaw Health Foundation equip the hospital of today and the hospital of tomorrow. With Laurie's five-year reign as the volunteer Chair, the Festival of Trees has raised \$1.2 million.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask all the members to join me and all the citizens of Moose Jaw in thanking Laurie for her tireless efforts in making this fundraising event an annual success. Thank you.

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

Saskatchewan's 21st Lieutenant Governor

Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday Vaughn Schofield was named Saskatchewan's 21st Lieutenant Governor designate, and today this House is pleased to welcome the announcement of the new Lieutenant Governor. Vaughn Schofield has contributed to the well-being of our province through her work in business, the arts, education, broadcasting, corporate governance, crime prevention, and community involvement. As honorary lieutenant colonel of 16 Saskatchewan Service Battalion, she provided leadership and support to the unit and to the Canadian Forces Reserve, in particular those who have returned from Afghanistan. The Lieutenant Governor designate has proven leadership to the Canadian Forces liaison council, St. John's Ambulance, the Hospitals of Regina Foundation, the MacKenzie Art Gallery, the Duke of Edinburgh's award program, Regina and Regina Beach Chamber of Commerce, and the Enterprise Club.

In recognition of her service to the community, the Lieutenant Governor designate was a 2009 recipient of the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal. We would also like to thank the contributions made to Saskatchewan by retiring Lieutenant Governor, Dr. Gordon Barnhart and his wife, Naomi.

Under the constitution, lieutenant governors are appointed by the federal government for a minimum of five years, but there is no fixed term of office. Mr. Speaker, the monarchy is a foundation of our democratic institutions and is a sanctuary of our ancestral freedoms. We are confident that the Lieutenant Governor designate will work to protect and uphold these most important of Canadian democratic principles. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and God save the Queen.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Number of Members in the Legislative Assembly

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier's been telling Saskatchewan that the people need to brace for cuts in a budget that's coming up and that nothing is off the table.

Everything is there for those cuts. The next sentence he's telling people, not just here but everywhere, that it's a time of growth and investment. To the Premier: will he be straight with Saskatchewan people and tell them, is it a time of prosperity or a time of austerity?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I think it's a change of one word. The Leader of the Opposition said, is it one or the other? And the answer is it's both: it's prosperity and austerity.

Mr. Speaker, we have to make sure that we're moving this province forward. We have to make sure that the economic plan of this province is sustainable, Mr. Speaker. We have a great economy in this province. We have a growing population. We have a growing province, and we want to make sure that those things continue. So, Mr. Speaker, the message that will be delivered on March 21st will be a budget that will be sustainable and will be balanced, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier and the Deputy Premier are telling Saskatchewan families to prepare for cuts in services. Yet the Premier announced, quite surprisingly, in December that he's going to spend \$700,000 a year to add three more MLAs to this Assembly. To the Premier: Saskatchewan people need a straight answer. When you are cutting services to Saskatchewan people, how do you justify increasing the number of MLAs?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We appreciate the opportunity to add some information on this important issue. Mr. Speaker, since the last time a census was conducted, the population of the province has grown by over 5 per cent. We anticipate between now and the time a next census is done there will be a further 5 per cent increase in the population of the province. And we have had in the history of the province, we've had as many as 66 and 64 MLAs. It is a challenge to ensure that MLAs are able to give good service to the people.

We are a government that wants to plan for growth, not for limitation, and we think it is simply the right thing to do to try and balance and make an appropriate adjustment on matching the number of MLAs with the number of people that they will be serving.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, let's be clear. One minute the Premier and his ministers are talking about austerity in the budget, and the next minute they're talking about prosperity in the province. Now I've taken a look at the Saskatchewan Party election platform, and I've looked at the recent Throne Speech. I was here to hear it in December. But nowhere did I see a promise to add three MLAs to the province.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would challenge the Premier and his ministers to explain where did the request for the three

additional MLAs come from? And who did he consult, who did they consult with before making the decision to add three additional MLAs?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, we have more members on this side of the House. We want to ensure that they're able to service them. I'm quite surprised, Mr. Speaker, to hear the Leader of the Opposition doing that.

The member from Athabasca in the House said, and I quote:

Because right now in the Assembly, we have a certain number of seats, and as the minister alluded to, as the population grows, do we have the need for more seats, for more MLAs? And the obvious answer is yes, as the population grows. And you should have more MLAs as the population should reflect that in the number of seats that we have in the Assembly.

So I guess, Mr. Speaker, the simple answer to the question is, the one we've consulted with the most is the member from Athabasca. But you would think with only nine members, they'd be able to get a consistent story. It hasn't happened yet.

[14:00]

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

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I'd ask my learned friend, as I would call him in court, I would ask my learned friend to read the whole story, read the whole speech, and look at the fact that the primary emphasis in the hon. member's speech relates to an increase in services for the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Premier, Mr. Finance Minister, Mr. Justice Minister, it's a simple question. It's about priorities. How do any of them square spending \$700,000 a year on three extra MLAs when they're telling Saskatchewan people to brace for cuts to services and programs?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question. And, Mr. Speaker, we did read the member from Athabasca's comments, and we did read them in their entirety. The quote that I gave before was from page 294. At page 297, and I quote again:

So again, Mr. Speaker, we would encourage different groups out there that are aware that the Sask Party wants to put up three more seats by using the argument that there's a growing population and we need more seats. We agree with that, that there is a growing population and more seats are necessary.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure whether we want to be on the same page as the member from Athabasca or the Leader of the Opposition but, Mr. Speaker, we think it's the right thing to do. We want to ensure that the citizens of the province are well

represented. We recognize there's a growing population in our province and, Mr. Speaker, we will serve the constituents and the people in our province well.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, it's a question about priorities. And I say on behalf of the Saskatchewan people, how can this government, how can this Premier, how can this Finance minister, how can any of them justify spending \$700,000 a year for three more MLAs when they're going to be cutting the services for people in this province?

Mr. Speaker, it's a sad day when we have to ask this kind of a question. It's even sadder when we don't understand where this idea came from. It's not in any documents that we've seen. It's not in the platform. They did not talk about this when they went to the public last fall. Mr. Speaker, I ask the members, what kind of priorities do you have? We on this side of the House have strong priorities to protect the people of the province.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I'd be pleased to talk about their priorities. They plan for decline; we plan for growth.

Mr. Speaker, when that party was in government, they spent \$5 million a year more on government communications, three and a half million dollars less than we have spent in the Premier's . . . three and a half million dollars less that we are spending.

Mr. Speaker, we have made substantial savings through our executive government, Mr. Speaker. The amount of money that is spent on MLAs is money that will go directly to serving the citizens of this province. We'll take no advice from them on where to spend money on serving the population of this province.

Mr. Speaker, we will do a good job ensuring that people have access to an MLA. I spoke earlier to the member from Arm River. He has to travel two and a half hours from one side of his constituency to the other. We want to ensure that people have good access, that they do not have to travel a great deal of distance to meet with their MLAs. And, Mr. Speaker, we're going to do exactly that.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Education and Employment for Northern Youth

Mr. Vermette: — Northern Saskatchewan is home to many young people who want to have a good quality job. However, the government has not provided the funding and supports needed so that northerners can be successful.

To the minister: what is his plan to create more training opportunities in northern Saskatchewan so our young people can qualify for good-paying jobs?

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

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Indeed an important question and one that is a priority for this government. Let me begin by talking about First Nations and Aboriginal education as a whole. We have some 75,000 post-secondary students in Saskatchewan. Some 13,000 of those are from First Nations and Métis, and 18 per cent, the largest ever in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

As a government, we are spending \$46.3 million for First Nations and Métis education, directly on education and employment support; an increase, Mr. Speaker, and I hope members opposite are paying attention, an increase of some 20 per cent, Mr. Speaker. I have pages and pages of outlines of the programs, and I would be happy to go through them for the entire question period if members opposite want to do. A highlight amongst them is a \$1 million commitment for the International Centre for Northern Governance and Development that's happening in northern Saskatchewan today because of this government.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Mr. Vermette: — Well that's real interesting, because sometimes when you visit some of the communities in the North, it isn't so as the minister is pointing out. The Premier recently visited Ireland, looking for workers to come to Saskatchewan. At the same time, there are young people in northern Saskatchewan who, with proper training, can fill the need for skilled workers. It would be good for the Premier to visit communities in the North and to meet the people that could solve the labour shortage. These people are here, right here in our own backyard. Is the Premier willing to come to northern Saskatchewan for a visit?

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

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, we have indeed in this province a Premier that we can be proud of, whether he's on the international stage talking about the advantage of Saskatchewan, whether he's in Ottawa speaking for us, or whether he's in northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier, the Premier each and every year, to my knowledge, has been up in northern Saskatchewan visiting communities, talking about people. Not just issuing press releases, Mr. Speaker, sitting there talking to people, day in and day out about it. Mr. Speaker, that's indeed a Premier that we have. And I can tell you, ministers and colleagues on this side of the House take that leadership and visit northern Saskatchewan at every opportunity. And that's why northern Saskatchewan is such a great part of the province of Saskatchewan.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Mr. Vermette: — I don't know if the minister has been talking to northern people or not, but obviously not because he doesn't know what's going on.

Recently I have visited communities such as Sandy Bay, Pelican Narrows. There are many young people in these communities who could make an excellent skilled worker if

they were just given a chance. I am offering right now to take the Premier on a tour, and not just for a quick stop, so that he can see first-hand what is happening in our communities. Will the Premier join me on a tour of Sandy Bay and Pelican Narrows as soon as possible?

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

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much for the question, Mr. Speaker. Indeed it's a privilege to visit northern Saskatchewan at each and every opportunity. And I know when I have the opportunity to be invited up into northern Saskatchewan, I like to take that opportunity. And certainly I would welcome the opportunity to join the member in northern Saskatchewan at any time.

Members will know that every time that I am in northern Saskatchewan I talk to the local MLA — two of them that are sitting on the opposite side of the House — invite them to join me wherever possible. Because at the end of the day, what's most important is not the politics of the House, but increasing the standard of living for those people. That's the priority for us, that'll continue to be the priority, and that's why we're on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker.

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

Kidney Transplant Program

Mr. Brotin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. March is Kidney Health Month. Unfortunately this month also marks 31 months since the Sask Party government suspended the kidney transplant program. That was back on July 28th, 2009.

Since being appointed Health critic, I have been contacted by a number of individuals who are on the waiting list for a kidney transplant. Last month the minister informed me that the kidney transplant program is not yet fully up and running. My question to the minister: when will the kidney transplant program, on behalf of the patients and families who are desperately waiting, when will the program be fully up and running?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, the kidney transplant program is up and running, not fully as the member opposite mentioned. We are still sending some citizens outside the province once they have a match.

Now it's important to understand, Mr. Speaker, that if a person is waiting for a kidney transplant, because they're on a waiting list doesn't mean they're waiting because surgery cannot be performed. They're waiting because there is not a match of an appropriate kidney, Mr. Speaker. So it's very important that the member opposite not mislead, that people on a waiting list aren't waiting for surgery as much as they are waiting for an appropriate kidney, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we have been working very hard with the Saskatoon Health Region to make sure that the kidney transplant program will be up and functioning fully as soon as

we possibly can. In fact, Mr. Speaker, we have sent a physician from Saskatoon out to London, Ontario to upgrade their education so that when he returns, he will be able to conduct the full transplant procedure, Mr. Speaker, here in Saskatchewan. Until that time, we have a great working relationship with Alberta so that our citizens will not wait any longer than as long as it takes to find an appropriate kidney, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Brotin: — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan was once a world leader in kidney transplants. And it's been under this minister's watch, this minister's watch in the Assembly, that we've seen the decline of the program. Simply sending patients to Alberta is not satisfactory to the many Saskatchewan patients and families that are waiting. On April 15th, 2010, nearly two years ago, the minister set a target of three to four months to have the program up and running. It's been 22 months and 23 days since the minister set that target. Patients are anxious. They want to know when the program will be fully up and running in the province. They've heard the minister set targets before.

My question to the minister: what is his explanation for the extensive delay that these patients are having to wait and suffer with their families?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, I will say that it is not the ideal situation when a patient has to go outside Saskatchewan to receive services, for example, a kidney transplant. But I will also say, Mr. Speaker, that those people that have been outside of Saskatchewan are very pleased that our government has such a good working relationship with Alberta and have received appropriate care, returned back to Saskatchewan and received all the support services that they need, Mr. Speaker, on a recovery basis.

Mr. Speaker, these specialists are highly educated, are subspecialties, Mr. Speaker. We have done a review of the kidney transplant program. We realize what is needed. We are working to that end goal, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that we have a fully functioning program here in Saskatchewan. And I am very confident, Mr. Speaker, as the appropriate professionals receive the appropriate training, that program will be up and running fully in Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Brotin: — Mr. Speaker, the minister's made promises before about the program, and we've seen those targets come and go. There's no question that the primary concern is about the patient and their well-being and their quality of life. But there are also very significant financial implications for the province. Hemodialysis on an annual basis costs about \$60,000 per patient. On the other hand, a kidney transplant is about \$23,000, and there's an annual cost of about \$6,000 to maintain that transplant. So for each successful transplant that we see in the province over a five-year period, there is a savings, a savings of \$250,000.

My question to the minister: while patients wait, while the Saskatchewan program has declined and we're waiting for it to be fully operational once again, how many patients are on the waiting list? And how much could be saved if the program was fully operational here in Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, as I said in my previous two answers, the ideal situation is to have a fully functioning kidney transplant program here in Saskatchewan. Having said that, while we are waiting to have the appropriate professionals trained and attracting continually, always recruiting and attracting to Saskatchewan, those patients are going outside the province. I said earlier to the member opposite and I will explain again to him one more time. If a person is on a wait-list, it doesn't mean that they can't have their surgery; it means that the kidney is not available. There is a huge difference there.

So if a person is on a waiting list and they're waiting six months, it's because a kidney hasn't become available for six months, Mr. Speaker. It isn't because the surgery was not available. Mr. Speaker, we've got a good working relationship with Alberta and in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, as well as across internationally. When the proper kidney is available, the surgery will be conducted, Mr. Speaker. The member is trying to mislead by a wait-list that doesn't apply to the surgery, Mr. Speaker.

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

Funding for Independent Schools

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, education is vital to the well-being of our province and to students from a social and economic perspective. In December the Sask Party announced they would divert education funding to previously unfunded, private, independent schools without consulting school boards, teachers, parents, the entire education sector. This decision has been widely criticized.

To the minister: how does making major policy changes that have a direct impact on our publicly funded education system and on students without any consultation create a culture of trust or good policy?

[14:15]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our government is very committed to good quality education within our province. And there was a consultation process on independent schools and how independent schools should be funded within our province that was initiated actually when the NDP [New Democratic Party] were government. And the consultation process undertook a couple of years, and then the report was issued to the minister in, I believe it was 2010.

We didn't immediately act on the report. We decided that the funding formula was more critical than dealing with the recommendations within that report. The recommendations was that we follow the example of the other Western Canadian

provinces, which in the Western Canadian provinces have some level of funding for independent schools.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, there was absolutely no consultation with the education sector on that announcement as a plan. In fact the boards were without an education funding formula for the past three years, and it was a complete surprise to the entire education sector when it was announced.

The Sask Party should be working to support students by enhancing and enabling the publicly funded education system. Many new Canadians, for example, are choosing to build their lives in our province. This provides an excellent opportunity for us as a province.

Instead of taking this opportunity to build inclusion, social cohesion, unity, and celebrate diversity and ensure educational excellence through the publicly funded system, this government is diverting already thin educational dollars to private independent schools. This move reduces equity, standards, and support for students and serves to fragment and erode our education system. To the minister: honestly, how is this in the best interests of our students and our province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite has been told a number of times, and he just chooses to ignore it, that this is additional funding that's going into education. There is accountability that will be required in order for schools to receive this funding. It is not funding coming out of the existing budget within our province which, by the way, the Saskatchewan Party government increased by over 18 per cent in our first term in government.

However, when the member opposite talks about fragmentation and inclusion and public, we have historically in this province, we have a very, very strong public education system. We also have a very strong Catholic education system. Mr. Speaker, we fund a French school division within this province. We fund one Protestant school division within this province. We have historical high schools that we fund within this province which are independent and which are faith based. We fund and have traditionally funded associate schools which are faith and culturally based.

So, Mr. Speaker, this is sort of one last type of school that we've decided to give a level of funding to just like the other Western Canadian provinces. We're not reinventing what is being done in other places in Canada.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Rightfully so, Mr. Speaker, the school boards and the education sector have concerns around the decision to fund private, independent schools. So does the public. Currently many communities are facing the prospect of school closure because this government has deemed them not viable because of their enrolments, schools in Regina such as Dieppe and Haultain — Haultain with more than 100 students — and rural schools like Nokomis and Bjorkdale and Pangman. Yet, inconsistently and hypocritically, this government is moving ahead with diverting funding to private, independent

schools with no minimum enrolments. They can just have a handful of students, Mr. Speaker.

Given this hypocrisy, how does the government, how does this minister expect a community to accept the closure of their school because, quite simply, it isn't fair?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — I know sometimes it's really difficult to hear in the Assembly because of the noise. So I'll repeat it again: we did not divert funding from the Education budget. This was new funding that we are going to give to independent schools.

In addition the member opposite is criticizing funding for private independent schools and yet, historically in this province, when the NDP were government, we provided funding for historical high schools. We agree with that, Mr. Speaker. Historically when the NDP were government, we provided funding for associate schools which are also private independent schools. We agree with that. The NDP agreed with that then, and now obviously they're doing a complete flip-flop from what they agreed to when they were government.

The Speaker: — Before we move on, I would like to remind members to carefully choose their wording in questions and answers and not to imply or impugn the honour of another member. And that includes interrupting the Speaker.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

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

New Day Program Funding for People with Intellectual Disabilities

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to rise in the House today to talk about an important announcement that I made this morning that will improve the lives of Saskatchewan people with intellectual disabilities. I'm very pleased also that Bev Bartok and Sharla Schofield are able to be with us today from the Cosmopolitan Learning Centre, and they were there this morning for the announcement.

I'm proud to announce that on April the 1st, the Government of Saskatchewan will officially implement a new day program funding standard for ministry funded community-based organizations. It also gives me a great deal of pleasure to tell you that a portion of this new day program funding standard will be targeted towards individuals with complex needs.

The total funding increase for both aspects of this new day program standard will be approximately \$6.3 million in 2012-2013. This includes a \$4.6 million increase for regular day programs and a \$1.7 million increase for day programs with clients with complex needs. By the time all the complex needs designations are completed in the year 2013-2014, the total annualized funding increase will reach \$7 million. As a direct result of this new funding for day programs, additional resources will be provided to up to 54 day programs right across our province.

This new funding standard was piloted at eight sites right across the province between March 2010 and July 2011. Following the evaluation of the pilot in the fall of 2011, and after completing approximately 2,100 assessments in ministry-funded CBOs [community-based organization] across the province, the new funding model was developed.

The current day program funding model was developed in the 1970s. Mr. Speaker, it has not changed since that time. This model is based on a cost per space and does not take individual support of clients into consideration. The new model being announced today will allocate funding to day programs in a more customized way, based on individual assessed needs of each person and every program.

In addition to this, the ministry will also be implementing expanding funding standards in current and new residential programs operated by community-based organizations that support individuals with complex needs designations. Expansions of the current residential funding standards will result in an increased capacity of group homes to more appropriately support individuals with complex needs. This expansion begins on April the 1st, 2012. And in the year 2012-2013, \$560,000 will be allotted to this expansion and the total supports will grow to \$2 million when fully implemented in 2014-15.

Over the past decade, the profile of people served in day programs has changed as higher needs individuals are now being served in the community instead of in the institutions. As a result, community-based organizations are challenged to provide services that meet those higher levels of need. This increased funding announced today will help address these challenges head-on and allow community-based organizations to provide the best possible service to all their clients. This funding will also assist with our government's goal of making Saskatchewan the best place in Canada for people to live with disabilities.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all the people who work and volunteer at the community-based organizations right across our province. The work they do makes a very big difference in the lives of Saskatchewan people with intellectual disabilities. We can't thank them enough. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to respond to the ministerial statement today, and I want to thank the minister for sending this over in advance so we could have a look at it. And I just also want to welcome the special guests to the legislature for this very important announcement.

It is indeed positive news. I assume it's part of the pre-budget announcements and we'll have a time to ask more questions about this in estimates, and this is the appropriate time. But today is a good news day and I think this is the right thing to do. We all want to make this the best place in Canada for people with disabilities to live, and to support those who work in the CBO sector because there are a lot of challenges in the CBO sector and we're becoming more and more aware of the

challenges indeed.

So thank you to all the folks who work in the CBO sector. And of course this, as I said, is a good news thing. There's not much more to say. I think the minister has laid it all out with the details and we look forward to seeing the good results of this and that people can live in dignity in their own communities. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 34

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Bjornerud that **Bill No. 34 — *The Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation 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 with some interest that I rise to participate in the debate today on crop insurance changes, Mr. Speaker. I come from a family that, we still have the home quarter out in Montmartre country, 100-plus years, Mr. Speaker, 105 I believe we've now held title to that particular quarter section, McCalls.

And as relates to insurance and the changes that have been made over the years, it's always, when you go through a season like last year with the flooding that had gone on, it was with a certain interest that I watched what had happened out in the Southeast. Because of course I came to be a resident of the city of Regina, and McCalls, my father and my grandmother, came into the city of Regina in the mid-'50s following fairly severe flooding out in their neck of the woods. And I guess it's always interesting to talk with my father about going through that time and the kind of ditching that they had to do and the way you'd come home with a headache from using the dynamite in a way that . . . To this day if he smells cordite or certain of those things, how it brings back memories of that time — which was quite frankly terrible, Mr. Speaker, for a number of reasons. The cattle that they tended to, the flooding was so bad in some circumstances, and the inability to properly attend to the livestock, some of the cattle, their hooves were rotting off, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I know in a very direct way just what an ordeal that was for our family and what hardship can be inflicted on our producers when it comes to the acts of mother nature, and how hard it can be for producers who work hard, who plan very diligently, and who get that good crop in, but the way that things can change in an afternoon of bad weather or an evening or what have you. But one of the things that I always think about, I guess, when I hear about different situations as it relates to producers that are undergoing problems as it comes to the damage that mother nature can do to their livelihood and to those crops that they put such pride in.

[14:30]

So again, Mr. Speaker, the kind of changes as well that have taken place over the years for the different insurance schemes, for crop insurance, the major review that was recently undertaken, again we followed that with great and certain interest. So when the announcements were made in February in terms of the coverage for the 2012 crop insurance program, on a number of fronts it seems to be positive news. For example and I guess off the top, providing the unseeded acreage benefit up to \$100 per eligible acre as well as another year of funding and coverage levels at significantly high levels, that is of course welcome news. The continued co-operation with the federal government in terms of being there for producers, again welcome news.

I guess we followed the work of the minister quite closely on this, and it's an evolutionary process certainly, working with partners. But the minister, of course, had a lot to say in the second reading speech on this and also when they launched this. And we're quite glad to see that there's favourable comments coming in from the SARM president, Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities president, Dave Marit, commentary from the Saskatchewan Oat Development Commission Chair, Dwayne Anderson, SaskCanola Chair Brett Halstead weighing in, and the Saskatchewan Forage Council president, Aaron Ivey — different stakeholders certainly weighing in.

Another thing that was interesting to see, Mr. Speaker, is something that has traditionally not been covered but we'll see how this works out for commercial fruit growers, the possible coverage to be provided for the replacement of saskatoon bushes, dwarf sour cherry, and haskap fruit trees. I'm not just saying that as a big fan of saskatoon pie, Mr. Speaker, and I'm not saying it to make you hungry either. I'll get off that path, Mr. Speaker, before we're rumbling our stomachs back and forth here. But again, these are segments of the market that traditionally have not been served by crop insurance and there's definitely an interest on the part of that segment of the industry to have that assurance and the insurance from crop insurance. So we welcome this initial extension of coverage in these areas and we'll be watching closely to see how that works out.

But 2012, the budget is at \$177 million. Coverage levels are at a high of \$174 per acre. On average the . . . Again the way that it works, you've got to make sure that you're funding the potential liability, Mr. Speaker. So we're glad to see that the monies are being extended in that regard.

We look forward with great interest to the work of our agricultural critic, the member from Saskatoon Nutana, who comes off a farm out Lafleche way, and somebody that's got some pretty vibrant roots and ongoing connections with the sector, and I know she is following this file with great interest as well.

That's about all I have to say for now, Mr. Speaker, and as such I would move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 34, *An Act respecting Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation*.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader 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.

Bill No. 1

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 1 — The Queen's Bench Amendment Act, 2011/Loi de 2011 modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur la Cour du Banc de la Reine** be now read a second time.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Well again, Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to rise again to join in debate on second reading of Bill No. 1, *The Queen's Bench Amendment Act, 2011*. It's again always kind of interesting to see which departments provide a preponderance of legislative activity, and it's been my experience over the years, Mr. Speaker, that the Department of Justice is no slouch when it comes to providing legislative grist for the mill here at the legislature. Again there are a number of measures contained in the Act.

It's also provided en français aussi [Translation: in French also] as *Loi de modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur la Cour du Banc de la Reine*. It's good to see the, again, particularly as relates to justice measures, Mr. Speaker, the importance of the very law of the land having that bilingual capacity in the legislation itself. It's good to see that.

The Bill itself amends the former, *The Queen's Bench Act, 1998*, facilitating the appointment of the Associate Chief Justice for the Court of Queen's Bench. According to the minister as related in his second reading remarks, the total number of judges on the court will be maintained at 32, including the Chief Justice and the Associate Chief Justice and 30 other judges, wherein the Chief Justice of the court is responsible for the court's administrative functions, scheduling matters, participation in Canadian and Saskatchewan judicial councils, and ensuring that these administrative responsibilities are efficiently and importantly discharged for the smooth operation of the court.

According to the minister as well, Mr. Speaker, the amount of time that the Chief Justice spends on administrative matters and the way that this impacts the ability to hear and decide important legal issues that come before the court — again the point in being Chief Justice is to be the Chief Justice and not be administrator in chief — so as enabled by this legislation, the sharing of administrator responsibilities with an Associate Chief Justice should provide the Chief Justice with a greater opportunity to hear matters and act as a judicial leader in the court. Again drawing upon the remarks from the Minister of Justice in his second reading speech, so we think that would seem to hold water, Mr. Speaker.

The fact that the Chief Justice is obviously someone that has a significant amount of expertise and body of knowledge built up over a career and the recognition of that being invested in the

position of Chief Justice itself, again it makes good sense to make as best use possible of that wisdom, of that judiciousness, if I might say, Mr. Speaker. And not . . . Again this isn't squandering it, but perhaps to spend a preponderance of time on administrative matters is not the best use of that knowledge and wisdom that is invested in that position or the individuals that fill that position.

So that the amendments also allow the Associate Chief Justice to take on all the duties and responsibilities of the Chief Justice in the absence or in the inability of the Chief Justice to act. Again, provides a good insurance policy to ensure the seamless operation of the court and making sure that, should there be illness arising or the need to be away for an extended period of time, that that work will carry on.

I guess one of the provisions the minister references, one of the other provisions that the minister references, wherein the Chief Justice of the Court of Queen's Bench in most other provinces having the ability to assign some administrative duties to an associate chief justice, that amendment helps to remedy the situation where Saskatchewan hasn't had that, and in fact as it stands right now, according to the minister's remarks, we are one of only four jurisdictions, provincial jurisdictions in Canada.

So right now we're ranked among those. The other jurisdictions are Newfoundland, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island. Again nothing against our Maritime cousins, but given that Ontario, Alberta, and British Columbia each have one Associate Chief Justice, that's good company to be in, as would be brought about by this legislation.

The minister relates that Quebec has two associate chief justices, one in Montreal and one in Quebec City. And again those who are familiar with the two solitudes, arguably that holds true in that province in the difference between those two cosmopolitan regions.

Nova Scotia and Manitoba courts being roughly the same size as Saskatchewan's court, each of them have two associate chief justices, one for the general division and one for the family law division. And again as this government continues to evolve the differentiation between general division and family law, we'll see how this impacts other processes and positions within the system.

So the minister, when he had stated that it seems appropriate to amend *The Queen's Bench Act, 1998* to facilitate the appointment of an Associate Chief Justice, we on the face of it, *prima facie*, Mr. Speaker, would agree.

Apparently this is a joint legislative or a shared legislative authority with the Parliament of Canada, and as such, a corresponding amendment is required to the federal *Judges Act* before the amendments to the Saskatchewan legislation can be proclaimed. Apparently the government has requested the federal Minister of Justice to table the federal amendments when the *Judges Act* is next before the House of Commons. Again we'll be keeping an eye out to see how that transpires.

But to recap, Mr. Speaker, Bill No. 1, *The Queen's Bench Amendment Act*, at its base, we see it as a means by which to

enable the Chief Justice to focus on being a judge and to focus on the . . . and get the most out of what has been obviously recognized as wisdom and knowledge and ensure that that is best deployed, and to perhaps better deploy on the question of administrative functions and the scheduling, the participation in other judicial councils and whatnot.

So it's not exactly a world-beating piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker. And on the face of it, it looks to be of value and to be something that would largely fit under the category of housekeeping. And as such, we'll continue to look at it and make sure it's not meeting up to the law of unintended consequences or that there are other measures that weren't touched upon by the minister's remarks, but are borne out in the actual items in the legislation itself.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I would, as regards Bill No. 1, *The Queen's Bench Amendment Act, 2011*, I would move to adjourn.

The Speaker: — The Opposition House Leader has moved adjournment of Bill No. 1, *The Queen's Bench Amendment Act, 2011*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

[14:45]

Bill No. 2

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 2 — The Miscellaneous Statutes (Collaborative Law) Amendment Act, 2011/Loi corrective (*droit collaboratif*) de 2011** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to rise today to speak to Bill No. 2, *An Act to amend certain Statutes with respect to matters concerning Collaborative Law*.

And it's always a good thing that we keep on top of new developments, and so I took a lot of interest in this Bill to see what kind of changes. Again it's a short one. It looks like it's updating good practices, best practices, in an area that our families are most fragile in terms of coming to law to solve issues that we all hope that things would never get to that state. And so this is a good piece of legislation to bring forward and to discuss.

I do have some questions and some suggestions — some questions that I'm sure that the minister, hopefully before we get to committee, may think of. Because you know, one of the things we do is we do write letters to other stakeholders or people that would have interest into this and ask them their opinion about this. And so I'd like to share some of those things in a few minutes because I think they make some very worthwhile comments.

But first of all, what we're talking about is just three pieces of legislation that exist today — *The Children's Law Act, 1997*, *The Family Maintenance Act, 1997*, and *The Family Property Act* — and inserting into that better language around collaborative law services and mediation services, and making sure that the applicant or the respondent, the two parties to the dispute, have the opportunity to make use of those services if they so choose. And I think this is a wise thing because I think clearly nobody wants to make a bad situation worse. And when we have families who are in dire circumstances for a whole host of reasons — and this is part of the human condition is when families break down and when children are involved, where family homes are involved — clearly the province should be there with the supportive regulations to make sure that they get the appropriate supports. And when they go to their lawyers for best advice and help to move forward, their lawyers, one, have the best tools, are kept up to date, but are also required by law to make sure that the parties have the best information and most current information.

So I want to go through that. I just want to take a minute to review the minister's comments. I always find that a good practice to do to make sure we understand the context. And sometimes the minister gives about right, sometimes a little less. I've never known him to give too much information. But I think this is an interesting piece. And I think that he states the circumstances quite appropriately, talking about how we want to create situations where people find themselves in a stressful situation that, in days gone past, we might feel like we have to go to court. But we actually don't want to do that. In fact, if we can take it to mediation, that would be best. If there's some other way to seek resolution to family law issues, this is quite appropriate.

And he talks about how, over the past 50 years, I think that there's been a lot of changes. And of course we would talk about the baby boomer years, or the years of the '50s and the '60s, and a lot more kids were around. Families were sprouting up all over the place. And of course, then things started to change and we saw a . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Simpler time, exactly. That's exactly the words, a simpler time. And it's not so much any more, and of course that's for a whole host of reasons. But that is so true.

And now if we can get back to those times where it wasn't so complex and make laws a little, a little more simpler, I think this is a good thing. And of course, the minister talks about how, while we did change things in 1997 and talked about *The Children's Law Act*, *The Family Maintenance Act* in 1997, and mediation negotiations were considered cutting edge in '97, they are part of the tool kit now. And this is something we have to recognize, and I think that's a very good thing. And collaborative law is part of that tool kit, and we have to acknowledge that and bring that into the common terminology of law. And so I think this is important.

He highlights — and I'm glad he did highlight this, because many of us would not realize this — that those who practise collaborative law . . . And, you know, it's funny how we go to a law office now and you see the different magazines they have on the bookshelf, you know, like the divorce magazines. I don't think 50 years ago you would have seen a magazine dedicated to divorce. You would not have seen that. But this is what

divorce lawyers read these days, you know. And I find this very odd, but it's actually very good because they keep up with the times.

And so I guess there are new things . . . Or you see the billboards. And I know driving through Saskatoon you see billboards about collaborative law, and 50 years ago you would not have seen a billboard about a lawyer offering their services. It was very discreet, very quiet, and it was just not much you talked about. But it's a different time. And so I think this is important that we understand that mediators and those who practise the art of collaborative law require special training and certification. That's an important part. So I think this is very interesting to read and I appreciate that. And I think this is important.

Mr. Speaker, the minister points out, of course, unlike other family law Acts, *The Family Property Act* does not currently require lawyers to advise their family law clients about negotiation or mediation and so we need to change that and I think this is important.

So it looks like a relatively straightforward piece of legislation and that there's not much to really talk about. But I do want to raise one thing. And I hope that before we get to committee, as I said, that if the minister can consider this, or let us know why.

And this is not actually something that this current minister has brought in. I think this is part of the old legislation. But it still needs to be asked because I think when we look at the actual changes — and I'm going to go through this with the explanatory notes, but I may not get it right — but what's being inserted into the . . . while the Act overhauls the sentence, for example, in *The Children's Law Act, 1997*, it's subsection 11(1), clauses (a) and (b). And he's taking out whole phrases and substituting the new phrases, but really what's new is the insertion of collaborative law services and mediation services. And actually I understand it's not . . . The old law referred to mediation facilities, not services, and so there's a change from facilities to services to modernize it there.

But the one that I have a question about is, and it's not explained well in the explanatory notes, but why does it say, "known to him or her"? And this is a key point because we did receive one letter and it was from Family Service Saskatoon. As we do and as I think all oppositions do, we write letters to stakeholders saying, what do you think of this piece of legislation? We did get one response back on this Bill from Family Service Saskatoon, and I'll read this into the record so if the minister wants to take note of this, he can. And I quote, and it's a letter of February 24th, 2012:

The proposed amendment to subsection 11(1) clause (b) and similarly in subsection 16(1) clause (b), stipulates "inform the claimant or respondent of the collaborative law services and mediation services **known to him or her** that might be able to assist the parties in resolving those matters." The wording of concern is "known to him or her" which could be strengthened to create a positive obligation with lawyers in order for them to remain abreast of current collaborative services and training available to them in the field of collaborative law. The current wording implies that if one has not taken the

opportunity to become aware of these services, there is no responsibility to offer or find such information.

Now I read from the explanatory notes that every lawyer who provides a service and then ends up in court with a dispute has to sign a form saying that he did or she did actually inform the parties that there was another dispute resolution process. But what these people are saying — and this is from Deborah Bryson-Sarauer, executive director — saying, you know, if we're updating the language, why does that phrase have to stay in there? Why does it have to say, known to him or her?

We can change mediation facilities to mediation services because 15 years ago facilities seemed to be a better word to use, better choice of word. Now we're saying services is a better place. I'm not sure why the difference would be. I could speculate. Facilities might imply a place. Services might imply that these people are willing to travel to wherever you need to be which may be more appropriate, I think, and I think that's a good thing.

So I do have a . . . I think that's one question we're going to be having, and that's one thing that we're going to be asking about: why does that phrase need to stay in there, and could that in fact be strengthened? And I think this is, this is important. Because otherwise the folks, the Family Service thinks it's a very good thing. And in fact this is, to them, it's actually keeping up with the times, and I think this is a very, very good, very good piece of legislation.

And so with that . . . And the only other question I have — now I may be wrong in this — but I'd be asking this question too, is I see that it comes to it, in effect, it comes into force on July 1st, 2012. Usually when we come into force, it's upon proclamation or assent. It's not usually on a date necessarily or at the end of the year or at the end of a fiscal year. So why would be July 1st? What's special about July 1st? I don't know why that would be the case. So I have some questions. I have some questions. It's a curious question about why July 1st. Why not December 31st? Why not March 31st, the fiscal year? I'm not sure.

So having said that though, I do think this is an important piece of legislation. We should always . . . This should be a priority for the government. As I said, nobody wants to see this kind of stuff happening in terms of when families find themselves in these kind of circumstances that they want things to be as simple as they can. And hopefully if divorces or whatever happens can be friendly, then that's a good thing. It's when it gets to be ugly and tools of law are misused not to find justice but to find vengeance, we don't want to see that.

And I think collaboration is a good, good way to go. And as somebody who's not a lawyer, doesn't really understand all of these things, and fortunately, I think, count my lucky stars, I haven't had a lot of experience in that. And I think that the more we can do to help out . . . And as I say, lawyers do want to do as much as they can to be in the know, but this is one way to encourage them to be in the know and making sure they're offering their services in the best way to their clients. And if it encourages them to be a better lawyer by taking some of these courses, getting certified, then I would say that we are all for it.

So, Mr. Speaker, with that, looking forward to having the discussion with the minister. My interest has now picked up a little bit about why these certain things happen, but I'll be looking forward to hearing some of the explanations. So with that, I would like to move adjournment of Bill No. 2. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The member for Saskatoon Centre has moved adjournment of Bill No. 2, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Collaborative Law) Amendment Act, 2011*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

[15:00]

Bill No. 3

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 3 — The Summary Offences Procedure Amendment Act, 2011** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to join in on debate this afternoon on Bill No. 3, the summary offences procedure Act, 2011.

What we're looking at in this piece of legislation, as I understand in reading the minister's comments, is in many ways a modernization and movement forward as far as bringing some efficiencies to the justice process in general and to our peace officers here in Saskatchewan. And certainly in looking at a couple of these measures, two of them certainly seem to make a fair amount of sense at first glance. When I'm looking at specifically the ability to have officers in the field and responsive to fresh evidence and on the scene in a timely way, this of course is important to the efficient delivery of justice and actual delivery of justice and bringing safety to Saskatchewan people and to communities. So this is certainly something that looks to be supported. We've done some consultation and will continue to seek input as it relates to this piece of legislation.

Consultation to date has supported the two pieces around the electronic tickets, the summary offences, and as well around the piece around warrants being able to be accessed by way of telephone. So those two pieces seem to bring merit and look to be sort of a modernization of an Act in making sure that we're responding to some of the needs in the community.

When I'm looking at the Bill itself or the Act itself and some of the minister's statements, and I'm looking at the summary offence tickets that now will be able to be filled out electronically, what the contention is is that this will allow officers to be more efficient with their use of time, to be able to be more attentive to where they're best utilized, and that's responding to community needs and to challenges that exist. And this seems to make sense. And it seemed in a way that it was rather impractical to have officers limited in a sense of having them having to fill out hard-copy paperwork. That was

not where their time could be best spent, Mr. Speaker. So if this is a more efficient process that allows greater community safety, that's something we support.

We know this is something that's been called upon and urged upon by the police chiefs of Saskatchewan and calling for this change. We've heard that from the police chiefs, and we're glad that government's listened to being able to make some of these refinements on their behalf and their members' behalf. But also this has been something that's, I believe, as I understand, has been supported by law enforcement personnel across the country, including the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police], who have certainly as I understand a strong preference for this electronic format that will allow officers to be more efficient when spending their time on that sort of data and that sort of information filing and be more focused in being able to be more responsive to the important needs within our community. And it comes down to community safety and efficient delivery of service. So we certainly heard many of these aspects from our peace officers, from our enforcement officers, and in the respect of stakeholder organizations. And on this front, it seems that it is good to see government hearing some of those calls as well and making some of those refinements.

Of course we're going to be doing broader consultation on this as well to make sure both on this change, but the three others in this piece of legislation, that those in fact are in the best interests of Saskatchewan people. And that consultation's vital to making sure that we understand the direct impact on those that are affected. And certainly an important group in this case would be law enforcement officers here in Saskatchewan, and a learned experience that we can likely hear from across Canada, but broader consultation as well. And that allows us to make sure we understand from government what their intent is with this legislation, to make sure we understand what the challenges are for stakeholders right now on the ground. And we need to make sure then that this legislation both is as responsive and as efficient in addressing those challenges, but also not creating some unintended consequences maybe not contemplated by government. And I say that that consultation process and the thorough examination that we will undertake as an opposition and as this Bill proceeds is very important.

Unfortunately what we've learned far too often in this Assembly is that this Sask Party government is awfully reckless in putting together legislation and that really shirks its responsibility as it relates to consultation with those individuals affected by legislation. So we need to make sure we bring that sober second thought and effective scrutiny to this sort of legislation so we don't end up in circumstances as we've seen in the past where this government's rushed forward without any consultation, just out of ideological pursuit and ended up . . . In fact in one case, Mr. Speaker, if you can believe it, and it's a shameful story for Saskatchewan people, but actually brought forward unconstitutional legislation to the people of this province.

Of course we don't see that sort of approach just in legislation, Mr. Speaker. We also do see it, unfortunately, manifest itself as well in the actions of ministers as they create regulations and programs. And that lack of consultation with those that are impacted and know the circumstances best is certainly not the

best approach to either derive policy or to create program or to respond to people's needs. And we see that occurring across the piece, whether it's in health care, Mr. Speaker, or whether we see it in education, and then of course there's consequences in those scenarios for Saskatchewan people.

So we're pleased to weigh in on this discussion here. And as we see with potentially some greater efficiency found on summary offence tickets, that's certainly something that we should be able to support. It's something we've heard from the law enforcement community and something that should allow those officers who are there protecting and working on behalf of the public to be as efficient as they can be in their usage of their time and placing those energies into where they're best utilized, which is responding to the demands and needs in the community and providing safety and bringing about timely justice.

Just to give a bit of an example on some of the tickets that we're speaking about here, there's a wide range when we're talking about provincial offences, from minor traffic offences to more serious offences, whether that be infractions in hunting, let's say poaching, or environmental pollution. Unsafe transport of goods on our highways would fit into these sorts of pieces. So there's quite a range of infractions that would fall into summary ticket offences, and as you can see, that these are likely numerous scenarios for an officer. And you know, if we're providing a more efficient system for officers to share information to file these tickets, then I think that that's a positive step. We'll continue our consultation on that front.

I know another aspect of this Bill is as it relates to seeking warrants on provincial matters or for provincially regulated crime, Mr. Speaker. And I know that that's . . . What we see on this case is actually coming in line with what occurs from a federal perspective as it relates to the Criminal Code and the more serious offences. This already is allowed for in that scenario, as I understand it anyways, Mr. Speaker, in consultation with stakeholders. So this allows us to modernize and be more efficient on this front.

And I guess if we're thinking about being able to access a warrant by telephone, certainly I can see the merits in a more efficient process, especially if we think of some of our rural or northern regions or all sorts of circumstances where it might be impractical or challenging for a peace officer to appear to receive a warrant. This should allow, with these changes which have been called upon by law enforcement officials here in Saskatchewan and across Canada, it should allow officers to be quickly responding to an incident and gaining fresh evidence and ultimately seeking or ultimately being in a better position to provide that timely justice and certainly the community safety that comes with that, Mr. Speaker.

So I know we have a few officers in this Assembly, or former officers in this Assembly, and I suspect that they probably have some level of support for these sorts of changes as well and making sure that the men and women who do the good work on behalf of Saskatchewan people in keeping communities safe and providing timely justice, making sure that their time's being spent as efficiently as it can be and on where they're best utilized for the outcome which we require, which is the side of community safety and ultimately justice.

I know there's some other aspects that have changed around entering default convictions and some new structures for deterrents or alleged deterrents for the default convictions, where an individual's supposed to appear before the courts and if they don't appear, certainly there's cost both to the public and by way of time to all those individuals to conduct a hearing. And in many cases, in most cases, I understand that if somebody doesn't appear, they're going to be convicted by way of their absence in default. And that's neither the best use of our justice system and not necessarily a reflection of the real circumstance that we should be assessing.

So certainly I recognize the problem and the challenge in default convictions, and I look forward to asking more questions on this front as to the deterrent structure that's put forward, as to its impact and its potential effectiveness. And certainly it sounds like it's an issue that we need to be responding to; we just need to make sure that this is the most effective way to go at it and that these deterrents aren't going to have unintended consequences for Saskatchewan people.

So these are all important aspects as it relates to timely delivery of justice, as it relates to community safety, as I say, as it relates to the default convictions. I really do think we need to do a bit of broader question asking on that front, both with our respective stakeholders, but also of the minister and of government and on some of the contemplations that they've had as it relates to the impact and what information is driving whether or not this is the best way to go at dealing with something that certainly, I think we can all agree, is a challenge for our justice system.

When we're talking about the issue of justice here as well and delivery of justice and community safety, at this point in time I know there's a real ominous feel across the province right now and some concerns in municipalities when we have our Premier, just a few shorts days ago and just a little while ago, go before the public and to share that he's going to be providing, I believe, some cuts to the funding for these services. And when we look at the growing communities and needs, whether it's in Weyburn or whether it's in Prince Albert or whether it's in Meadow Lake or whether it's in Regina or whether it's in Saskatoon or Melville, it's important that we look at the services as a whole. And certainly community safety is a vital part of that, and timely justice.

So I think there's really hard questions that law enforcement officers are asking of this Premier at this point in time. I know that that's the case of many individuals across this province, many community leaders across this province that are questioning, at a time where we're actually growing as a province, that in fact the Premier feels this is a time to reduce funding for police officers and community safety, Mr. Speaker. So there's good questions.

I know down in Estevan — I hear the member speaking up a little bit — this is an area where the RCMP in fact are under great strain in Estevan, and they're working incredibly hard to bring about community safety. And I think it's disappointing for a community like Estevan that's in many ways contributing to the prosperity directly into provincial coffers of this government, Mr. Speaker, to then be told that they're going to be cutting their support for RCMP services back to their

community.

So this is a concern. And this is a growing community with, you know, the beautiful Bakken field and the activity that's going on and the workers that are employed there. And I know there's many individuals — lifelong residents and seniors and otherwise — that are asking many questions about why they should be compromising their public safety and they're receiving a reduced allocation for policing in their community when they certainly see needs that are needing to be attended to. And the case is the same here in Regina and across this province.

So that's a point that certainly hits directly to this piece here. And the reason I say that is, if we're making some tweaks to modernize and make more efficient the time usage of officers, this is something that certainly we support. But if we're reducing the support for communities and for the public at large to have the response of a team of officers providing the public safety that we, that Saskatchewan people deserve and that they expect, then that's too bad. So it's a bit of a two sides of the . . . speaking out of two sides of the mouth sort of an argument here when we get to a Bill like this. And it seems in a way that common sense may not be prevailing, Mr. Speaker. And that's our biggest concern. We should simply be letting common sense prevail.

When we're looking at another aspect here as well, this Bill certainly does raise some other consequences that we need to be understanding and that we can't get any analysis from this government on, and that's the federal changes to criminal law, changes that they've made and the implications then back on Saskatchewan.

[15:15]

And we know the general implication of those changes, but we've had not a sniff of analysis from this government, not an ounce of analysis. And Saskatchewan people deserve real answers on this front because we've had a federal government unilaterally make changes that actually are going to be paid for by Saskatchewan people, and at a significant cost.

So when we talk about ballooning expenditures, we see some of that being directly attributed to a federal government that continues to off-load on this province and on Saskatchewan people. And unfortunately we see a government that's far more interested in sort of cheerleading press releases than to, at times, take the principled stand that they need to for Saskatchewan people and the thoughtful analysis to say, wait a minute here; we're standing for Saskatchewan people. So this is something we're watching and it's of great concern. Because on so many fronts, we see this federal off-loading onto our provincial budget, onto our residents of Saskatchewan, our taxpayers. This comes at a direct cost to Saskatchewan people.

And this is interesting in the context that we have a federal government that will send us, any Bill the federal government sends us, this Premier's so willing to accept. He just says yes; no, we'll pay for it. Whether it's in health care, whether it's old age security, whether it's the federal jail Bill, on so many fronts, this Premier's just so willing to accept any bill that's sent to him by the federal government. And these aren't

one-time bills. These are bills that are incurred many years forward and in fact will balloon and grow without any level of analysis and standing up for Saskatchewan people's best interests. And that's disappointing. And his response to much of this is then to go back to Saskatchewan people and say that they deserve less as it relates to the programs and services that have been historical to Saskatchewan, whether that be in the classroom or in community health services or right across the piece, all across this province, Mr. Speaker. And that's problematic.

So it's problematic when our Premier will welcome any new expenditure, ballooning expenditure, off-loaded onto Saskatchewan people into our budget without a principled position on behalf of Saskatchewan people but then looks to Saskatchewan people to take a compromise and to take less and to wear the impact of that. So on a few different pieces here, it highlights some important aspects of challenges that we see within this province and some areas that we would really like to see some improvement upon.

But as it relates to Bill No. 3, *The Summary Offences Procedure Amendment Act*, certainly it's good to see some of the changes that have been called upon by people on the ground understanding the circumstances best — our law enforcement officers and legal stakeholders — in bringing about some new efficiencies to those officers in the pursuit of providing public safety and timely justice. That's something that in general is something that we've heard and something that in the two provisions we support, certainly with a little bit more analysis to be had and consultation as it relates to the process around entering default convictions. It's an area that we need to ask some more questions and seek greater consultation. We recognize certainly the problem that exists. Now we need to go about this in an evidence-based manner that allows us to find what is the best solution. How can we be most effective in dealing with this challenge?

So that's what Saskatchewan people can expect from Saskatchewan New Democrats on this front as we move forward, making sure that we are responding to the needs. And we are also going to stand up to a government that is telling Saskatchewan people, a Premier right now that's been telling Saskatchewan people that they should do less or pay more for policing services in Saskatchewan. We think that in a growing Saskatchewan community safety and policing is an important aspect of peace of mind and well-being and quality of life, whether that's in Estevan, whether that's in Regina, whether that's in Saskatoon, or whether that's in my good friend from La Ronge's riding. And that's something that we're going to be calling for.

Thirdly, as we speak about the off-loading of Mr. Harper and his crew federally, like I say, it's disappointing that any Bill that shows up at our doorstep, to be paid by Saskatchewan people, the answer is just a quick, simple, yes from this Premier instead of analyzing the impacts of that. Squeezing and ballooning: ballooning our budget, squeezing Saskatchewan people. And now because of the lack of oversight or principled oversight that should occur on behalf of Saskatchewan people, now Saskatchewan people are expected to do less with institutions that have been long-standing in Saskatchewan, whether that be their health services up the street, reductions in their

classrooms, or impacts and reductions for the most vulnerable in this province. We can do better than that, Mr. Speaker, and Saskatchewan New Democrats expect us to do better.

It's my pleasure to weigh in on debate on this Bill. We look forward to a broader consultation and certainly more questions of the minister on this front. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this point in time I move adjournment of Bill No. 3, *The Summary Offences Procedure Amendment Act, 2011*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Regina Rosemont has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 3, *The Summary Offences Procedure Amendment Act, 2011*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 4

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 4 — The Pension Benefits Amendment Act, 2011** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to weigh in on debate of Bill No. 4, *The Pension Benefits Amendment Act, 2011* and offer some insight into this, and to examine further what sort of direction the minister is taking, this government is taking as it relates to pensions and income security in the province of Saskatchewan.

I understand that this in many ways is in response to a national agreement, a new national agreement that all provinces have signed on to and represents pan-Canadian changes to pensions, and in fact changes an Act that's quite old — 1968 agreement — and reflects some of the modernization that's needed to simply reflect changes, both in the way of pensions, but in the way of work and what's going on in different jurisdictions. So certainly some of these changes seem to make sense. They're simple updating that's important for pension plans and for people, and that's certainly something that we support.

Something that I always look very closely for, particularly with this government, Mr. Speaker, it's unfortunate, but is what kind of consultation has occurred when this government brings forward legislation. On this front here we've been engaging in some of the consultation with the relevant stakeholders, and I understand that certainly some consultation has occurred. The government claims that consultation has occurred across the piece in a wide way, whether that's with retiree associations or whether that's with unions or whether that's with representatives of the pension industry and pension experts. And we hope that that's the case. We would expect that to be the case.

Our concern would be that this case may be like others where this government has not done that due diligence on behalf of Saskatchewan people, not done the consultation that they suggest that they have, and then we end up with a whole host of

unintended consequences and negative impacts for which weren't contemplated because of a reckless process to drive policy. And we see that far too often with this government, Mr. Speaker.

And you'll be well aware of the case where this government actually brought forward an Act where they had no consultation with stakeholders that were going to be impacted, shifted the balance of power out of the hands of working people and directly over to the ledger, entirely into the hands of that of the employer in a very unfair, unbalanced way — very ideological, didn't reflect any common sense, didn't reflect any level of balance. And now embarrassingly, Mr. Speaker, that piece of legislation has now been ruled unconstitutional in this very province, Mr. Speaker. Of course this is an embarrassment, certainly for government, but for Saskatchewan people, but hopefully provides an opportunity to bring forward fair and balanced legislation to Saskatchewan people and workers in making sure that their rights are protected.

So that's why we're so careful when we see these sorts of pieces of legislation put forward, Mr. Speaker, because in our history with this government, we've learned very quickly that due diligence, respecting stakeholders, understanding what impacts there are for Saskatchewan people aren't what this government respects in their legislative process. It's simply not their priority.

But what I look at when I look at this piece of legislation, it seems to me that this is in response to a new national agreement. It's bringing in some level of, I guess, some level of standardization across Canada, and I think we need to make sure we fully understand what those impacts are from that. It likely also brings about some level of portability of people or portability of workers or portability of plans to respective jurisdictions. And that can certainly be helpful from a perspective of us having workers come to Saskatchewan or a whole host of individuals coming to Saskatchewan or for Saskatchewan people who are going to be offering contributions in other parts of Canada.

So certainly I think I take at face value from what I see is likely a modernization. It likely does reflect industry standards. It seems to be consistent with a new national plan, new national agreement that all other provinces have entered into. And on that front, that's a good thing. But I would hate to . . . It's disappointing, I guess, to see this being the actions of government and only this as the actions of government as it relates to income security, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, income security and retirement security is a significant issue and challenge for Saskatchewan people, whether it's retirees at this current point in time or whether it's individuals who are working so hard, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to build their careers and plan for that stage of their life. And it's in many ways simply not a priority of this government. And that's unfortunate because it's a real hardship for so many in this province and across Canada.

And unfortunately if we're looking at the statistics and changes to pensions and some of the different financial challenges, this is going to be a real challenge and arguably a growing challenge, as we move forward, for that next generation of

workers, and when they're looking for that time to retire and to have that peace of mind and dignity in their life that I think all people who have spent their life contributing and offering their services and working and building their lives deserve to have.

And far too often we see scenarios in this province where an individual or a family spends their life working and they're close to that moment where they can retire, and they recognize that that's simply not going to be possible for them. And they continue on piecemealing together work well beyond the years for which they hope to be in the workforce. They hope to be spending time with grandkids and with family and having another stage of their life, but that's not the reality for far too many under some of the challenges that we see.

And unfortunately this isn't assisted by conservative governments, provincially or federally, Mr. Speaker. And I guess this gets into a broader discussion, one right now that's going on that has a direct impact on Saskatchewan and for which we haven't heard a peep from this government on for Saskatchewan people, and this is the federal government's desire to reduce old age security benefits for Saskatchewan people. And this is unfortunate because it impacts so many across this province.

Certainly seniors today have many questions. But certainly many hard-working young people and individuals at various stages of their career, that are planning their income security for years forward and making sure they have the dignity and peace of mind that they deserve, are really unnerved by this. And we find it, I find it incredibly disappointing to not hear a peep from the Sask Party government, not a peep from the Premier as it relates to standing up for Saskatchewan people when a federal government is dismantling and reducing a program that brings some level of dignity to so many seniors' lives.

And really when we look at it, this isn't a program bringing great affluence to seniors or retirees. It's basic dignity, Mr. Speaker. And even in the current scenarios that we have, we certainly see far too many seniors in the grip of poverty, Mr. Speaker. And we see that in rural Saskatchewan. We see that in urban Saskatchewan. We see that on First Nations. We see it right across this province. And we need to do a far better job on this front and putting this as a very important priority area.

I can certainly relate to Saskatchewan people that the official opposition, Saskatchewan New Democrats, are pushing hard on this front. It's an important priority area. We're calling on this government to stand up for Saskatchewan people. And we're disappointed that again we see a Premier simply allow, by stroke of a pen or a quick change federally, direct impacts, hurt and challenge placed back on to Saskatchewan residents. And the role of the Premier, the role of government is one to stand up for Saskatchewan people, to understand the challenges and pressures that are there, and to be responsive to that. And on this front we're disappointed and we're concerned. And we're going to stand with Saskatchewan people on this front, Mr. Speaker.

One other area that we should definitely touch on as it relates to pensions . . . And we see some changes here to portability of pensions in this Act. But what we should be seeing is certainly a government standing up for Saskatchewan seniors and workers

as it relates to their income security and old age security. But we should also see a government that would stand with other provinces in support of expanding the CPP [Canada Pension Plan], the Canadian pension plan.

[15:30]

And we've had multiple opportunities for that to occur. And unfortunately at one point this government seemed to have suggested that they might support such a plan, and I don't know what happened, but over the course of the last two years they've retreated from that position. And this is disappointing for Saskatchewan people because, as I've said, income security and retirement security is something that's of great concern to Saskatchewan people of all demographics, not just retirees themselves but young workers who are planning for the future. And we're seeing a growing challenge on this front.

CPP itself is a very efficient plan, one of the lowest cost plans to administer, and an incredibly portable plan. And it would be one of our best mechanisms to provide that sort of broad-based, pan-Canadian support to workers and to retirees. And I find it disappointing that this Premier and this Finance minister have not supported expansion of the CPP. At one point they had suggested that they could be onside with that. Now that's changed. But there's opportunities before us, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I would urge every single member that's sitting in here today . . . And I know it must be frustrating for some of the backbench MLAs that don't have a role in cabinet, but they do have an important role for their constituents and for Saskatchewan people on this front. And it's to talk to the Premier, to talk to cabinet about supporting some of the changes to the CPP and the expansion of the CPP. And it's really the least they could do when they're spending the time that they are in this Assembly, to take the time to — at some point over the next month or so, Mr. Speaker — to simply request of cabinet, to request of the Premier, a priority on expansion of the CPP.

You know, I think whether you're in Moosomin or whether you're in Rosthern-Shellbrook or whether you're in Moose Jaw, I think that all seniors and all workers deserve to see a strong future for themselves, and a dignified retirement. And it's unfair for the uncertainty that exists, and I think that, like I say, we could work on this as an entire Assembly in a co-operative fashion. We know that the Premier has gone astray from his original position of support for this expansion, but that doesn't stop an Assembly from calling upon a government and on a cabinet and on a Premier to reconsider something that's a very efficient, affordable way of expanding dignity and income security to all Canadian people and all Saskatchewan people.

And you know, I think whether . . . You know, I suspect it's awfully boring for some of those members that spend hour after hour not taking their feet to offer any contributions to this Assembly, but one place they could be incredibly effective is just taking a brief moment with the Premier or with cabinet and sharing their view that they believe their constituents deserve income security, that they deserve the kinds of improvements and peace of mind that expansion of the CPP would provide. And this is the kind of an issue, I think, that it would be nice to see some rallying behind and some co-operation across, throughout this Assembly, and to bring forward something meaningful for Saskatchewan people.

And I think the opportunity exists in a significant way, and I'll give timelines to all members in this Assembly that we have, I believe, a Finance ministers' meeting that's coming up in June. This is a prime time for Saskatchewan, in advance of that, to take a position of supporting expansion of the CPP, to bring forward the kind of protection to workers into their retirement and for retirees themselves to make sure they have the benefits that provide simply a decent quality of life, simply dignity, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

All the information we have right now is that simply it's unacceptable, the current level of poverty that exists with seniors across Saskatchewan currently. But sadly if we play that string out and look at all the independent data that suggests where the next generation of workers, when they retire, what those circumstances are going to be, this is a very significant problem for Saskatchewan people. So I urge all members in this Assembly, all members of this side of government, and certainly it's important for Saskatchewan people to know that the official opposition, Saskatchewan New Democrats, have been urging this position for a significant period of time, have been solid on this issue, and the reasons being is that it's the right thing to do for Saskatchewan people. It's efficient. It's affordable. And it responds to their needs in making sure they have the deserved peace of mind, Mr. Speaker. So let's try to work together as an Assembly on this front.

We recognize that the Finance minister and the Premier, who once said, I believe conveyed some support on this front, who have gone astray — there's a real opportunity for all of us, and I make that urging here today, and I do it from the floor. And I know that there's many members that aren't able, aren't allowed to enter into debate, represent the views of their constituents. But they can still do so by taking a moment with the Premier or cabinet and making sure their voices are heard to address something that's a significant challenge both today but into the future. And that's the sort of planning and the kind of responsiveness that people expect of their government. It's the kind of common sense that Saskatchewan people expect of their government. And they reject a government that just pursues ideological pursuits. What they respect is a government that brings forward common sense solutions, that responds to the needs that they have within their own lives.

So that's something, I guess a bit of a rallying call to this Assembly to be able to show our support for the expansion of the CPP, to make sure we can get this Premier and this Finance minister onside and in support of this — currently right now they're not in support of providing that sort of dignity to Saskatchewan people — but making sure we each think of our constituents when we spend the time door knocking, and the different circumstances that are there and the hard-working young families that are moving towards that stage of life, to make sure that we have them in mind as we enter this debate. Certainly our side of the Assembly, the official opposition, will have that in mind when we're giving speeches and making our push on this. But certainly I think it's a space for all MLAs, government or opposition, to make sure they do what they can to bend the ear of the Premier and to ask him to provide the kind of support that Saskatchewan people simply deserve.

So that's an interesting little piece that maybe we can work together on as an Assembly here. The Finance ministers'

meeting is going on in June, and we have some time to get this right. And I know there's some members over there that are probably picturing the scenarios I'm picturing in my mind, whether it be in Melfort or whether it's in Moosomin, but circumstances where you know that there's individuals that have worked hard that are going to be retiring with inadequate income and the pressure it places on individuals that have contributed so mightily to their communities and offered service to their communities and have worked their entire lives, to then live in a setting that doesn't provide basic dignity and quality of life. And we can do better, Mr. Speaker, and this is an issue for which we have a practical plan that we can move forward together. So that's important.

And then just on the last piece, I urge this government to provide some scrutiny and some understanding and some analysis as to what the impact is for Saskatchewan people as it relates to the federal plan to cut old age security benefits to Saskatchewan people. And we haven't heard anything from this Premier or from this government on this front and that's really disappointing, but again there's opportunity. So let's urge this government to stand up, to step up, and to represent Saskatchewan people who deserve to have income security, peace of mind, dignified quality of life, and not simply accept every foolhardy plan that comes by way of the federal government, and to make sure that we're standing up for whom we should, being Saskatchewan people.

And I know I can picture all sorts of constituents and family for whom we'll want to make sure that we're making income security a priority. I suspect that members opposite may be picturing some of those same scenarios and I think that quite simply we need not accept this failed agenda from the federal government. We need not accept this new position of the provincial government to not support expansion of the CPP. And we need to expect better from this Assembly, from this government on this front to provide that sort of peace of mind and dignity to Saskatchewan people.

At this point in time as it relates to the Bill at hand, we have much more time we'll be able to have as far as questions for the minister in some key areas. Certainly we'll continue our consultation. What we see here is some modernization and a reflection of a new national agreement that's been brought forward, and certainly we know that all other provinces in Canada have supported that agreement. So while we are likely to support changes in this Act, what we call on this government to do is to bring real, meaningful actions as it relates to the broader question of income security, and not to just tinker with Acts that, you know, when we get requests from a federal body to come into compliance or to modernize, we certainly have to do that, but a government's other job is to respond to the needs of the people they represent. And on that front as it relates to income security and retirement income, we can do a much better job because currently what we're doing, what this government's doing is failing Saskatchewan people.

So on that front I certainly move adjournment of debate on Bill No. 4, *The Pension Benefits Amendment Act, 2011*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Regina Rosemont has moved to adjourn debate on Bill 4, *The Pension Benefits Amendment Act, 2011*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to

adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 5

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 5 — The Credit Union Amendment Act, 2011** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to enter into the debate on Bill No. 5, an Act to amend the credit union, 1998 and to repeal the credit union central of Saskatchewan Act, 1999. And it seems relatively straightforward, and of course the devil is in the detail and so we do have some questions. But we have been out talking to a few people about the necessity of this and we have reviewed the minister's remarks.

But before I get started too far down the road, I do want to say that on this side of the House, and I think on both sides of the House, especially in light of the fact that we know that the credit unions and the co-ops play such a huge role in Saskatchewan and in Canada — in fact it is the international year of the co-ops — and these folks along this kind of business model play a significant role in shaping our society. What they do is they have a real values-added model, and they really take social values to heart in terms of quality and community-based ideas. And I think even though the intention of this Act has helped them establish more of a national presence, as I understand it, it's still going to be a hometown type of enterprise where they recognize that the good stays in the community and that people can get ahead in their lives. And I think this is an important movement here, the credit unions and the co-ops.

And so we're delighted to have discussions. I know that my colleagues on this side had discussions with the SaskCentral representatives not too long ago actually, discussing why the necessity of this Act. And they met to make sure we understood it. And this is how this House works, talking to people so we can understand. And they talk about how they want to work towards a national co-operative of credit unions. And even though that's many years down the road, they see that in their business plan this will help out credit unions, because as a larger group there's much stronger financial leverage.

And of course when you're dealing with the five multinational banks, it's hard to play in that game when you are just a provincial credit union or a small-town credit union. And so they see a lot of advantage having a national organization, a national co-operative. And you know you can see the national banks, how they're even moving into America. I understand there's more TD [Toronto Dominion] Banks in the United States than there are now in Canada and just how this world is changing.

And so I think this is an important fact. And so SaskCentral is

looking to move forward, to be federally incorporated, and that's why this Act is so necessary. And so this is an important thing and I think that this is straightforward. And of course this is what the minister says, so it seems like everybody's on the same page. It's part of an evolution, and I think this is really key.

I think that for us to . . . I've always appreciated how the credit unions make sure that they keep us in the loop, both through their lobby activities in terms of just helping us understand the challenges they face but also the successes they have.

You know, yesterday I talked about international year of the co-ops and talking about how the top one-third of Saskatchewan's top 100 businesses are actually co-ops or credit unions. I think that's phenomenal. That's a phenomenal stat that actually, that's talking about our own success stories here in Saskatchewan. And that's what we talk about in terms of true economic development that the money is from the people here to help people meet their own needs here, and it's exciting to see.

[15:45]

And I know that in Saskatoon, my hometown where I represent — my current hometown, I mean — the credit union is a phenomenal leader in terms of both economic activity but also in terms of social responsibility. And so I think hats off to the folks in the credit union movement and hats off to Credit Union Central to have the wherewithal and the skills and the capacity and they see that with a good business plan, of which this Act helps out, that they can make the move to have a stronger presence federally. And because of that, that will help them move forward in terms of the things that they want to achieve for their members. And of course because it's a democratically run organization, we understand that this is truly what the members want and we feel pretty confident that this would go well with that.

So just in a couple of minutes, Mr. Speaker, I will be moving on so we can allow the next speaker to speak. But with that, I have not too much else to add, except that we'll have questions when we go to committee. And we understand that this Act only affects SaskCentral; it doesn't affect *The Credit Union Act*, and so this is very important.

So with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to move adjournment of this Bill. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Tell): — The member's moved to adjourn debate on *The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Amendment Act, 2011*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion? . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh, okay. The member from Saskatoon Centre has moved *The Credit Union Amendment Act, 2011*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Bill No. 35

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 35 — The**

Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Amendment Act, 2011/Loi de 2011 modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur l'Assemblée législative et le Conseil exécutif be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. McCall: — Madam Deputy Speaker, it's a pleasure to rise and join in the debate today on Bill No. 35, *The Act to amend The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, 2007*. Previously when this measure was brought to the House by the Minister of Justice then — who is of course the Minister of Justice now — in providing for fixed-date elections, it was funny at the time, Madam Deputy Speaker, that the Minister of Justice introduced it as the fixed election legislation, which we don't know if that was a Freudian slip or if it was, you know, got truly to the heart of the matter as regards the way that this government has approached the electoral law in this province. We think it worked on a number of levels, Madam Deputy Speaker.

But as regards the attempt to move the election date itself, moving to, moving . . . again, the problem being there are a number of other jurisdictions including the federal government that have a fixed-date election to take place overlapping with the window of November 2015. So moving from there to April, the first Monday in April of 2016. So I guess the election night the government should have been chanting, four and a half more years, perhaps. But this is the . . . It's a fairly reasonable, on the face of it, approach to trying to remedy the situation, the Bill, but again with certain provisos, Madam Deputy Speaker. I wouldn't want to be quoted as somehow supporting this, full stop, period.

It's interesting in that this was one of the last Bills brought forward in the dying days of the fall session, and certainly one of the last Bills on the legislative agenda of this government, that it also was accompanied at the time by a letter from the Premier to Prime Minister Harper requesting that the feds move their election, the timing of their election. Now that was December 2015 that . . . pardon me, December 15th, 2011, that letter was sent to the Prime Minister.

It's been a few months, and it would be good to know from the members opposite what happened to the letter. Has there been a response? And is this, in fact, a done deal? So I would request of the members opposite, is there a way that they can update the House as to the progress of the correspondence with the Prime Minister and if this is in fact the situation? I'm suspecting of course that the Prime Minister is saying no; you're welcome to do what you will, but our fixed election date stands . . . fixed-date election stands. But we shall see where this winds up. But if the government was looking to be helpful, this would be good information to make public in terms of whatever response has been made by the Prime Minister and the Conservative government in Ottawa, who are certainly preoccupied with a number of Elections Canada related themes these days, Madam Deputy Speaker.

So the next election, if this legislation goes through, would take place April 4th, 2016. Again, I think we on this side don't have a problem with fixed-date elections legislation. If they are looking to renovate fixed-date election legislation, there's some

examples in Manitoba in terms of extending the blackout period that this government would do well to look into and in terms of ensuring that the election period is not being unfairly used by one side or the other, but that it's a fair and balanced playing field for the competitors in our electoral system.

One thing that's of particular note, Madam Deputy Speaker, is the way that this accompanies the legislation around the constituency boundaries redistribution, and certainly we're going to be having a fairly fulsome debate on that score. But other measures that this government has brought forward in terms of electoral law change, one being the provision of the photo ID [identification] requirements and then the whole back and forth that we had around the use of attestations and the way that the regulations were dropped August, you know, literally weeks before the election was to take place, the way that that singled out First Nations, the way that this government was brought to heel by the Acting Chief Electoral Officer in making sure that First Nations on reserve weren't singled out in a way that is not even a case in the federal legislation, Madam Deputy Speaker.

There are a number of things that have happened when it comes to election law, as regards to the track record of this government, that even something like this, that would seem to be fairly commonplace or fairly common sense, we can't help but be suspicious of. And certainly as regards to the changes being proposed for the constituencies boundary redistribution, we think it's more than passing strange that they're recommending three additional MLAs and changing the formula to completely discount the citizens under the age of 18 in this province.

So Bill 35 itself though, it's interesting that, you know, it didn't take very long after the election to come forward with this proposal. Again it was not presaged anywhere in the election commitments or documents on the part of the government. This is something that they knew was coming that they didn't have the common courtesy to share this position with the people of Saskatchewan during the election. We think it is kind of strange, Madam Deputy Speaker, but certainly part of a pattern when it comes to the actions of that government.

So I know that other members of the opposition caucus are very interested to participate in this debate. We'll be looking at providing their perspectives on this. This one is interesting but of course, Bill No. 36, what that means for the practice of democracy in this province, Madam Deputy Speaker, we think this is where the government has got some things dramatically wrong.

So I will move to conclude my remarks in the debate on Bill No. 35, *An Act to amend The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, 2007*. And as such, I will move to adjourn debate.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Tell): — The member from Regina Elphinstone has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 35, *The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Amendment Act, 2011*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Tell): — Carried.

Bill No. 36

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 36 — The Constituency Boundaries Amendment Act, 2011** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to conclude my remarks from last night. There were a few more remarks that I wanted to say because I felt, and I still feel like, as I said last night, that how egregious this Act is. I think this is one that needs to be withdrawn. I think there is serious errors in this Act. And I think that some of the comments last night I want to review.

And I want to talk a little bit more about some of the things that I've come to understand since then too, about how contentious this was in the '80s — in the late '80s, in fact, went to the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal and then to the Supreme Court for a ruling. And the percentages that were involved there, when Grant Devine tried to establish 25 per cent was an acceptable margin. And actually, when it got to the Supreme Court, I understand — now I could be wrong, but — actually the Supreme Court rule that I talked about, effective representation.

But at that time, when he got the ruling back, caused him to be able to call the election, and that was what happened in '91. And then causing that, the government of Premier Roy Romanow held consultations. He established an independent commission, travelled around the province to find out what should we do about having an effective representative electoral system here in Saskatchewan. In fact the commission had visited some six locations, had 46 presentations and 25 written documents to it, exhibits.

And so I think that it's really important to look back and say, how do we do things right? How do we do things wrong? Can we learn from history? And of course we all celebrate and we all think this is a good thing that this province is growing, that this province is growing. We have no doubt about that, that we're all on the same page of that. But what is it that we are really trying to establish by passing this Act?

And I think that we really need to revisit this because we are in some unique circumstances now. I said last night — and I think this is the case, but I think that it could be open for further discussion — that probably the right time to have had a travelling or a public consultation about adding more MLAs would have been last year or the year before because we all knew that the census was going to be done this year, but we all knew as well what the population stats were. There are other ways of doing it through the health records or other very effective means. We have a sense of what our population is. We don't have to wait every five years for the StatsCan report even though we hold that in high regard and even though the last two — the 2001 census we used and the '91 census we used — we've used that as the benchmark.

[16:00]

But I think we could go back and take a look and say, what do the people think? Do they really think that we need to have three more MLAs? Other provinces are wrestling with this. We are not the only province that is growing in population. We know Alberta is. We know BC [British Columbia] is. And what have they done? We know in BC particularly they have had a commission to go out and wrestle with this very, very issue. And what did they find? They said, you know, we see that the ridings are going to get better but the electorate, the people have spoken. What they want are more services.

And as we've talked today, we think about how can we best spend 700,000. Maybe \$700,000 is not a lot of money and when you have a provincial budget of 10, \$11 billion, you might say, well what's 700,000; it's not very much. But for a lot of people who expect some basic services from this government and whether it's a rental supplement or whether today we were talking about how we can help people with intellectual disabilities, it's a lot of money. It's a lot of money, and it's about priorities. How do we set our priorities?

And so, Madam Speaker, I do think I continue to say, and I will say that we need to rethink this Bill. This is not the right thing to do at this time. It's never a wrong thing to think about how we can make sure we effectively represent our people, but to lay it out so prescriptively like this is wrong. It's wrong. We need to set our priorities and especially when the government is sending out messages about austerity and saying, but in this case it doesn't really matter.

You know, the other point I wanted to make in my remarks is that at one point I represented all the high schools in the west side of Saskatoon, west of Idylwyld. I had Bedford, Feehan, and Mount Royal. Now there are two further high schools out there, Bethlehem and Tommy Douglas, and the member from Saskatoon Fairview represents them. But it was an honour to think that I represented all the high-school-aged kids on the west side of Saskatoon. That was a real, real privilege that I could say that was in my riding. Because I really feel and I truly believe, the youth of this province should be counted. They should be counted. And clearly in this legislation where it says that 18 years of age or older shall be, it should be added, so kids who are younger than 17 no longer count. And what are the ramifications for that? I think this is a real problem that we have because this is a real paradigm shift in terms of who do we represent after the elections.

You know, during the writ period we go out there and we go hard in terms of putting out our platform and our policies and we say we think this is the best and we live by the results. We live by the results. We all wish and, you know, we have to live by the results. We wish we could do better, but they are what they are. The electorate has spoken. But the day after the election, I represent everybody in my riding. I don't say to anybody, you're not old enough, you're not old enough, you're not a citizen, you're too old, whatever. I just say, if you live in my riding, I represent you. I represent you, and we represent everybody in Saskatchewan.

And last night as I was talking about this, there's some 240,000 people that we're going to say, no longer are you part of the

formula. And that's truly what it is. And I think that's wrong. That's very wrong. They should be part of that formula. They should be part of that formula.

One of the things we have, one of our greatest challenges in Saskatchewan is that we are a young province, a young province. But that's our greatest strength too. It's our potential. And one of our challenges is how to say to young people, you matter; you matter so much we want you to be part of the democratic process. But we're sending them mixed messages here by saying, you don't really count until you're 18. You don't really count till you're 18. Why is that?

We know seven other provinces count them. We know the federal government, when they set up their electoral boundaries, they count young people. So why is it that we are moving this way? Is it something that people have asked for? And that's what I would like to know. Has there been a consultation process through this that somehow we have missed? Have people been saying, you know what; we really want to change this? Has there been some briefing notes, documents that we could read to say, oh okay, this is what the people of Saskatchewan want? But I don't think there is. I think this is ideologically driven by the Saskatchewan Party who believe somehow this is the right thing to do.

And we had challenges around this last year and the year before, issues around voter ID and the challenges that present to certain demographics and certain communities. I know in my riding that it was harder than ever, harder than ever to get people enumerated. I know people were living there, but it was tough to get people to go and get those people enumerated. And even when they did get enumerated, there were still challenges of getting them across to the voting stations.

And so what we should be trying to do, we should be really trying as hard as we can to get more people engaged in the democratic process, not less people — not less people. And it was interesting, as I said last night — and I think this will be one of the stories that I will hold near and dear — is when I was talking on a panel with young people, recent immigrants, and they were asking about the robo-call scandal at the federal level. And they were saying, so why should we trust politicians? Why should we trust politicians?

And I have to ask you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that that's a tough one to answer when we're putting forth this kind of legislation, when we're putting this kind of legislation out there. Because we're saying, trust us, but we're not going to count you. You don't count any more. And that's simply what this means. It's simply what it means. No longer are we talking about effective representation of everyone, but we're talking about only those who vote. And that's wrong. That's wrong. And I think that's just not why this legislature was set up the way it was. It was for everyone. Everyone who lives in this province should feel like their voice is heard here every day, every day, not just on election day.

And so I'm quite upset about this. And I have to say the other issue that really makes me upset is the fact that there was nothing in the platform, nothing in the platform. We all knew that there was going to be a boundaries commission established because that's out by statute and that would be happening, but

nothing in the Sask Party platform about increasing the number of MLAs or cutting youth out of the formula. Nothing was in the platform, and nothing was in the Throne Speech. All of a sudden that came out of the blue.

And I know the minister often will say that he takes exception to the fact that we say he doesn't consult very often. But clearly, if he has consulted on this, please let us know who he consulted with and who brought these ideas forward. Because I've just got to tell you that this is . . . I just can't believe this is a priority, and so I'd be very curious to know who said, we would rather spend \$700,000 on three new MLAs, and by the way, can you make sure you cut out the young people because we don't think they're part of the system? They're not part of the democratic system.

We think this is clearly, clearly inappropriate and wrong. This represents a fundamental shift in the wrong direction of democracy. And so for those four reasons: no advance notice in terms of the platform or Throne Speech; the increased cost; that you're cutting out 240,000 young people out of the formula — and I mean, I think these young people should be clear that when you're . . . the signal is that you don't matter any more, you don't matter any more; and the lack of consultation, I have some serious reservations.

And I think this is a severely flawed piece of legislation. And I think that, as we've said on this side of the House, that when we are all in favour of effective representation, effective representation, but there are processes to make sure you do that so everybody knows about it, and that you don't get to a point where you go, where did that come from? Where did that come from? Who thought that up? And I have some real questions about that.

So with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is a lot of people that I know want to talk about this. And particularly I know the members opposite raised the whole issue about what happened in the late '80s and about the court challenges. I think that that'll come out. I think there are many people on our side of the House who can speak more eloquently to outlining the events of the late '80s that caused that fiasco, that fiasco of democracy, and how we don't want to recreate that here in Saskatchewan. We have the opportunity to do it right.

And the irony is we have many more people here that've come here because they believe this is the right place to be. This is a good place to be. And we don't want to start it off by doing this wrong. They're looking forward to being voters and members, full members of the Saskatchewan community. And for us to get this wrong now I think would be a travesty. So with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move adjournment of Bill No. 36. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Centre has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 36, *The Constituency Boundaries Amendment Act, 2011*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 6

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. McMillan that **Bill No. 6 — The Miscellaneous Business Statutes Amendment Act, 2011** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise to speak to Bill No. 6, *An Act amending certain Business Statutes to provide for Extra-provincial Matters and Common Business Identifiers*. And this particular piece of legislation is moving in tandem with Bill No. 7, which I will speak to in a while, which is *The Co-operatives Amendment Act*.

And effectively what these Bills intend to accomplish is to make sure that the registries that we have in this province mesh with the registries of the provinces to our west: Alberta and British Columbia. And these are pieces of legislation, these are ideas, these are concepts around making business work better in Western Canada that are the next step on a path that has been followed for many years.

We know that our Western Canadian economy has been tied together in many different ways ever since the Hudson's Bay Company was effectively setting up business right across the West. And when you look at any century or at any decade in the century, there are always steps that are taken that assist with the further development of business.

This particular legislation relates to the fact that when one registers business incorporation documents, which used to be a fairly standard process, lawyers in Saskatchewan would have a number of companies on the shelf, I guess we used to call it. But they had a number on them, and they were basically ready to go. And somebody would come in with a very good idea for a new business, and effectively you would prepare all the documents and file them with the corporations branch and proceed with letting the business go based on the documentation that was there. And there were lots of very or relatively efficient ways of doing that. But one of the jurisdictional limitations was that businesses needed to operate within the confines of the province of Saskatchewan. And if they were going to go and do business in Alberta or in Manitoba or other parts of the country, there needed to be extra-provincial registration of that business or some other form of that.

What this legislation is accommodating is a couple of things. One is that it allows for the registration of a business here in Saskatchewan to be recognized in Alberta and British Columbia immediately. And so it's based on agreements that the minister will enter into with the ministries in the other provinces, and once again, it facilitates the ability to do business.

Mr. Speaker, we think this concept is a good idea and it builds on what we've had before. So when you look and you see what are the steps that are being taken to accomplish this goal, well some of the key ones relate to the sharing of information. When you're in business and you're dealing with another corporation, you like to be able to know that you can get the information

about that corporation quickly and accurately and do it on a very, very regular basis. This document will assist in that process very, very ably. So, those things are positive.

[16:15]

Now one of the interesting aspects of the legislation also emphasizes and talks about the further facilitation of the Information Services Corporation and the types of forms and registries and things that can be entered into that particular system. And I think as the minister stated last December when he was introducing this particular legislation, he talked about how this was part of a broader concept of a business portal that is being managed by the Information Services Corporation in conjunction with other similar corporations.

Reading this and hearing this is very important to me because when I was the minister in charge of the land titles system back in the '90s — it's a little while ago — one of the challenges that was presented to me as a new minister was how do we respond to the long time that it takes for people to get titles registered because realtors were waiting for their fees. People were concerned that their mortgages weren't getting registered in time. And there was a whole concern — that I think a number of times where the concern was raised here in this legislature — about how long it took to register documents in the land titles system.

Looking back, what we all realize was that we were using very effectively a paper system that had been developed in the middle of the 19th century. And it was very accurate. There were not that many errors in the system based on the number of transactions, but it was not meeting the needs of a modern community. So at that point we started on a journey. This is what I'm talking about today. This legislation is part of that continuing journey. But back then we started on a journey to end up with an online or electronic registry in the land titles system.

And there was consultation about how to do this and lots of ideas, and we started that project. And there's no question that it had continual criticism, is one word, but also advice, I guess I would put it, from members of this legislature, from lawyers, from realtors, from all over the place. And it took much effort by many people and many groups to finally get it working in an appropriate way. But I can say that within the sort of timelines of the original plans, maybe extended a couple of years, we had the Information Services Corporation which was handling the land titles system.

As that was further amended and updated and brought into the picture with new technology, new ideas, and with succeeding groups of professional people and managers who all added some very important things on how that system was developed, we now have a very robust land titles system that is based at the Information Services Corporation.

But when we were selecting a name for the corporation, there were some who said, well it should be called the land information system or the land titles system corporation or another name. But there were quite a few of us who said no, this is about information services and that a name like ISC [Information Services Corporation] would work on a broader

basis because there are other places within government and within the community where information is being managed.

And the first step after the land titles was to incorporate the personal property registry which is a registry of securities around movable items in the community — cars and trucks and farm machinery and things like that. So that took place. Then there was a recognition that — and I'm not sure if I got the exact order here — but of a whole number of other areas including the corporate registry, which is what we're talking about here. And then in the next Bill we're talking about the co-operatives registry, that they should be included here.

More recently the whole information management part of the health area has been moved into the Information Services Corporation because many of the skills that have been developed there and the tools that have been developed there are able to be used as you manage the registration of births and deaths and similar types of information.

And so, Mr. Speaker, when we look at this particular Bill and the changes that are made in this particular legislation, it's being changed the way it is to facilitate agreements that will complement this work that's being done at the Information Services Corporation.

I think there are other pieces of legislation on this legislative agenda that actually speak to some of these issues as well. But what we know is that we're getting closer to the original dream that I know I had, and some of the senior people working with me in the Department of Justice had, which was that when you registered your company name, or when you registered your personal name, you'd only have to do that once and it could be used right across all of the registry systems of government. And I note that the minister, on December 13th, talked about the business portal or the entry and the ability to do this within Saskatchewan, but also to tie it in with the federal government's revenue agency and with municipalities. And there are so many things that we can do on this base that make it easier for businesses to get at the task they're to be at, which is to serve people or provide products or do other things that make for a healthy corporation and therefore be part of a healthy economy.

So when we're making changes on legislation like this, we always need to be careful that we're accomplishing what we set out to do. And we have to make sure that we provide the security of legislation which relates to public confidence in that these are the rules and they're not going to change very easily, and then also the regulation side which has aspects of the system that are changed a little more easily, maybe by the minister and Lieutenant Governor in Council.

So some of the questions that we will have, as we move forward with this particular legislation and I think some of my other colleagues will have as we look at this particular piece of legislation, will be whether that common sense balance that was the original idea back in the '90s when we were going forward with the Information Services Corporation, whether that common sense balance between security of the legislation and the flexibility to respond to changing business is here in this particular legislation. And so we'll be watching this and asking questions, and we will be listening for any advice that we get from the community as we proceed forward with this type of

legislation.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I know that some of my other colleagues who are also supportive of making things better for businesses in Saskatchewan and in Western Canada, they also want to make some comments and present some perspectives on this particular legislation. So at this point I will move to adjourn the debate.

The Speaker: — The Opposition Leader has moved adjournment of Bill No. 6, *The Miscellaneous Business Statutes Amendment Act, 2011*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 7

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. McMillan that **Bill No. 7 — The Co-operatives Amendment Act, 2011/Loi de 2011 modifiant la Loi de 1996 sur les coopératives** be now read a second time.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Leader.

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise to speak to Bill 7, *An Act to amend The Co-operatives Act of 1996*. And, Mr. Speaker, as I just indicated a few moments ago when I was talking about Bill No. 6, the Act to amend the legislation with respect to business statutes, I indicated that this particular piece of legislation is complementary to the other piece of legislation. And effectively what this does is take the changes that are set out for special rules for extra-provincial matters that are part of the business corporation legislation and extend it to the co-operatives legislation in this province.

We have a long, proud tradition of co-operatives in the province of Saskatchewan and they have been some of our biggest businesses. And I'm thinking of the Federated Co-operative who have businesses right across Western Canada. They ended up being . . . now using much of the national co-operative legislation to govern what they do. But we also have some fairly large co-operatives that are using this particular legislation and actually will end up having the ability to work right across the provincial borders in Western Canada.

So what this legislation will do is, once again, give the minister the power to enter into agreements with our neighbours to make sure that the co-operatives can compete in the business world with the same kind of ease and facility that the business corporations can right now.

Now when the rules are created by ways of agreement, they end up, in this particular legislation, also having to find that fine balance between legislation and regulation. And so what we will be watching as we proceed with this legislation is to see which areas are justly put into the legislative side versus which areas are put into the regulatory side, which allows for more discretion by the people who are running the overall system of registration. We know that the rules have been working without much of a problem. And clearly the goal with this legislation

would be not to cause or create more problems but to once again facilitate the economic activity which is important to our community.

[16:30]

And once again I note that when the minister introduced this particular legislation last December, he once again referred to the role of ISC, the Information Services Corporation, and their ability to work with similar agencies in Alberta and British Columbia to make sure that the registration that would happen in Saskatchewan can be easily translated into the systems that we have in other provinces.

That probably is not a major issue, because I know ever since we were initially looking at the land titles changes back in 1995 and '96 and '97 that we had much conversation, especially with British Columbia and Alberta, as we developed the registration, or the Information Services Corporation. Because we all had experience with different aspects of the registry, but there were sometimes situations where in British Columbia or Alberta, because of the increased activity in a certain area, they would have had more experience. And by the same token, we in Saskatchewan would have had more experience in registration and the use of the tools in the system.

As it relates to co-operatives, which is the subject of this Bill 7, clearly Saskatchewan has a long history of very strong co-operatives that also have been very effective at providing good advice to governments over the decades to make sure that their business model is strengthened and enhanced and so that it can fit in with what's happening in business in Western Canada. And so, Mr. Speaker, we are once again going to be asking the questions about whether the balance has been appropriately attained in this particular legislation, once again, between that security of having an Act or whether a certain aspect of the legislation can be dealt with in a regulation or maybe even just by an agreement between provincial officials.

And what we all know is that businesses don't like uncertainty. And any time legislation is introduced into the legislature of Saskatchewan or Alberta or British Columbia or anyplace, where uncertainty is created, that's bad for business. And we want to make sure that what's being done in this particular legislation is not bad for business but that it actually is something that will enhance everything that we need to do here in Western Canada.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that security of appropriate regulation and appropriate legislation is a part of our long history here in this province, which I know that we will all celebrate. So I look forward with some of my colleagues to being able to ask some questions about this when we get into committee. But before we get to that point, I know that my colleagues will also want to make some comments about this legislation from some of the other perspectives. I know some have been very strong participants in co-operatives and may end up with some interesting comments about that, and so I think that it's appropriate for me, Mr. Speaker, to adjourn the debate at this time. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The Leader of the Opposition has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 7, *The Co-operatives*

Amendment Act, 2011. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 8

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. McMillan that **Bill No. 8 — *The Land Titles Amendment Act, 2011*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Brotin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure this afternoon, after question period and after listening to adjourned debates for some time, to enter into the discussion on this specific piece of legislation. And as the Clerk's table just read out, this is Bill No. 8, *An Act to amend the Land Titles Act*, Mr. Speaker. For individuals that are following at home, the minister's second reading speech, if they would like to see what he said on this piece of legislation, his speech was provided to the Assembly and to all Saskatchewan people on December 13th, 2011 and it's provided on page 165 of *Hansard*. So I thought I would provide that source there for anyone at home listening and wanting to read what he had to say.

Mr. Speaker, this piece of legislation is somewhat consistent with certain changes that have been occurring in the area of land titles and I suppose also is a connection, though not necessarily directly, to some of the remarks that the Leader of the Official Opposition just made when it comes to talking about the evolution of different systems and processes and how things operate. In this specific situation, it's looking at the issue of *The Land Titles Amendment Act*, and what is being proposed here by the minister is the creation of a document storage library that will reduce the number of duplicate documents that are required to be filed with the registry.

So it's the idea of one central spot, Mr. Speaker, and where these documents would be provided electronically and eliminating some of the duplicate copies that individuals or organizations or businesses, banks, credit unions may have to submit or, as they're retrieving information, as to how they would access the necessary information they need, as they need the information to do with transactions in the economy. And so it's the traditional work that *The Land Titles Amendment Act* has done, but it's proposing a new approach in terms of a central spot where documents are gathered in the library on an electronic basis as opposed to multiple copies being filed.

Mr. Speaker, I suppose this is part of a larger shift that we see within society in terms of moving to systems that can be more efficient and provide better access to individuals. And it's my hope, Mr. Speaker, that this particular system would in fact accomplish that end. There have been instances, Mr. Speaker, where a system has been designed or a stated goal has been provided to the public and the course of events have not panned out exactly as intended. And so with this situation, Mr. Speaker, if this is the stated goal that the minister has provided with respect to establishing a document storage library, I hope that is

in fact the case, and I hope it is successful. And as I said, Mr. Speaker, we have seen this type of development in other areas of society as technology has advanced. There have been more creative or, perhaps, efficient ways to accomplish traditional tasks which can make life easier.

Sometimes changes also make life more difficult in certain ways, in certain respects. And sometimes they can be more expensive as well. But we have seen changes, and one example I can think of, Mr. Speaker, is the advent of electronic medical records and electronic health record within the realm of health care and how many physicians' offices, for example, are making the shift and the transition to electronic medical records, and how that information then can be better shared within an electronic health record so that the quality of care provided to individuals remains high, and that when practitioners, health care deliverers, need information they can have access to. And the patient has better access to that information and the sharing of that information within the understandings of privacy protection.

Now in this situation, Mr. Speaker, it's not in the realm of health care, but it is within the realm of business transactions. So as individuals, as businesses, as the people involved with having an interest in acquiring information around land titles do their work, I would take it that it's the hope of the minister that this change, this development of the storage library, will better facilitate the work that they want to accomplish.

As with any type of change when we do see different developments, there are other questions that do need to be asked. With this change, I would be curious about how much it will cost, what type of technology is going to be used, and where that technology will be obtained — whether a system is being designed from scratch or whether a system will be borrowed from other jurisdictions perhaps or other efforts that the land titles individuals have already been developing and pursuing. That would be interesting and some questions that I would be interested in knowing, basically how Information Services Corporation intends to accomplish this objective in developing the storage library.

And it would be interesting, Mr. Speaker, to have a bit more detail in the minister's second reading speech to discuss how he thinks this will affect the service and the quality of service that individuals receive when accessing the land titles — how much faster it will be, what sort of problems it will be addressing, and what are the expectations the people can see coming in hopefully the near future.

When receiving services, Mr. Speaker, there are also, of course, fees attached and associated with the endeavour. And I think it's important for those that have requested this change, as the minister would suggest in some of the discussions that have occurred, if the possible expenses and costs associated with this change, how those costs will be paid for and whether the user can expect a significant increase in service charges or whether it will be covered or whether it will be . . . just basically what the terms are as to how the individuals will access land titles information in order to conduct business and do the necessary work that they need to do.

So, Mr. Speaker, of course access to land titles and the work

that the Information Services Corporation provides of course is very important because it facilitates the work that happens in the economy. So when individuals want to pursue a transaction, it's necessary that they have the timely and appropriate access to the information they need to conduct that transaction. It's my hope, Mr. Speaker, that the creation of this document storage library will in fact accomplish that goal and that it will be done on a fairly speedy basis and that the cost associated with this change would not be unreasonable for the people requesting the change and the people that will be accessing the service in the long run.

So those are some of the greater questions and details that I personally have when we look at this particular piece of legislation. And as I said before, it's Bill No. 8, *The Land Titles Amendment Act, 2011*. And I know, Mr. Speaker, there may be others on this side of the House. I know a few of my colleagues have already had the opportunity to speak to this Bill, but I know there may be some others because the concerns and the questions that I had, Mr. Speaker, I know may be echoed by other members on the opposition side.

And, Mr. Speaker, in addition to the comments and possible concerns that I raised, there may be additional questions and concerns that my colleagues will have. And I think it's appropriate that we have the opportunity for members on this side of the House to ask the questions that are necessary and the questions that the Saskatchewan public would like us to ask. So on that note, Mr. Speaker, I would move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 8, *The Land Titles Amendment Act* as I look forward to colleagues weighing in on this issue. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The member for Saskatoon Massey Place has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 8, *The Land Titles Amendment Act, 2011*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

[16:45]

Bill No. 9

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Hutchinson that **Bill No. 9 — The Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation Amendment Act, 2011** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Brotin: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Having just spoken to the previous Bill, Bill No. 8, it's still just as much of a pleasure to have the opportunity to speak to Bill No. 9, *The Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation Amendment Act, 2011*.

This piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, addresses how, it addresses how the resources that are earned through the casino operations in Regina and Moose Jaw, how those resources are spent. But more importantly, Mr. Speaker, it also addresses how the decisions around funding and the decisions around the

governance of the CIF — which is the Community Initiatives Fund — it details how in fact the governance of the CIF is to occur, as well as stating more clearly in a legislative sense the objectives and clearing up a few other matters that I will get into during this discussion of Bill No. 9, Mr. Speaker.

We do know that the Community Initiatives Fund, as I just said, is a fund that is created through profits from the casino operations in Moose Jaw and Regina. And it's through these profits, Mr. Speaker, that a number of programs and activities within the province of Saskatchewan are funded. And I think that's an important thing to realize, that not everyone on the street would probably know what the Community Initiatives Fund is and where the money comes from, but most people on the street would have a sense for some sort of, would have an idea of the programs and the services that are provided through CIF dollars.

And so I think that's an important point. And I state it, Mr. Speaker, because while not every citizen would know the fine detail about the fund, it shows the importance of the programs and the services that are provided through the CIF. And as the minister states in the second reading speech . . . And I'd like to thank the officials who helped with the drafting of the minister's remarks on his second reading speech which occurred December 12th, 2011, for clearly outlining what the objectives of this piece of legislation are. That is appreciated.

What the objectives of . . . or the different streams within the CIF as identified by the minister, and I think it's important to reiterate so that listeners at home have a sense of what the CIF actually does, the funds are used for: (1) community grants for human development; (2) youth leadership and Aboriginal inclusion, including the urban Aboriginal community grant program; (3) physical activity, including Saskatchewan in Motion; (4) problem gambling and mitigation payment; and (5) community vitality program which includes small capital investments and milestone community celebrations.

So, Mr. Speaker, the idea here that the fund's being used, really it's a fairly wide range, things like supporting human development and different programs that can be delivered in communities that individuals or groups can apply to receive funding for. Different projects: youth leadership and Aboriginal inclusion, including urban Aboriginal community which of course is a major consideration and ought to be a major priority for all members of the House, especially members opposite; special or unique endeavours to do with In Motion and people living healthier lives, which is a very important thing, also something that ought to be a top priority for the provincial government. Problem gambling and mitigation. We have seen throughout the city, I noticed the campaign under way right now about gambling myths and about the billboards that are around the province, and while gambling and gaming is legal, we know that there are also, there can be problems associated with it and it's appropriate that steps be taken in order to provide the types of services to people that may be in need of them.

And also the small capital investments in milestone community celebrations. I guess in the past few years or in the next few years, they're having quite a few centennial celebrations for different buildings, for different towns, for different farms, all

types of different celebrations as it comes around. We're around the 100-year mark from the start of a number of different projects going on in the province, and I think it is appropriate that we recognize and promote our history, so I'm pleased to see that the Community Initiatives Fund still maintains levels of funding for certain types of milestone markers because, as I said before when I was speaking yesterday about the community and development amendment Act, people in Saskatchewan, we are very proud of where we are from and the communities that we represent, and it's important that, I think, that we recognize the historical milestones that are reached.

As the minister states in his second reading speech, the fund is managed by an arm's-length, government appointed board whose members all have extensive experience as community volunteers. So it is also important, Mr. Speaker, that the board involved with the CIF have roots in the community and that individuals know what in fact is going on.

Well a major section of what this legislation is addressing, Mr. Speaker, is in the area of governance. And as the minister states, there was a number of clarifications that this piece of legislation is seeking to identify in terms of how the trustees and the boards should be operating. So it's the normal things about a board, but it's important to have the language and the policy around boards to be clearly stated. So it does touch on things such as the appointment of the board of trustees, the establishment of quorum, the designation of Chair and Vice-Chair, payments that are associated, and also the ability to engage technical expertise.

So I find it interesting that this minister would include technical expertise in the legislation because everyone in the legislature knows he is a very strong proponent of technology and gadgets and gizmos, as he has promoted, and I also know his staff members are strong promoters of technology and being teched up. So it's no surprise that the minister has chosen to include aspects of technical expertise in this legislation. I don't know if he's referring to himself in providing that technical expertise, or his direct staff, but it is good that technical expertise is included in the changes in this piece of legislation here.

And I am pleased that the minister is able to introduce this piece of legislation because if there is a cabinet shuffle in the spring, I think he may not be the minister for this ministry any longer. I don't know. It's possible that he could be moved to the ITO [Information Technology Office] or some other technical ministry, but I guess we will see. And it's obviously not up to me to determine where the minister may go in the coming months.

But based on this piece of legislation, I am pleased that he did include technical expertise as one of the components of the legislation. And I think when we look at different pieces of legislation, we should examine whether or not, whether or not it is teched up as it ought to be.

So that is some of the topics that are covered in this piece of legislation on governance. There are also a number of amendments that address four main issues as the minister identified in his speech. One clearly states that the trustees have . . . Well basically the one main goal identified is that the board be able to hire the individuals needed for the expertise. While

trustees have skill and have that community background, they may not have all of that expertise that is needed, so there may be occasions when someone needs to be hired.

Second, also important for people that are willing to serve on boards, it's important that the necessary liability protection be there, and this enhances that and improves that. And I think that's a good thing. If someone is willing to serve as a trustee, it's only appropriate that it explicitly be covered in the legislation that that person has all of the normal responsibilities of being a trustee but also the protection and the benefit that is necessary.

Third, this piece of legislation tightens up some of the stewardship and oversight responsibility for the CIF. And by this what the minister stated in his second reading speech is that the reporting relationship with the fund is not only supported by an MOU [memorandum of understanding] that is not legally binding, but also that it is necessary for the minister to have stewardship and oversight responsibility over the Community Initiatives Fund. So again it's clearly stating and providing an understanding as to what the relationship is between the minister and the CIF. And I think it's appropriate that that sort of explanation is provided.

And fourth, Mr. Speaker, the amendment will update and modernize the wording of the granting provision. The modernized wording will ensure the board members are able to fulfill their mandate to ensure that Saskatchewan communities receive tangible benefits from casino profits. So this is the notion, Mr. Speaker, that it's only appropriate as, in the same way as I spoke to the previous Bill where we look at modernization of technology to provide better services through a common library, we also know that changes occur within society and within programming and that there needs to be changes to language. And so if the language can be modernized to better reflect what the duties and the job and the roles are of the different individuals from minister to trustee to staff, I think that is an important and a very good thing.

So, Mr. Speaker, in the few brief moments I've had on Bill No. 9, I've been able to underscore a number of important things. The one message that I attempted to deliver was that the profits that are delivered to the Community Initiatives Fund, they come from the casinos in Regina and Moose Jaw, and they provide important services to Saskatchewan people — services in developing our youth, services in providing culture, services in some of the problems associated with gambling. I think that is important and necessary not to overlook.

But, Mr. Speaker, anything that develops also requires updating. It requires that changes in governance be brought up to speed to best reflect the reality of 2012. It requires that the language around the role of the board and the trustees be current and that full protection to individuals be provided. I think that is very important as well, as well as, Mr. Speaker, tightening up that relationship, as I stated earlier on. Sometimes over time patterns of behaviour can develop through convention. So when we have the opportunity as legislators to look back at a piece of legislation and see how can this be better clearly detailed so that there's less ambiguity and uncertainty as to what the roles are and who is supposed to perform those roles, I do, Mr. Speaker, think that is a positive development.

So again, for the listeners at home, the piece of legislation that I've been speaking to today is Bill No. 9, and that piece of legislation is *The Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation Amendment Act*. So it's an amendment to an existing piece of legislation, an existing Act. The minister has brought forward some changes focusing on a number of things including technology. And, Mr. Speaker, I've identified some of the purposes of the CIF and some of the changes that have occurred. And I think some of them, it sounds as though many of the changes are positive. I hope everything is as it appears and that there are no problems with what the minister has put forward and there's nothing hidden in the fine print, so to speak.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I thank members for having the opportunity to speak to this important piece of legislation. And I do in fact look forward to other people on our side of the House who may want to weigh in and talk on this issue. And you know, if individuals at home were listening and watching and had some questions, most certainly they can contact me via Twitter. They can contact me through my email address, or they can contact me through a handwritten note if they really want to. But I think the minister's preference would be that they send me a tweet, so I would encourage listeners at home to do that.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would move to adjourn debate on this piece of legislation. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The member for Saskatoon Massey Place has moved adjournment of Bill No. 9, *The Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation Amendment Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that this House do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The House is now adjourned until Thursday morning at 10 a.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 16:58.]

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