



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

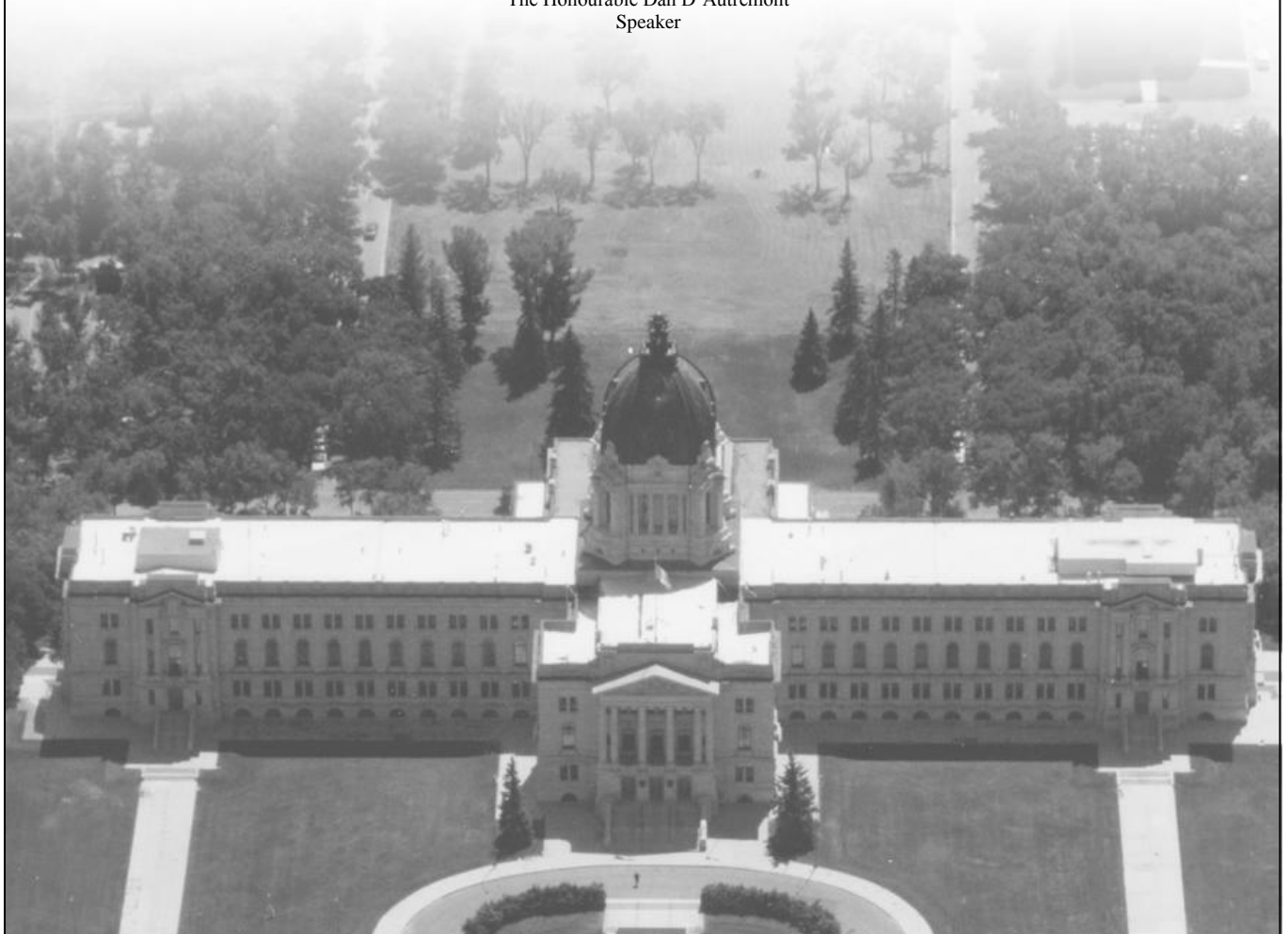
of the

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
Broten, Cam	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Campeau, Jennifer	SP	Saskatoon Fairview
Chartier, Danielle	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
Cox, Herb	SP	The Battlefords
D’Autremont, Hon. Dan	SP	Cannington
Docherty, Mark	SP	Regina Coronation Park
Doherty, Kevin	SP	Regina Northeast
Doke, Larry	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
Draude, Hon. June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Duncan, Hon. Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Hon. Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
Harpauer, Hon. Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harrison, Hon. Jeremy	SP	Meadow Lake
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Nancy	SP	Martensville
Hickie, Hon. Darryl	SP	Prince Albert Carlton
Hutchinson, Hon. Bill	SP	Regina South
Huyghebaert, Hon. D.F. (Yogi)	SP	Wood River
Jurgens, Victoria	SP	Prince Albert Northcote
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Krawetz, Hon. Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
Lawrence, Greg	SP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Makowsky, Gene	SP	Regina Dewdney
Marchuk, Russ	SP	Regina Douglas Park
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMillan, Hon. Tim	SP	Lloydminster
McMorris, Hon. Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Merriman, Paul	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Michelson, Warren	SP	Moose Jaw North
Moe, Scott	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Morgan, Hon. Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Norris, Hon. Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
Ottenbreit, Greg	SP	Yorkton
Parent, Roger	SP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Phillips, Kevin	SP	Melfort
Reiter, Hon. Jim	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Ross, Hon. Laura	SP	Regina Qu’Appelle Valley
Sproule, Cathy	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Steinley, Warren	SP	Regina Walsh Acres
Stewart, Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Tell, Christine	SP	Regina Wascana Plains
Tochor, Corey	SP	Saskatoon Eastview
Toth, Don	SP	Moosomin
Vermette, Doyle	NDP	Cumberland
Wall, Hon. Brad	SP	Swift Current
Weekes, Randy	SP	Biggar
Wilson, Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Wyant, Gordon	SP	Saskatoon Northwest

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, I have the honour of introducing two very special gentlemen today. They are making an impact in our province and in Regina. Joining us today from Street Culture project is CEO [chief executive officer] Kim Sutherland and board member Dustin Browne.

Street Culture Kidz is a non-profit, charitable organization that mentors and supports our young people. They're using social entrepreneurship and positive adult role models to make a difference.

This morning I had a chance to go down to Street Culture Kidz and take part in the grand opening of the emergency youth shelter, the first one in the province. I always enjoy going out and meeting with the young people and with a group of people who are so dedicated and so passionate at helping our young people. I want to thank you for all the work you're doing. And on behalf of the province and of the legislature, welcome to your legislature.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the official opposition, I'd like to join with the minister in welcoming Dustin and Kim to their Legislative Assembly. I just want to thank them for all the work that they do in ensuring that young people have the supports they need to live the best possible lives. So thank you for all the work that you do.

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

Mr. Docherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, it is with great pleasure that I introduce to this Assembly representatives from the North Central Family Centre as they celebrate their 10th anniversary this year. So in no particular order: Sandy Wankel, the founder and executive director; Ivan Amichand; Jennifer Ewenin; Shyanne Obey, Mel Burton, Ron Lawson, and Ben Hernando.

North Central Family Centre is a registered non-profit organization which delivers a wide range of programs and activities to inner-city children, youth, families, and seniors, with a goal of improving their quality of life.

And while I'm standing, Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to let everyone know in the Assembly that it is Sandy's birthday today. Happy birthday, Sandy. Happy birthday, Sandy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to join with the member from Regina Coronation Park in welcoming, particularly, our guests from North Central Family Centre. I'm surprised you don't have a birthday cake up there with you with 10 candles glowing bright, but certainly we're neighbours over on 5th Avenue and North Central as many folks will know, Mr. Speaker. And it's good to see some great neighbours from North Central here that do a lot of good work all the year through. And the fact that you even brought the king of Queen Street, Ron Lawson, along with you, that's a great thing to see as well.

But congratulations, happy birthday, and here's to many more years of good work for the people of North Central and Regina. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Advanced Education, Employment and Immigration.

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, Mr. Speaker, to all members of the Assembly, I'd like to introduce a group of young leaders from the University of Saskatchewan who are assembled in your gallery this afternoon. I'd like to begin with the executive of a group called Women in the Legislature. And I'll start with Heather Franklin, the executive coordinator and fourth year political science student. Then we'll go to Shira Fenyes, the executive coordinator and again a fourth year political science student; Marie Dumont, executive board member, a fourth year international studies student; Paula Steckler, director of logistics and public affairs, which I know have been taxed a little bit just making the journey here today, so I appreciate all the work that's gone into that; Bryn Rees, the director of transportation, and again Bryn, we know how busy you've been to make this possible; Sara Waldbillig, the director of operations and a third year political science student.

And there are other colleagues that I will introduce: Erica Lee, Danielle Lingelbach, Jenna Clark, Kendal Durocher, Tara Weisgerber, Kahmaria Pingue, Jayne Walters, Samantha Gauvin, Shannon McAvoy, Amanda Bestvater, Brogan Waldner, Lisa Skomoroski, Alanna Carlson, and Brynn Harris.

And we're delighted to be able to welcome these leaders from the University of Saskatchewan into their legislature. And I sense, Mr. Speaker, not only are they engaged and enthusiastic about the work that's under way, but I sense in the not too distant future, many of them may be joining us down here on this floor here because they are so capable and competent in the work that they do, not just in their studies but right across our broad community.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I'll ask all members to join me in welcoming these fine young leaders to their legislature.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join the

minister in welcoming the absolutely amazing group of young women from Women in the Legislature here today.

Some of us — my colleague from Saskatoon Nutana, my colleague from Saskatoon Fairview, and my colleague from Kelvington-Wadena — had the opportunity to participate in a panel discussion today about women and politics and our experience here in this place. So I hope that you got as much out of it as we did. It's great to have . . . that it was a dialogue back and forth. And, like the minister said, I do look forward to seeing some of you, many of you, on the floor of this legislature at some point in the future.

So with that, I'd ask all our colleagues, I ask all my colleagues to join us in welcoming this group of amazing young women to their Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you, to the members of the Assembly, three gentlemen in the west gallery, Mr. Speaker. I'd ask them to wave when I introduce them. Ron Risling is the administrator of the RM [rural municipality] of Saltcoats — Ron and I worked together when I was reeve out there — and Terry Hall and Rob Kirkham who are also councillors in the RM of Saltcoats. And I would ask everyone to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all members of the legislature, I'd like to introduce a class of students who are seated in your gallery. These are 12 grade 11 students who are part of the Regina Public School Division Trek School. This school is located at Sheldon Williams when they happen to be in town, but this course allows people to study biology, geography, social studies, phys ed, and communications media in a disciplinary fashion, and they spend at least 25 nights camping throughout the province as part of the course.

So I welcome all of these students along with their teachers, Karen McIver and Tiffany Lix. I ask all members to welcome them.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Highways and Infrastructure.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with the Minister of Agriculture in welcoming the gentlemen from Saltcoats, specifically Ron Risling. I've known Ron for many years. We grew up together. Well, I grew up; the verdict's still out on Ron. But, Mr. Speaker, we've been best friends for forever, went into the same line of work before I went into politics. It's great to see them in the Assembly, and I look forward to chatting with them later. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Yes, Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, I'd like to invite and take an opportunity to welcome three

guests that are here from PAGC [Prince Albert Grand Council]: Vice-chief Brian Hardlotte, give us a wave. Thank you, Brian. Robin McLeod is the executive assistant, and Richard Kent who's the commissioner of emergency and protective services with PAGC.

It is an opportunity to welcome leaders that come here and people who help the First Nations community. And it is an honour to have them coming from the Cumberland constituency and the job that they do. They have a lot of work to do. They are very professional. They make sure they speak for the people that they represent. And I just want to say to them, it is an honour to welcome you to your legislative . . . And again, many more meetings, successful meetings that you have. And again I ask all member to join them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed a pleasure to join with the member opposite and welcome the group from the Prince Albert Grand Council to their Legislative Assembly.

And may I, Mr. Speaker, just say how proud we are to work with First Nations leaders across this province in making sure that they participate in the very bright future that Saskatchewan has. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I too want to join in on the introduction and welcome our special guests from the northern part of Saskatchewan. And I want to point out, of course I want to recognize Mr. Kent. And more so I want to say a special hello to Robin and to Brian.

Robin used to be quite a volleyball player, as well as Vice-chief Brian Hardlotte. They were both very good volleyball players. And you should know that Brian's family, his brother Gordon, Leonard, and that they're all great volleyball players. And for the record, Stanley Mission was an impressive team. The only problem they had was they had this town called Ile-a-la-Crosse that had the Ile-a-la-Crosse Halfsons, and then later the Ile-a-la-Crosse Huskies. And they just couldn't get past that team, Mr. Speaker. And I want to say I'm very proud to have played against them, and to point out that it's always nice to see them in a different life. But in an earlier life, playing volleyball against Stanley Mission was always exciting. And I welcome these two great friends and great families from the Stanley Mission area, and tēniki. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling for protection for late-night retail workers by passing Jimmy's law. We know 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 know British Columbia and other provinces have brought in

several safety precautions through law, including a requirement that workers cannot be alone during late-night, early morning hours. And if they are required to work, there must be protective barriers such as locked doors and protective glass.

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.

And, Mr. Speaker, the people signing this petition come from Canora, Sturgis, Norquay, Kamsack, and Saskatoon. I do so present. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for 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 our province. 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 and 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 citizens of Weyburn and 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 neighbourhoods of Dundonald and Hampton Village. And the petition is about the need for a 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.

[13:45]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cumberland.

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

The prayer reads:

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

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

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Women in the Legislature

Ms. Campeau: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to highlight a very important initiative which I had the pleasure of being a participant in, the Women in the Legislature program.

Women in the Legislature is a student-led, non-partisan, interdisciplinary organization that strives to bring awareness regarding the under-representation of women in politics and to provide women with real life experience and the motivation to get informed and involved. The Women in the Legislature program strives to inspire in women an interest in governance and encourages them to become active in political life.

Today's event, being held here in the Legislative Building, consists of multiple panel discussions and networking opportunities for 20 female undergraduates, students from the University of Saskatchewan. Throughout the day, these students will partake in these interactive programs with women of political leadership, allowing them an opportunity to talk with female MLAs [Members of the Legislative Assembly] and civil servants and to learn about the Saskatchewan political system through discussion and direct observation.

This program also provides an excellent opportunity for women

in politics and in administration to share their personal experiences and to give the students an opportunity to better understand the roles of female politicians.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members of this House congratulate the student organizers of this fantastic initiative and thank the participants for acting on their interest in the political system. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the aftermath of every election in our time, two observations are made without fail: neither women nor young people are taking part in our political process to the extent they should be. Last week, International Women's Day gave us further cause to consider the vast, untapped resource this province has in its young women, and challenged us all to work to ensure they know they have a place in our legislature.

Today I'm so pleased to say that the students of our province are responding to that call. Born from a conversation over a cup of coffee, the group Women in the Legislature has emerged as a grassroots effort to engage young women in politics. WiL [Women in the Legislature] is a non-partisan organization from the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] whose mission is to open the eyes of young women to the opportunities in elected life. Using positive messaging, the group's aim is to inspire their peers on campus to consider a future as an elected official.

At their inaugural event, a panel discussion at Louis' pub, the attendance was so positive that students were cramming the floors just to take part. I had another great event here, or a great day today.

University students at the launch of their careers are in a uniquely flexible position to approach a life in public service. Although many years may pass before a decision is made to run for office, their involvement today plants a seed for tomorrow. The WiL group gives us hope that more young women will see elected life as a viable option and will engage with the system they too often don't consider for a large number of reasons.

As MLAs, it is our responsibility to respond to these young women and ensure they know this legislature is a place for them. I ask all members to join me in applauding the efforts of this group and saying to the young women of Saskatchewan, we want you here and we need you here. Thank you.

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

Heritage Month in Moose Jaw

Mr. Michelson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Heritage Month has great significance for the city of Moose Jaw with its heritage theme throughout the downtown area. In February, the Moose Jaw heritage committee paid a special tribute to the Moose Jaw Library in recognition of 100 years of service. Back in 1912, city council made a request to the Carnegie Foundation for \$50,000 to build a new library but were turned down, stating that the city was too small for such an elaborate sum. Understanding the benefits of the public library providing

access to information, culture, and educational materials, city council of the day, with great foresight, made a decision to construct a new library at double the cost — \$110,000.

The Moose Jaw library is uniquely designed in 15th century Italian Renaissance architecture featuring a marble rotunda, stained glass dome, and a glass floor. The library contains more marble than any other Saskatchewan building, except for the Saskatchewan Legislative Building here in the capital city of course.

In 1967 the structure was expanded to include the National Exhibition centre, the forerunner of the Moose Jaw museum and art gallery. Today the library is a designated heritage building. It has been referred to as the jewel of the park in the centre of Crescent Park in downtown Moose Jaw. Its distinctive design and pleasing blends of old and new agricultural features emphasize practical and efficient use.

Congratulations to the Moose Jaw heritage committee for their presentation and preservation of this unique heritage structure, the Moose Jaw Public Library. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

5 Days for the Homeless

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to recognize the tremendous work of students from the University of Regina who kicked off their 5 Days for the Homeless campaign on Monday. The University of Regina students joined the 5 Days for the Homeless campaign in 2009, and over the last two years they have raised over \$37,000 and collected a significant amount of non-monetary donations such as clothing and food for Carmichael Outreach.

The students are raising awareness about the point six per cent vacancy rate in Regina for rental housing and the housing crisis in general, Mr. Speaker. Their goal is to raise awareness and funds for the issue of homelessness generally in Regina and across Canada.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, the students have selected Carmichael Outreach as the fundraiser beneficiary. Carmichael Outreach is a volunteer-driven, non-profit organization that provides everything from clothing, food, and household goods to harm-reduction services, health education, and counselling referrals. No fees are charged, and their door is open to anyone needing assistance. They offer various services from needle exchange, immunization, and food recovery programs to providing resources for children, and an on-site nurse.

Mr. Speaker, during the five-day campaign, students from across the country will be making personal sacrifices in order to make their community a better place and to raise awareness. Students will forego their comforts and live outside on campus for five full days.

I ask all members to join me in recognizing this great cause. And we wish the students warm weather and the best of luck as they advocate for those who, far too often, have no voice. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Moosomin.

Saskatchewan Agriculture

Mr. Toth: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to rise today and speak about a new milestone in Saskatchewan agriculture.

We have a strong history of agriculture in our province, from our First Nations and pioneering families to our modern farmers and ranchers today. Agriculture remains the backbone of our province and a valuable part of our economy.

Mr. Speaker, today is another proud day for Saskatchewan agriculture. For the first time, Saskatchewan has exceeded \$10 billion in agricultural food exports and has now surpassed Ontario as the top agri-food exporting province in Canada. Since 2007, agri-food exports have increased from 6 billion to 10 billion and our diversified markets send Saskatchewan agriculture products not just to the US [United States] but to nations around the globe. Our agri-food export leader is canola seed, which has increased by 250 per cent since 2007. Other top exports include canola oil and wheat.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan farmers and ranchers consistently produce safe, reliable agriculture products to feed the world's growing population. Their hard work, dedication, and efforts have built this province and the Saskatchewan advantage we all enjoy today. I would like to congratulate all producers in our province on this accomplishment and thank them for all their contributions to our province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

2012 Saskatchewan Healthcare Excellence Awards

Mr. Marchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to commend those recognized on March the 10th at the Saskatchewan Healthcare Excellence Awards held in Regina. The Saskatchewan Healthcare Excellence Awards have been held annually for the last 12 years and serve as a fundraiser to support programs and services of AIDS Programs South Saskatchewan. This organization has been in existence for 26 years helping HIV/AIDS [human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome] and hepatitis C patients with educational and preventative life skills programming.

Sixteen finalists attended the awards ceremony and nine winners were announced. The winners: Dr. Chang, plastic surgery; Dr. Moustapha, cardiology; and Betty McKenna, elder in residence from Regina; Sherri Doel, AIDS Saskatoon; Sharon Monseler, registered nurse in the Saskatchewan epilepsy program from Saskatoon; Yorkton's Rural West primary care team; Rosetown's Debbie McCulloch, pharmacist; and Prince Albert's Grant Gustafson of the SHARE [self help and recreational education] program. These health care providers recognized have demonstrated commitment, passion, and dedication to their work and to the patients of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to, especially like to recognize Dr. Roberta McKay, Regina Douglas Park constituent. Dr. McKay

grew up on the 23 block of Atkinson Street in Regina Douglas Park, and today her practice is located on College Avenue in the historic Bronfman house, again in Douglas Park. She has never really left. Dr. McKay believes in the need to recognize the great work of those who deliver health care in our province and became the founding sponsor of the Saskatchewan Healthcare Excellence Awards.

I would like to ask all members to join me in recognizing all health care professionals and, in particular, those who were recognized at the SHEA [Saskatchewan Healthcare Excellence Awards] awards on Saturday. Thank you.

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

Saskatchewan Cross Country Skiing Association Annual Provincial Competition

Mr. Moe: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on March 10th and 11th, the Saskatchewan Cross Country Skiing Association held their annual provincial competition. This year's event was hosted by the Sturgeon River Nordic Club at the home of Bill and Joan Jefferies.

Officials Dan Brisbin and Kathryn Theede from Crown Country Saskatchewan were in attendance, as was James Cunningham, the high performance system coordinator with Cross Country Canada. Along with competition awards there was additional provincial recognition to Jeff Whiting for coaching dedication.

Competing this weekend was Colette Bourgonje, a six-time winter Paralympian, who has three silver and three bronze medals. At the 2010 Vancouver Paralympics, she was the recipient of the Whang Young Dai Achievement Award. This solid gold medal recognizes individuals who conquer adversity through pursuit.

Most recently, Colette won a gold medal at the 2011 Para-Nordic World Championships in Russia. This past weekend, Colette was also recognized as a finalist for the Saskatchewan Sport Female Athlete of the Year.

This past weekend's event was fortunate to have fabulous weather and snow conditions. There was over 140 participants for the two-day competitive event, ranging in age from 7 years old to over 60 years of age, as well as three para-nordic competitors. The attendance by participants, coaches, and volunteers at this year's provincial competition bodes well for the future of cross-country skiing in this province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Possible Takeover of Grain Marketing Company

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday I asked a serious question about strategic assets that are in the national interest to protect, and the Premier was flippant in his answer. If the Premier had done his homework over the last 15 months, he would have had a better answer.

My question to the Premier: common sense tells us if the potash used to grow food is a strategic asset, how can the food we grow not be a strategic asset as well?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, first of all we're talking about, potentially talking about a grain handling company. But even with that set aside, Mr. Speaker, in the case of potash, 53 per cent of the world's potash exists in this province. And while we are prolific agricultural producers, it's also produced across the country. And again I repeat, this is the rumours around a grain handling company.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's fair to say that, with respect to this potential takeover, there are competitive strategic interests that this province, and I think the Dominion of Canada, will be wanting to watch carefully if indeed, if indeed one of the proponents of the takeover group, if there ever is one, is a major grain handler with a presence in our country today. It'll go to the issue of competition over which the federal government has jurisdiction in very specific rules. And it'll go to the interests of prairie farmers, including those in the province who always want competition in terms of those who are able to purchase their grain; by the way, competition that will now be available to them as a result of changes to the Wheat Board.

Mr. Speaker, this will factor into our own analysis, if there ever is a takeover. It'll be as deliberate as the potash analysis was, Mr. Speaker, and we will come to a conclusion in the best interests of Saskatchewan people.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, a headline in yesterday's *Globe and Mail* read, "Ottawa indicates it's open to foreign bid for Viterra." My question to the Premier: since Ottawa is open to foreign bids for Viterra, has he now talked to the Prime Minister?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — The federal government was open to foreign bids for the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan. And when that bid was made, it initiated the Investment Canada review process — a review process, I would say, Mr. Speaker, that was led by this province actually, in the work that we set out to do with the teams we've put in place and the information we sourced from outside of government.

And, Mr. Speaker, when the province of Saskatchewan came forward with, I think, a very considered position — one that was made after a lot of deliberation, one that was made after there was actually a takeover proposal on the table to analyze — that informed the national discussion. Mr. Speaker, this province led on that issue in terms of protecting the interests and a champion in the case of potash. Mr. Speaker, we would look to take that same role in analyzing any potential takeover with respect to Viterra.

[14:00]

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned yesterday, there was a fair amount of waffling that went on before the decision of the Premier.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the interest in Viterra is a direct result of the destruction of the Canadian Wheat Board. The Premier supported the axing of the Wheat Board. Viterra CEO Mayo Schmidt, says that the additional market share coming from the dismantling of the Canadian Wheat Board will add an additional \$40 to \$50 million per year to Viterra's operating earnings by the year 2014. My question to the Premier is this: can he tell us what his advisors told him would happen to companies like Viterra before he decided to support the destruction of the Wheat Board?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, for all their support of the Wheat Board, they sure don't have a lot of faith in the Wheat Board. The Wheat Board's not destroyed. The Wheat Board can now use what it claims to be a very large base of prairie farmers to build itself into a private, competitive marketing company. They can now get into non-board grains. They can sell canola. They can sell flax. They can sell mustard seed, Mr. Speaker.

They'll have competition, Mr. Speaker, and do you know who supports that? Farmers that this government talks to, farmers that this government represents, Mr. Speaker, understand the importance of choice. Mr. Speaker, in this industry. I think it's reasonable for farmers who own the land and spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on the inputs to have a choice in how they market their grain, Mr. Speaker. We will support that 10 times out of 10.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, this is a serious matter to farmers. It's a serious matter to the future of our province. And, Mr. Speaker, we are in a situation where the Premier and his colleagues have allowed their ideology to override common sense. The federal Minister of Industry is saying that they are open to a foreign bid for Viterra. A British newspaper is reporting that Glencore made a \$5.4 billion bid for Viterra. Viterra has confirmed that it's received expressions of interest from third parties. The sale of Viterra is a hot issue at the SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] convention today. There is every indication that a bid has come forward.

My question to the Premier: why is he dragging his feet? Why is he not assessing the effects of the sale of Viterra to a foreign company, and what those effects will be on Saskatchewan? What's he waiting for?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, we're waiting for an actual takeover bid. That's what we're waiting for. That was exactly what we waited for in the case of PotashCorp and BHP. Mr. Speaker, we hear that member and now another member from his feet talking about we're waiting too long, there was waffling in the case of the potash takeover.

Mr. Speaker, as soon as we received word on that, I sought some advice from former premiers in this province, from former premiers from across the country. Their advice was pretty clear. Their advice was be deliberate. Assemble a team within your government, seek outside information so that you could make the best possible case on behalf of the interests of the people of Saskatchewan. Don't rush, they said. Get it right. Mr. Speaker, those premiers included Premier Peter Lougheed. They included, Mr. Speaker, former Premier Roy Romanow. Mr. Speaker, I hope members opposite will forgive me if I defer to their advice over theirs.

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

Human Rights Commission

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last year there were sweeping changes to the Saskatchewan human rights legislation. A key piece was the dismantling of the Saskatchewan Human Rights Tribunal. One of the selling points the government used to get rid of the tribunal was that everyone deserved their day in court, that complainants deserved to have their complaint heard before a judge.

Trouble is, the complainant has to get through the gatekeeper, in this case the Chief Commissioner, before the commission will advance their case to the court. And these court cases are expensive. We've learned that the commission's two in-house counsel are retiring at the end of this month, leaving no knowledgeable experts in the area of human rights law within the commission. In the interim, the commissioner has engaged outside lawyers who have represented pro-employer respondents in hearings.

My question to the minister: how many cases has the Chief Commissioner moved forward to the courts since the legislation was changed, and how are the skyrocketing costs of litigation going to be managed?

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Under the direction of Chief Commissioner Arnot, we have moved our commission to probably the head of the pack in our country. Mr. Speaker, there are four pillars that Chief Arnot brought forward. Those include referral to the Court of Queen's Bench; systemic advocacy; public education; mediation; and as the member opposite refers to, a gatekeeping role to ensure that complaints that don't have merit aren't pursued or that there's other resolutions there. I know that at least one or two have been referred to the Court of Queen's Bench and will be heard.

Mr. Speaker, there will be some significant cost savings on this because these matters would be heard by the Court of Queen's Bench which is doing this at no cost to the province of Saskatchewan, and for that matter, Mr. Speaker, no cost to the taxpayer at any level because it's being absorbed within their existing resources.

Mr. Speaker, there will be . . . I understand there's been some retirements and some changes at the Human Rights

Commission, and I understand that they are in the process of staffing up.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are told that only one case has advanced to the courts to date. And human rights bodies have been established throughout the Commonwealth to help vulnerable people whose rights are being violated. These people need the support of human rights experts to help them re-establish their rights. The role of the Human Rights Commission in-house counsel is to take cases forward to prosecution and advise investigation staff on case law.

The Human Rights Commission's current management lawyer has acted for many large employers and reportedly wrote the essential services legislation which the Court of Queen's Bench struck down as violating human rights. This same lawyer assisted the Chief Commissioner in a labour rights board application to move positions out-of-scope in December. He also assisted the Chief Commissioner in the termination of six employees in January without cause.

The minister knows that even the perception of conflict of interest regarding impartial legal advice can discourage people whose rights are being violated to think they have a chance of winning their case. My question to the minister: what kind of confidence can the vulnerable complainants have in getting impartial treatment from the Chief Commissioner when management lawyers are giving him legal advice?

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, last week we saw the Leader of the Opposition throw the member for Athabasca under the bus on the issue of redistribution of seats. This week we're seeing the member from Saskatoon Nutana throwing the Leader of the Opposition under the bus. He used to be a partner in MacPherson Leslie & Tyerman, the largest law firm in the province, certainly one of the most prestigious law firms in Canada. And, Mr. Speaker, if that isn't a good law firm to take advice and instruction from, I don't know why the members opposite would take any issue with that. They've got a leader that was a former partner there. Mr. Speaker, if it was good enough for the Leader of the Opposition, I think it should be good enough for the Human Rights Commission.

They are taking a competent, well-reasoned approach to this, Mr. Speaker. We take no issue with them. We respect their independence. They are doing a good job representing the citizens that require their support and assistance, and we will support them, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, on March 1st, 2012 the Canadian Union of Public Employees called for an independent review of the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission following its reckless decision to terminate six front-line staff and restrict services at the two offices. A freedom of information inquiry

has revealed that the commission has spent over \$100,000 on public relations in the last few months, much of which has been spent on designing a logo for the commission. Only one case has been recommended to the courts since the dismantling of the Human Rights Commission.

Will the minister request the Provincial Auditor and the Provincial Ombudsman to immediately investigate the financial management of the commission and the disgraceful termination of front-line staff who provided those vulnerable members of our society access to their human rights?

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, the Chief Commissioner made staffing changes as a result of the changes in the mandate, the change of direction for the Human Rights Commission. We support that. We've received notes. We respect their independence and their autonomy. They used competent, professional outside counsel. I understand that there are no outstanding claims for those employees. The employees have all settled and the matters have been fully resolved. Some of them had the opportunity to bump. Some of them took a package. We take no exception with that whatsoever. The firm of MacPherson Leslie & Tyerman, as I mentioned earlier, was used. They're a competent, professional firm. We fully support that, Mr. Speaker. The needs of the province are being well served by this commission.

We know that every year their books are analyzed by the Provincial Auditor. We know that they used outside communications consultants to develop things regarding the civics program and communicating the changes that were there. We presume that they will continue on using professional, competent help as required. And we're fully supportive of the very good work that they are doing, Mr. Speaker.

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

Funding for First Nations Education

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, there's a growing education funding gap between on-reserve First Nations students and non-First Nations students. On-reserve students receive an unacceptable fraction of education funding per student compared to students in the provincial system — thousands of dollars less. Shamefully fewer than 50 per cent of First Nations students graduate from high school, compared to 80 per cent for non-First Nations students. Well-respected U of S economist Eric Howe reports that Saskatchewan could reap \$90 billion in benefits through savings in health, justice, and social services and an \$80 billion gain in economic growth by closing the Aboriginal education outcome gap.

To date, all the government has done is make plans for a task force, and that has been yet to be struck. My question to the minister: what is the government's plan to address the unacceptable and ever-growing education funding gap between on-reserve First Nations and provincial students?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And on this issue of what the funding is from the federal government on reserve schools, the member opposite and I are in complete agreement. They grossly underfund the reserve schools, and unfortunately that is to the detriment of our First Nations people, young people in our province. And it is to the detriment to the future of our province, for them to have the opportunity to engage in our growing economy.

So, Mr. Speaker, we are engaged with the federal government, encouraging them to increase funding, and we're very encouraged by the latest movement in the federal government of a unanimously supported motion to increase funding to reserve schools.

Meanwhile we are doing what we can here, and we know that there's more that can be done within the province. We have struck the task force. We'll be announcing that soon, who the panel members will be on that task force, as well as we have a number of programs that are available to encourage school divisions to have individual plans for their particular First Nations students.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The education funding gap between on-reserve First Nations students and provincial students simply must change. It's unacceptable. We share some agreement across the floor here today.

On February 27th the members of the House of Commons voted unanimously to support Shannen's dream, a motion to ensure that First Nations children have an equal right to high-quality education. A federal budget is coming down shortly, and we need to speak with one voice calling upon the federal government to follow through and provide the financial resources needed to close the funding gap.

At the end of question period, I will be introducing a motion calling on the federal government to provide the resources needed. The minister mentioned something about this in her statement here today, but my question to the minister: will this government support that motion?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Myself, along with the Minister of Advanced Education, Employment and Immigration have been very much engaged, not only with the federal government but also with the other ministers across the entire country on this very issue. We will continue those conversations and those efforts in working with the federal government to get this very serious issue addressed.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the question was, would the government support the motion? The government has the motion before them right now. But the Premier, we know, was in Ottawa last week. And we suspect he had the opportunity, or would hope he had the opportunity, to meet with the Prime Minister. And that was at the same week that the Prime Minister and other members of the House of Commons voted

unanimously to support Shannen's dream.

My question to the Premier: did First Nations education funding come up during that meeting? And as a result, what can Saskatchewan people expect to see in the federal budget?

[14:15]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for the question. I did have a chance to meet with the Prime Minister about a number of issues as we were returning from the economic development and job fair mission in London and then Dublin. Mr. Speaker, indeed Aboriginal employment and First Nations education did come up in the course of that conversation. It was raised by myself.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, we're also concerned about cuts in the provincial education system. The Sask Party has cut more than 350 educational assistants. They're closing public schools and failing to support community schools and their programs.

Because of an unfair funding system, many First Nations schools can't afford to provide a fair and equitable education. They struggle to retain talented teachers, and they are often using outdated technology and resources. The impact, Mr. Speaker, is felt by students, society, and our economy. And we're told to brace for more cuts in this provincial budget.

I would like to see a unanimous voice going forward here today, calling with one voice to the federal government. Instead it seems that we don't have that support. By not supporting our motion, the government is out of step with MPs [Member of Parliament] of all political stripes and offside with the research. To the minister: what is this government doing from a provincial perspective to show leadership on this most important file?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And again, the member opposite and I can agree on this as a most important file. What we cannot agree on is him repeatedly saying that we have cut funding to education when in fact, in our first term of government, we increased the funding to school divisions for operating by over 18 per cent, Mr. Speaker. We have invested more in four years in infrastructure, in school infrastructure, than that government did almost in their entire time of being government. Mr. Speaker, we have put unprecedented amounts of capital money into improving and building schools within our province.

Mr. Speaker, specific to First Nations, again I will mention that we have struck a task force that is going to study this issue so that we can do better in closing the gap not only in education but in employment.

We have created ... We have increased the pre-K [pre-kindergarten] programs, because we see how important

those very first years are, by over 75 per cent to what they were when the NDP [New Democratic Party] were government.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Federal Crime Legislation

Mr. McCall: — Well it's a sad answer from that side, Mr. Speaker. But we'll try again for a different answer. My question is to the Minister of Corrections because of course, you know, actions on the one hand have impacts on the other. I wonder if the Minister of Corrections agrees with the following statements:

If the municipality passes a bylaw, who bears the cost of the enforcement of it? That's something that a municipality should consider. That's something the province and the federal governments consider whenever they enact a law.

Does the Minister of Corrections agree with that statement?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing.

Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert: — Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure what the member opposite is really asking a question about. If he's asking questions about policing costs, I can sure discuss that with him. If he's asking questions about disaster assistance, I can sure answer that question and discuss that with what we've done in the past. I'm not sure exactly what his question relates to, Mr. Speaker, so I'd ask him to rephrase his question.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Well it's a pretty common sense statement, Mr. Speaker, the idea that if you're going to pass a Bill, you should know what the cost is and have a plan to bear that cost. That statement was from the Minister of Justice in a panel that the Minister of Corrections and Minister of Justice participated in on February 1st with the folks from the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association. It was in response to a question about a municipal bylaw, but the principle stands: if you're going to pass legislation, you should know what it costs.

Last night the House of Commons passed C-10, the Conservative crime Bill. How much is that Bill going to cost the province of Saskatchewan?

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we're pleased that Bill C-10 has come into, has been passed. We are among the vast majority of provinces that are supportive of this piece of legislation. Mr. Speaker, this piece of legislation is impossible to try and accurately cost out with any degree of accuracy.

There are a number of provisions in the Bill that we don't know how the courts are going to interpret, how the courts are going to apply. We will work with the federal government. We will monitor it very closely, and we will make an assessment as it

goes along. But the analysis that some of the other provinces are doing are a large amount of guesswork, and our experts within our province say that it is impossible at this point in time to make any kind of realistic assessment.

We know full well, Mr. Speaker, that there's a good likelihood that this will increase the amount of incarceration that's necessary in our province, but the people that we are seeking to incarcerate under this Bill are people that are preying on children, bringing drugs into our schools — things that we need to address, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, it's plain that the minister doesn't agree with his own words, you know, seated there with the Minister of Corrections. The Minister of Justice went on to say, "So when you pass them, know that there's an expense and get a plan in place." So I guess if it was good enough for that minister to lecture municipal officials about the cost of legislation and the consequences, why isn't it good enough for that government across the way?

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, our government is astute enough to realize that some things cannot be costed out accurately. There are things that will make a change. Mr. Speaker, I can advise the member opposite that we have increased the capacity in our corrections facilities for an additional 90 offenders in the male facilities, 36 in the female facilities.

Mr. Speaker, we support the changes that are necessary in this Bill. They're doing things such as ending house arrest, eliminating pardons for serious crimes, and most importantly, dealing with the serious offences that directly affect children and affect the people that prey on children and bring drugs into our schools, Mr. Speaker. Those are people where we have to focus on. Public protection and public safety and, Mr. Speaker, that is something that our government intends to do. And we will work through the necessary changes that are required in our correctional facility. We will look to the federal government for an investment and where to partner as necessary. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Why is the Government House Leader on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — What is your point of order?

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Mr. Speaker, I believe the member from Regina Rosemont during question period was alluding to a motion to be moved under section 59, I presume, by the Opposition House Leader. That motion was brought to my attention about 2 minutes before question period, relating to Shannen's dream, which was referenced during question period.

I would encourage the member from Rosemont, he still has approximately 6 minutes to actually put that forward for discussion on Thursday, which we would be very happy to discuss that motion on Thursday and would encourage him to avail himself of that opportunity.

The Speaker: — In listening to the Government House Leader's point of order, that is not a point of order.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

The Speaker: — Yes, I called that. Your colleagues were being too noisy. I recognize the Minister of Social Services.

New Emergency Youth Shelter

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, thank you. I am very pleased to rise in the House today to talk about the grand opening of Saskatchewan's first emergency youth shelter in Regina this morning. This facility, known as Downtown Browne's Emergency Youth Shelter, is operated by Street Culture Project Inc. and provides 15 residential beds for 16- to 18-year-old homeless youth for up to 30 days when no placement is available and all other family and non-family options have been exhausted. Through this shelter, they are providing so much more than a safe place to stay. They are providing hope to young people who desperately need it. This shelter will also help Social Services re-engage with youth that were previously in care to provide them with basic needs.

Shelters like Downtown Browne's are vital to maintaining healthy and growing communities like ours. They are a safe haven for youth during some of their darkest hours. But even more than they that, they provide a place to start fresh, a place where youth are supported and engaged in programs that increase personal development and maximize self-sufficiency. As a government, we take our lead from organizations like Street Culture Kidz.

We understand that it's essential to invest in the necessary supports that keep our most vulnerable citizens from falling through the cracks. In the last four years, we have increased our child and family service budget by nearly \$107 million. This level of investment is a reflection of our priorities. The children and youth who are served by this funding are the ones who need our help the most. Our government has prioritized this issue, not just with extra funding, but by trying to look at the challenges for children and youth in new and different ways.

In December of 2010, a seven-member cabinet committee on child and youth — the first cabinet committee of its kind in the history of this province — was appointed. Last year the first government-wide child and youth agenda budget was pulled together, putting \$34 million in additional funding from across government to focus on key factors that impact the well-being of our children and youth of all ages. The investments focused on things like education, unemployment gaps in the First Nations communities, better supports to keep troubled families together, and new funding for FASD [fetal alcohol spectrum disorder] and autism.

I could go on about this, Mr. Speaker, but the key factor is we are doing things differently. Rather than looking through the narrow keyhole of what many individual ministries do, we're looking across government to what are children's needs. That's why we

tend to look outside the box on the investments and impact on children and youth. We know that to make investments in things like housing ensure that families have a home.

Mr. Speaker, investments will not fix these challenges overnight. It's going to take time. But I hope in a generation from now our investments in prevention and better supports for families will one day make the facility we announced today obsolete. Today we can take comfort in the fact we are headed in the right direction. We know that child poverty is down, food bank usage is down, more people are working, more people have full-time jobs. In other words, more families are stable.

But we know our work . . . There's more to do. We know we need to continue investing in facilities like this one that keep children, the people off the streets and keep troubled youth from falling through the cracks. That's why our government was proud to partner with Street Culture in this important work by providing annualized funding of \$989,000 for Downtown Browne's Emergency Youth Shelter. Our ministry partners with Street Culture by providing \$385,000 in annual funding for D.O.C.S. Place and W.E.N.D.Y.S Home, two safe homes for youth, females, between 16 and 18.

The initiatives speak to the willingness of Street Culture to step up to the plate and deliver for the young people in this province who need our help the most. Our government's investment in this project isn't about the bricks and mortar of the building, but the people who made it possible. We're investing in leadership, and we're investing in partnerships.

I want to conclude by extending my sincerest thanks to Street Culture and its board of directors for all their hard work and their dedication into the opening of this youth shelter. They are making a big difference in the lives of Saskatchewan's youth.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the minister for sending her remarks over earlier. That's always very good to . . . and very appreciated.

I want to commend actually Street Culture and all the work that they do on the front lines of this housing crisis. And I know in Saskatoon Riversdale, not just this past election but the previous by-election, a shelter for youth was and is and continues to be a huge issue. So I'm glad to hear that the government is moving forward on the Downtown Browne Shelter here in Regina.

But it is one shelter, Mr. Speaker, and I commend them on doing this, but this is a small, small, small step, Mr. Speaker. There is still so much more work to be done on this front that this government could be doing.

We'll have a budget here, Mr. Speaker, next week. And I trust that when the minister says they're going to continue to invest in housing that this will be something this government considers, is the fact that vulnerable individuals, housing for vulnerable individuals is a particular issue here in this province. There's a housing crisis that many people are experiencing, but vulnerable individuals, particularly youth and all kinds of other

people, are at risk.

[14:30]

And I would also encourage the minister to think about and look at the Housing First approach as an overall approach. I know that they've talked. I've seen letters where the minister has responded saying, oh we take that approach here. Well Housing First, Mr. Speaker, is an overall approach to ensuring that people have a roof over their heads so they can address some of the issues in their life, and the reason they can address them is because they have a safe roof over their head.

So I am glad that Downtown Browne's shelter has opened, and I commend Street Culture for all the work that they do on the front lines, and the government for opening this first shelter. But there is a serious amount of work to do, and I hope and I trust that there will be something in next week's budget for vulnerable citizens and housing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Advanced Education, Employment and Immigration.

SaskPower to Fund University Research Chairs

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise in the House today, Mr. Speaker, to offer the citizens of Saskatchewan an important update on a new initiative being undertaken by SaskPower with our partners at the University of Regina and University of Saskatchewan.

It's an initiative, Mr. Speaker, which highlights two vital aspects of the work that's under way: first and foremost, the ongoing efforts of SaskPower to sustain its world leadership role in key areas of electrical generation, especially when it comes to clean and green technologies; and secondly, SaskPower's plans to reinforce the sound foundation which is in place, and has been for decades, regarding its support for the province's growing economy and our growing communities for years to come.

I was pleased today to be in the Qu'Appelle Gallery of the Legislative Assembly — joined by Chancellor Ready of the University of Regina as well as Vice-president Fitzpatrick from the University of Regina and other University of Regina officials and Dean Ernie Barber from the University of Saskatchewan as well as SaskPower officials — earlier today to announce this major investment that will help to ensure SaskPower can fulfill its mandate of providing safe, reliable, affordable, and sustainable electricity for the province of Saskatchewan for decades to come.

This morning we announced that SaskPower will provide a total of \$7 million to establish faculty Chair positions, that's research Chair positions, at the University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan to help meet our province's growing need for power with a skilled workforce and increasingly innovative and clean technologies. Each institution will receive \$3.5 million for this initiative.

At the University of Regina, the money will go directly to encouraging and supporting researchers and our students involved in researching and developing new carbon capture and

storage technologies — technologies that are recognized around the world, Mr. Speaker, as being increasingly important for helping to sustain the use of coal while at the same time eliminating the worst environmental aspects of coal and its usage. SaskPower will need the knowledge and expertise of these students as it proceeds with the development of the \$1.2 billion Boundary dam integrated carbon capture and storage demonstration project in Estevan, also known as Boundary dam 3.

At the University of Saskatchewan, funding will go towards power systems component with the university's electrical engineering program. This will help to enhance curricular development and related research, and it will help to ensure that there's greater alignment between the University of Saskatchewan programming within engineering and SaskPower.

Mr. Speaker, over the course of the next 15 to 20 years, SaskPower must rebuild, replace, or acquire more than 3700 megawatts of generating capacity, approximately the current size of our system. It must also work to renew to a considerable extent our transmission and distribution system. The research Chairs announced today will ensure that today's students will have the skills and knowledge required to be the leaders of tomorrow, who will help to ensure that SaskPower's moving forward and as a result, Saskatchewan is moving forward.

As I said this morning, this investment is part of the government's deep commitment to post-secondary education in Saskatchewan. Since 2007, under the leadership of our Premier, we've increased support for our post-secondary institutions by 40 per cent with a total of more than \$2.8 billion — an all-time record, Mr. Speaker. But we know there's more to do. That's why I want to say how much we appreciate and continue to encourage other donors and other partners to come forward and complement the funding that is coming forward from the provincial government.

As for SaskPower, over the coming weeks and months SaskPower is exploring similar post-secondary partnerships with institutions right across the province, with a particular focus on First Nations and Métis programming. Mr. Speaker, today's announcement is significant news for our province's already strong economy and in fact it is the very strength of the economy that's one of the factors driving the need to help ensure that we have the labour force available and the technological know-how in place to ensure that we continue to move forward.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's population is growing. It's an all-time record. Businesses are investing. Industry is expanding. And we know at the heart of the Saskatchewan advantage rests the people of this province, most especially our young people. Mr. Speaker, the investments and announcements that were made today reflect and reinforce this government's commitment and SaskPower's commitment to our young people to ensure that safe, reliable, and affordable electricity is available, not just simply for today, but for decades to come. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the minister for sharing his remarks in advance of the House today. Clearly research is vital to Saskatchewan. And it's also clear, Mr. Speaker, that we have big challenges in Saskatchewan in how we produce electricity, with demand increasing and challenges with the existing infrastructure and much of it needing refurbishing or replacing, and also with the very real challenge and issue of climate change, Mr. Speaker. We know that there is much work to do and with the convergence of these factors, the role of research is essential and is, of course, a positive thing.

It's also very exciting, Mr. Speaker, the research that occurs at the U of S and U of R [University of Regina]. We're very fortunate in Saskatchewan to have the types of scholars and researchers that we do. And I think, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to see that SaskPower is supporting research on the campuses of the U of S and the U of R. And it is a good example I think, Mr. Speaker, of how the Crown sector can promote and assist our fine universities in the work that they do.

Of course, as New Democrats we believe and we're keen to see an increase in renewable power in the province. So it's my hope that a sizable portion of this funding will be devoted to research focusing on options that allow the harnessing of these possibilities. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I would conclude my remarks. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I would ask leave of my colleagues in the legislature to present two additional motions of condolence.

The Speaker: — The Premier has asked leave to present condolence motions. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. I recognize the Premier.

CONDOLENCES

Kenneth Roy MacLeod

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, thank you for that. I thank colleagues for leave of the Assembly as well. Yesterday, of course, we took the opportunity to pay tribute to former members of this Assembly, and I certainly appreciated the interventions on both sides of the House as members reflected in a personal way and in terms of their political perspective on members who we have lost.

Mr. Speaker, I move today:

That this Assembly records with sorrow and regret the passing of a former member of this Assembly and expresses its grateful appreciation of the contribution he made to his community, his constituency, and to the province.

Kenneth Roy MacLeod, who passed away 30 March

2011 at the age of 83, was a member of this Legislative Assembly from 1971 until 1975, representing the constituency of Regina Albert Park for the Liberal Party.

Mr. MacLeod was born on 10 September 1927 in Wadena. He graduated from Tisdale High School and later received a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1952 and then a law degree in 1954 from the University of Saskatchewan.

For several years he was a partner in the Regina law firm of Balfour, MacLeod, McDonald, Moss, Laschuk, and Kyle. Mr. MacLeod was appointed to the Queen's Bench in 1975, a position he held for 27 years until his retirement from the bench in 2002.

Mr. MacLeod was actively involved in the Kiwanis Club, Amalgamated Charities Inc., and the United Church. For his contributions to Little League baseball in our capital city, the main baseball diamond at Kiwanis Park was named in his honour.

Ken is survived and sadly missed by his wife of 56 years, Amber, and their two children, Maureen and Brian, their spouses, and grandchildren. Ken is predeceased by his son John in 2005.

In recording its own deep sense of loss and bereavement, this Assembly expresses its most sincere sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.

The Speaker: — Thank you. The Premier has moved a motion of condolence for Kenneth Roy MacLeod. Can we take the motion as read?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise and make some comments about Mr. Justice Ken MacLeod as I knew him. He was a new, relatively new judge at the court in Regina when I started practising law in Regina. And for any of the lawyers in the room, you know that when you're in your first two or three years of your practice, you always keep a pretty good idea on which judge is on the chambers docket because you like to have one that understands you and maybe gives you the benefit of the doubt on some of your rather rookie arguments.

Well Mr. Justice Ken MacLeod was that kind of judge who was fair in all circumstances. And he made sure that if you were arguing against Morris Shumiatcher, that you'd get just as many words as he did or, if you were dealing with Tony Merchant, that you'd end up with a balanced situation.

So I want to start with that little comment about Mr. Justice MacLeod because he was that perfect gentleman on the bench who would listen carefully and make fair judgments. Mr. Speaker, I think that that's why Ken MacLeod was elected as well, is that he loved to work with people, be with people, and he listened to them carefully and he was able to serve as a

member of this legislature using the same kinds of skills that he used for his 27 years as a judge.

After Mr. Justice MacLeod went into supernumerary status, we call it, or the semi-retired role, I had more chance to visit with him at different events, along with his wife, Amber. And it was at that point that you came to understand how important he was for his family and for his extended family, but more importantly for the baseball community of Saskatchewan. There is no question that his ability to organize and work with people meant that for baseball players in Regina they had every opportunity that was possible. And it's quite interesting how somebody who has this kind of a role as a politician or as a judge can end up contributing so much to the community in the community sports world, and he did that.

I know that he was always keenly interested in politics as well, and so if I talked to him at the symphony or at Globe Theatre, both he and his wife had some very specific questions about things that had happened over the last number of weeks and some very specific advice. And I would say, Mr. Speaker, that I always listened carefully because I knew his experience, but I also knew that he listened to people and he was somebody who had that particular skill.

One of the other areas that we shared a lot of fun was that he was clearly Scottish background, but his wife was Norwegian. So we would often compare notes, and she would come to me for advice about the latest arguments in any battle. And so I know I say to Amber and the family, we are all going to miss Ken and that we really appreciate the contributions that he made to our province.

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I only knew Ken MacLeod from my period of time in practice. So when I realized I was going to speak to this today, I contacted Mr. Justice Stuart Cameron of the Court of Appeal and asked him whether I could quote him and whether he would provide me some insight into Kenneth MacLeod, both as a lawyer and as a politician. And he gave me some information, and I certainly agree with the opinions that he expressed, and it was somewhat entertaining and interesting.

He told me that Ken MacLeod was exceptionally bright and he was top or near the top of his class through law school. He roomed with Cal Tallis who went on to become Mr. Justice Tallis of the Court of Appeal. He graduated from law school, as the Premier mentioned, in 1954 and practised for two years in Saskatoon with Disberry, Bence and Walker and then moved to Regina for the firm that ultimately became Balfour Moss, and went to the Court of Queen's Bench in 1975.

[14:45]

I inquired about his political career and Justice Cameron indicated that the things that stand out most in people's mind regarding Kenneth MacLeod were the two significant nominations that he fought. He sought nomination both as a federal candidate and as a provincial candidate. In 1968 he sought a federal Liberal nomination. He ran against several

other people including Ross Sneath and Bob Peterson, who later went on to become a senator. That nomination had over 1,000 people at it, was thoroughly contested, and he was the successful candidate.

During the course of that federal campaign, the young Pierre Trudeau came to Saskatchewan and it was an open meeting with a large number of candidates as well as large numbers of the public. At that time there was Trudeaumania sweeping across the country and at that time Pierre Trudeau seemed to walk on water. And nobody would want to challenge him, with the exception of Kenneth MacLeod, who told Pierre Trudeau quite pointedly, if you're not willing to go out in the country and get a particular substance on your boots, you will not be winning any seats in rural Saskatchewan.

The audience was somewhat aghast but those were rather prophetic words because Kenneth MacLeod did not win a seat and in fact they did not win any seats in rural Saskatchewan with the exception of Otto Lang, who won in the Humboldt constituency. Interestingly, I worked for Otto Lang in my younger Liberal days when I was far left-leaning as opposed to how I am now. Mr. Speaker, he also went on and in the 1971 election ran in another hugely contested nomination to become one of Ross Thatcher's candidates, defeated Ken Sunquist and Jack Klein on the first ballot — there was over 1,000 people there — and was, of course, successful.

He had enormous energy and was an outstanding, gregarious person. Justice Cameron refers to him as the single most energetic person he has ever met. He was innovative politically and creative in court. And he was not fussy for procedural details and chose to go directly to substance, was not afraid to make law, and had an ability to make law, did not regard himself as one who is particularly bound by precedent, which caused the Court of Appeal some additional work. But quite often when he challenged the Court of Appeal, it turned out that the arguments that he put forward in his judgments were accepted by the Court of Appeal. And he was not afraid to make law.

I knew Justice MacLeod in his capacity as a Court of Queen's Bench, and as mentioned by the member opposite, he certainly had a reputation for being interesting and entertaining to appear in front of him. During my time in practice, I appeared and did two trials in front of him and two or three chambers applications. As I was successful in both trials and at least one of the chambers applications, naturally my opinion is that he was a brilliant jurist and one of the best judges that the province has ever had.

I'm told as well he was a great conversationalist, and at social functions I was at, he certainly was. He would talk to anybody, whether it was a paper boy or a person working with him, another judge. He was an outstanding and outgoing person.

In Regina, as mentioned earlier, he was an avid baseball fan, a great supporter of amateur baseball. The baseball diamonds at the corner of Elphinstone and Regina bear his name.

Mr. Speaker, Justice MacLeod was an individual who served our province as an MLA, a justice of the Court of Queen's Bench, and a supporter of many community organizations:

Queen City Kiwanis, Regina Sports Hall of Fame, Little League baseball, just to mention a few.

Mr. Speaker, to the MacLeod family and their friends and supporters, we offer them our prayers and sympathies and we thank them for the contribution made by Kenneth MacLeod to our province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Will the Assembly take the motion as read?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — All in favour?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. I recognize the Premier.

Allan Stevens

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would move now:

That this Assembly records with sorrow and regret the passing of a former member of this Assembly and expresses its grateful appreciation of the contribution he made to his community, his constituency, and to the province.

Allan Stevens, who passed away on July 15, 2011, at the age of 91, was a member of this Legislative Assembly from 1960 until 1964, representing the constituency of Rosetown for the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, CCF.

Mr. Stevens was born on 30 August 1919 in Saskatoon. Allan was raised in the Harris district and attended Silver Cloud School. He worked on the family farm and later joined the Canadian Army. He served in Holland and Belgium and Germany from 1941 to 1946.

Upon returning to Canada, Mr. Stevens was actively involved in his community. He served on the Harris Village Council, the Legion, the Lions, the United Church, the rink board, the local school board, the Rosetown School Unit board.

He is survived and sadly missed by his five children, Brian, Gary, Beverly, Sandra, and Donna, and their respective family members. Allan is predeceased by his wife, Emily, of 58 years.

In recording its own deep loss and bereavement, this Assembly expresses its most sincere sympathy to members of the bereaved family.

Mr. Speaker, all too quickly we're losing this generation of Saskatchewan heroes — the generation that fought World War II; the generation so well represented on the Prairies of this

country, who were so quick to serve the cause of Canada and the cause of freedom and who, on their return, weren't finished giving. On their return, Mr. Speaker, we will know the history of so many veterans of that war and others, but significantly of World War II. They came back to this province and they continued to contribute. They continued to build small towns and communities across this province.

In the case of Mr. Stevens, that was quite a list. He's returned from World War II where he served in Holland and Belgium and Germany for five years until 1946. He comes back to his community. And I don't think anyone would have begrudged a bit of a break or a rest, but he chose rather to serve in other ways — on the village council, in the Legion, in the Lions, and in church and rink board. I won't read the whole list.

And then in 1960 I imagine somebody, probably a leader of a party — probably one of the most famous leaders of any provincial party in the country — contacted him to encourage him to run for office. Imagine that time in this particular Legislative Assembly from 1960 to 1964 and the debate that . . . Well we all know the debate that was occurring at the time, and what has happened as a result of that debate in our province and across our country. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Stevens played obviously a key role in that, though he only served one term here. Here was somebody who was so very actively involved in the life of this province and of his community in that Rosetown area.

And I think some members will want to address themselves to his memory, Mr. Speaker, this afternoon. I certainly want to make way for that. And I'm honoured to be able to move this motion.

The Speaker: — The Premier has moved a motion of condolence for Mr. Allan Stevens. Will the Assembly take the motion as read?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I agree with the Premier's remarks about Mr. Stevens in that he's of that generation who was born just after the First World War, served in the Second World War, and then came back to build our province.

And it's quite telling to see that this man, with his children, ended up serving on the school board and then was asked to serve in the legislature so that he was elected in 1960. And clearly 1960 was an interesting election in Saskatchewan. Tommy Douglas had been first elected in 1944 and so it effectively was 16 years of government. And then he won that next term, and then was elected national leader and went on to serve in national politics. But he had recruited people like Mr. Stevens to work with him on some of the very important, both educational issues and the medical issues. And when you look at Mr. Stevens's obituary, you note that one of his proudest moments was to be in this Chamber when that particular legislation was passed.

I personally did not know Mr. Stevens, but I know others from

that era and that place because my family roots are not that far from Rosetown. And so I can imagine the others, on other school boards in the next districts, and how intensely the discussion went on as the representatives of those local people came here to Regina to work on the particular legislation.

You know, to get only a chance to serve four years in this place is an incredible honour, no matter what, because we all know when we look at the total number of people who have actually ever sat in the Chamber, it's not very many people in the history of our province. And so when we recognize the person who serves one term like Mr. Stevens, we're saying once again, thank you very much for work that's well done, that's served the province well. And we do especially thank you for the work that you did as part of the team that created a medicare system for Canada.

So to Mr. Stevens's family and all of his descendants, we offer our condolences and our honour for the work that you've done.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Highways and Infrastructure.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition in saying a few remarks about Mr. Stevens. While I didn't know Mr. Stevens personally, I do know some of his family including his son Gary, and I also know a number of people in and around the Harris area who were friends with Mr. Stevens. In fact, Mr. Speaker, over the weekend I had an opportunity to speak with one gentleman who's a very close friend of mine from Harris and knew Mr. Stevens well and spoke very highly of him. He filled me in on a number of things, some of which have been touched on by the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition.

He was a World War II veteran; for that we owe him and his colleagues a great debt of gratitude. He also served in a number of ways for his community. He served on town council. He was a school board member. So, Mr. Speaker, he not only served his community and province as MLA, but in those other areas as well.

The other thing that kind of stood out in my mind when I was speaking to my friend about him was the fact that Mr. Stevens was very, very active in sports. When his children were young, he coached a number of their sports teams. And in later years, he followed his grandchildren's sports and educational pursuits with great interest. So by all standards, I believe, Mr. Speaker, this was a gentleman who cared very deeply for his family and also his community.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to acknowledge all the contributions that Mr. Stevens made to his country, to his province, and to his community, and I would like to offer my sincere condolences to his family. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is an honour to join in this afternoon and speak to the condolence motion for Mr. Allan Stevens. The days that we do these condolence motions, Mr. Speaker, I think are very important because it's a chance to

review the lives of individuals who have given so much to our province and to this Assembly. And it is also a reality check for those of us that are currently sitting in the Assembly to do a bit of introspection and perhaps self-examination to see how the things that we're doing, the beliefs that we're holding, how we are doing our best to carry on the work that some of our predecessors from this Assembly have done.

And that is most certainly the case when looking at the life lived by Mr. Allan Stevens, the example that he had in his community and the role that he played in his family.

I did not have the chance to meet Mr. Allan Stevens personally, Mr. Speaker, but I felt compelled to say a few remarks because as the Premier said, I think, at the time of these condolence motions, sometimes it's to convey personal stories about the member. Sometimes it's to say personally what that individual has meant to any of the members who are speaking, but it's also a time to say thank you, Mr. Speaker, and to say thank you on a generational basis. And I'm from a younger generation, but as someone who has grown up in this province and loves this province, I've benefited from the work that people like Mr. Stevens has done.

[15:00]

Mr. Stevens also served in 1960, and so he would have been a rookie MLA with my grandfather Hans. So I don't know any stories, but they would have sat around the caucus table together and I assume shared stories and shared many of the same views and concerns, both representing areas in Saskatchewan with some common issues.

When we look at Mr. Stevens's record of military service, of service in the community through the school board, it's clear that this was a man who was busy and very involved in the things that mattered to him and his local area and the broader constituency. I had a chance to go through his maiden speech, Mr. Speaker. And it was a fairly lengthy maiden speech, and it showed that this was an individual who really cared about issues. He talked about highways. He talked about agriculture. He talked about education. It was a well-researched speech as well. He cited sources from Europe. A variety of topics were covered, and it was well-researched and well-said. And to me, Mr. Speaker, that shows that Mr. Stevens was someone who took his work seriously and put his constituents first.

Also remarkable, Mr. Speaker, is to hear of his marriage, a union with Emily that lasted 58 years. And that perhaps overshadows any other work that he's done because we know how important and how special a marriage of 58 years is, and I know that it must be something that the children hold very near and dear to them.

So I simply want to say on behalf of myself, and I imagine all members of the Assembly, a sincere thank you to the Stevens family for the role that they have played because we all know that politics is a family endeavour, and I'm sure that there were many sacrifices over the years. So I want to say thank you to the Stevens family and extend my most sincere condolences to them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Will the Assembly take the motion as read?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — All in favour?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Linton Alexander MacDonald

The Speaker: — Members, I wish to advise the Assembly of the passing of a former sergeant-at-arms of this Assembly.

Mr. Linton Alexander MacDonald, who passed away on January 19, 2011, was sergeant-at-arms for the province of Saskatchewan from 1981 until 1985.

Prior to becoming the sergeant-at-arms, Mr. MacDonald was a teacher from 1936 until 1943, and then he became a member of the Canadian Army. Upon his return to Canada, he worked as the secretary for the RM of Saltcoats and then became the provincial secretary of the Royal Canadian Legion.

Mr. MacDonald is survived and sadly missed by his two sons and daughter-in-law — Bob, Ray, and Betty — as well as numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Willard Lutz

The Speaker: — Further I wish to advise the Assembly of the passing of a former provincial auditor of this Assembly, Mr. Willard Lutz, who passed away on January 17th, 2012.

He was appointed the provincial auditor for Saskatchewan in 1972 and held that position for 17 years. Prior to becoming the provincial auditor, Mr. Lutz served in the Second World War aboard the HMCS [His Majesty's Canadian Ship] *Kokanee*. In 1958 he completed the requirements for admission to the Institute of Chartered Accountants and joined the Department of Health as an auditor. He joined the staff at the provincial auditor's office in 1968 and quickly moved into the acting provincial auditor position in 1971. One year later, he was appointed the provincial auditor.

Mr. Lutz is survived and sadly missed by his son Douglas and family, and son Bruce.

The Speaker: — Why is the Government House Leader on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I ask for leave to move a motion of transmittal regarding the condolence motions.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has asked leave to move a motion of transmittal. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — I thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move:

That notwithstanding rule 8(2) of the *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan*, an audio-video record of the oral tributes together with the *Hansard* transcript and the resolutions adopted be communicated in memory of the deceased to the bereaved families on behalf of the Assembly by Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has moved:

That notwithstanding rule 8(2) of the *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan*, an audio-visual record of the oral tributes together with the *Hansard* transcript and resolutions adopted be communicated in memory of the deceased to the bereaved families on behalf of the Assembly by Mr. Speaker.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — All in favour?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before orders of the day, I request leave to move a motion under rule 59.

The Speaker: — The member will briefly outline the text of his motion.

MOTION UNDER RULE 59

Funding of First Nations Schools

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I stated in question period, the gap in funding between First Nations and the provincial education systems is unacceptable and unfair. Therefore I seek agreement on my motion as follows:

That this Assembly congratulate the House of Commons of Canada given the impending federal budget for its unanimous agreement to adopt the Shannen's Dream motion, a proposal which calls for closing the gap in funding between First Nations and non-First Nations school systems;

Express its support for this proposal which includes the goals of declaring that all First Nations children have an equal right to high quality culturally-relevant education; committing to provide the necessary financial and policy supports for First Nations education systems; providing funding that will put reserve schools on par with non-reserve provincial schools; developing transparent methodologies for school construction, operation, maintenance, and replacement; working collaboratively with First Nations leaders to establish equitable norms

and formulas for determining class sizes; and for the funding of education resources, staff salaries, special education services, and indigenous language instruction; and implementing policies to make the First Nations education system at minimum of equal quality to provincial school systems.

With that motion, Mr. Speaker, I ask for leave.

The Speaker: — The member . . . You have heard the request for leave to move a motion without notice, under rule 59. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Not agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has not been granted. Next business.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 10

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Hutchinson that **Bill No. 10 — *The Parks Amendment Act, 2011*** be now read a second time.]

The Speaker: — Is the Assembly ready for the question? Is the Assembly ready for the question? It has been moved by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that Bill No. 1, the Queen's Bench . . . Oh, this is item No. 10 is it? No, wrong one . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Okay. It has been moved by the hon. minister of parks, correction . . . I mean parks . . . TCPS, that *The Parks Amendment Act, 2011* be adopted. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried

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

The Speaker: — When shall this Bill be read a second time? I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Right now, Mr. Speaker? To which . . .

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — I designate that Bill No. 10, *The Parks Amendment Act, 2011* be referred to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has moved that this Bill be referred to Intergovernmental Affairs. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 11

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 11 — *The Court Officials Act, 2011/Loi de 2011 sur les fonctionnaires de justice*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to have the opportunity this afternoon to enter into the debate on this piece of legislation on court officials. It's been a, Mr. Speaker, a busy afternoon.

And as we move into adjourned debates after the condolence motions that we have gone through, as I said earlier in my remarks, I think it's an opportunity to sincerely offer a bit of introspection and thought about the work that we do here in the Assembly and how it ties into our larger objectives that we want to and wish to accomplish as a province. And while the types of legislation may differ, Mr. Speaker, in their content and in perhaps their significance to some extent, the onus on legislators to carefully look at legislation, to put forward constructive legislation, to put forward changes that are indeed in the best interests of all Saskatchewan people is a priority that we all need to share and put forward on a regular basis.

The Bill, Mr. Speaker, that we're looking at this afternoon is Bill No. 11, *The Court Officials Act*. And, Mr. Speaker, it's a fairly short piece of . . . Well the Bill itself is decently long, but the remarks made by the minister on the second reading speech are not that extensive.

This piece of . . . Maybe I'll start by saying, Mr. Speaker, with any piece of legislation over time, it's appropriate to look at the piece of legislation to make sure that the details of it and the content that it addresses is appropriate and is up to date and is modern. And there is, Mr. Speaker, from time to time, necessary changes that need to occur with any piece of legislation. And sometimes this is of a housekeeping nature in order to ensure that the piece of legislation is consistent with other pieces of legislation. And sometimes, Mr. Speaker, the changes that are suggested in an amendment to an Act are a reflection of something that's changed on the ground or a need that has emerged.

And in this situation, Mr. Speaker, as the minister identifies, the legislation is in response to some changes that have been identified as being appropriate for the Provincial Court system. Most specifically, Mr. Speaker, as the minister states in his second reading speech, this Bill seeks to establish two new court officials: the registrar of the Provincial Court and court transcribers. The current legislation, Mr. Speaker, as the minister identifies in his second reading speech which was delivered on December 13th, 2011, does not currently have a provision for these positions and therefore it is appropriate, in the minister's view, that legislation be brought forward in order to accommodate these new officials who would serve a role.

Mr. Speaker, I am not fully . . . I do not have great knowledge of how the actual operations within the Provincial Court work, but what I can trust are the individuals who are present in the system, providing feedback through the appropriate channels in the ministry, are in a position to identify and state what are the appropriate changes that need to take place. And as with any type of system in government, whatever the ministry may be, I think it ought to be our goal as legislators to ensure that the system is as up-to-date and is as responsive and is as effective as it possibly can be.

And it's my hope, Mr. Speaker, that the feedback that has been provided about the needed addition of these two individuals, it's my hope that that would be true. And I have no reason to think otherwise based on the feedback that the minister . . . or the input that the minister has stated about the feedback he's received about the provision of these two individuals.

Mr. Speaker, earlier on in my remarks, I commented about how situations can change and how operations can change and how things can be modernized and improved. And I note in the minister's second reading speech he made this remark, and it said:

In 1984 most court proceedings were recorded by court reporters using shorthand. Today evidence in court is recorded electronically and then transcribed by private transcription agencies. This change is reflected in the new legislation by eliminating the role of court reporter and by creating a new court official called the court transcriber who is responsible for transcribing evidence recorded in court.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's evidence of how, with the electronic age and how things have moved with technology, how it's appropriate for the court to adapt and be as responsive as possible. And this is consistent, Mr. Speaker, with some of the other pieces of legislation we've looked at in this spring sitting to date. I can think of, Mr. Speaker, the changes to the land titles system and the suggestion that a library or registry be created electronically to help streamline the process. And, Mr. Speaker, just as we would not expect individuals now to sit and write shorthand to record the proceedings that occur in court, we understand fully that it is appropriate to have technological changes.

[15:15]

And when we think of transcription, we think of the great work that the staff in the Legislative Assembly do, our folks who do such a fine job in Hansard with a short turnaround and providing the written record for many, many years so that there is a permanent official record for this Assembly. And just as it is important for the Legislative Assembly, for the court system of course, Mr. Speaker, it is just as important in order to ensure that the proper work be done and that justice be served in our province.

Just to cite also from what the minister stated in his second reading speech. He also identified that there are changes that take place in order that the system be as effective as possible, and this is what the minister stated in his second reading speech. It says:

The current legislation also sets out the hours that various court offices are open to the public. The provision has been updated to allow the hours of opening for the court and registry offices to be established by minister's order rather than by legislation. This change will provide flexibility in setting the hours of operation to meet the needs of the court and its users. This Bill also contains consequential amendments that update the names of court officials and the references to this Act in various bilingual statutes.

Mr. Speaker, as part of a democratic system, when we look at the judiciary and the role of the court system in our Canadian democracy, a key component in order to ensure that the system is as democratic and is as open as possible is the provision that allows individuals to go to the court in order to witness proceedings and also, Mr. Speaker, to receive the appropriate information that they may be interested about, whatever that issue may be. And I think, Mr. Speaker, from what I understand in the minister's remarks is that the guidelines or the rules of the decisions around the hours of operation that would allow for individuals to access the type of information that they need, for whatever purpose that they may want to receive that information, that the decision around the hours would not be through legislation, Mr. Speaker, but would be through regulation allowing a greater flexibility for the minister to ensure that the court system is as responsive to Saskatchewan people as it clearly needs to be and ought to be.

My hope, Mr. Speaker, as with any occasion or opportunity, when additional authority or power is given to the minister and is taken from a role of legislation and simply given to a minister and allows for the minister to make his or her decision as they see that it ought to be and what is appropriate, it's my hope and my sincere desire, Mr. Speaker, that the decisions and the changes that may occur would in fact be in the best interest of Saskatchewan people. So I would hope that when we look at possible changes, when we look at possible adjustments to when individuals can access the courts, receive the information that they need, I hope that the minister would be going down a path of greater openness, greater transparency, greater accessibility for all Saskatchewan people. Because as I said, Mr. Speaker, that is a fundamental tenet of our democratic system — that citizens in the province, just as they are able to come to this Assembly and observe the proceedings, they also have the availability and the accessibility to our court system in order to receive the information that they need.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, that general approach and the statement I made, that it is my hope that the minister would be going down a path of more openness as opposed to narrowing the parameters and narrowing the possibilities for people to receive information. I say that because when I think of the things that Saskatchewan and Canada stands for and the things that we try to promote and advocate nationally, but in the global context as well, it certainly matters how transparent and how open our court system is.

And so I think if there was a decision, if it was in the minister's opinion that there should be a narrowing of the availability and the accessibility, I think that would be a step in the wrong direction. I think that would be a step that would be contrary to many of the things that we promote in this Assembly, the things

that other legislatures throughout Canada promote, things that our federal parliament promotes, and then also the things that we promote on an international stage in a variety of contexts and through a variety of organizations.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would hope, it's my sincere hope that the minister's default position would be for greater transparency and would be for allowing the court system to operate as openly and as effectively as possible, and that individuals who are wishing to receive information could in fact receive the information that they want or attend and witness proceedings as they see that they need to. Because obviously with the role that the minister has in our provincial system, that ties directly to the oath that he has taken, the role, the duties that he has assumed as minister. And I would hope, Mr. Speaker, that his natural inclination would be to go down that path.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the availability as it's stated, I'll just read that paragraph again so listeners at home are reminded of the issue here. It says:

The provision has been updated to allow the hours of opening for the court and registry offices to be established by minister's order rather than by legislation. This change will provide flexibility in setting the hours of operation to meet the needs of the court and its users.

So what's being used here as the basis, the rationale for the change, is increased flexibility. What isn't explicitly said, Mr. Speaker, is that whether that will mean, whether that flexibility will mean more openness or less. And I think that is a crucial point. And I hope, Mr. Speaker, that eventually, after members on this side of the House have had ample opportunity to speak to this issue and consult with people and hear from individuals on this piece of legislation, when this issue is sent to committee and we have a chance to discuss it in committee, I hope that the minister would be willing to clearly state for the record whether it is his intention to reduce the accessibility and the availability or to enhance and increase the accessibility and availability of attending court, of receiving necessary information through the registry.

Now I think most people at home would say, well of course the minister would want to allow for increased access to this type of information and increased access to this type of witnessing of proceedings. Of course he would want to do that. Well, Mr. Speaker, I think, as I said before, I hope that is his default position of wanting to increase and improve.

But as we have discussed in the first week and a bit of this spring session, we've heard some real mixed signals from members opposite. And we've heard some warnings from members opposite about cuts. We've heard warnings, Mr. Speaker, about reductions that Saskatchewan people should be expecting. We've heard, Mr. Speaker, warnings about changes. They're fairly veiled at this point. The members opposite are putting out the feelers but saying that Saskatchewan people should expect reductions and cuts to services. On the flip side, Mr. Speaker, we have an endless stream of nothing but rosy and nothing but positive news releases coming out of Executive Council and the various ministries. So there's this mixed messaging going on with the Saskatchewan people at this time.

So when we look at a piece of legislation where we see changes to how individuals can access the court system, and when the minister says it's for more flexibility but doesn't state whether or not that flexibility is intended to increase access to the court system, I have concerns. Because, as we hear from members opposite, they're talking about cuts. They're talking about a reduction in services. They're talking about changes that will have a detrimental effect on Saskatchewan people.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we don't know what these cuts will look like, and members opposite are very fond of saying, X number of sleeps more. Don't get too excited. It'll all be fine, don't you worry. That's what members opposite, government members like to say. But when they're talking about cuts, when they're asking for flexibility, my question, Mr. Speaker, is, is this increased flexibility? Is it being introduced now in order to facilitate the cuts that are coming in this area?

Now we don't know where the cuts will be because members opposite have simply said, expect cuts. Expect reduction in services. Expect changes that will have a negative effect on your life. But there's no detail. So it puts the Saskatchewan people in a very difficult situation. On the one hand, the minister is saying, please trust me; I want to allow for greater accessibility to the court system, and this is the reason why we want to take the hours and the openness from legislation into regulation, and allow me to simply sign off on it and approve what I think is appropriate. So the minister is asking for this additional role, this additional authority, but at the same time the minister and members of the front bench are reluctant to say where the cuts are going to occur.

So if, when the budget comes down, we see cuts in the area of the Ministry of Justice and we see cuts in the area of the court system and we see cuts in the area of staffing levels for the individuals that will operate our court system, and then at the same time we have the minister asking for more flexibility to change the hours of when people can go to the building, to the courthouse, we see a change . . . we have a request for a change in the hours that people can go to the registry and access information in order to allow democracy to carry on, and for individuals to pursue the information that they want from their perspective, and what they think is appropriate for democracy, we have a real problem here, I think, based on the minister's messaging. And I think this ambiguity and this confusion the members opposite have created with Saskatchewan people needs to be cleared up.

Now members opposite will say, well just a few more sleeps. Don't you worry; the budget will be coming down. But members opposite have been going around talking about two different stories. They've been talking about how Saskatchewan people should expect extensive cuts, extensive changes to the delivery of services; but then they've also been saying, well everything's great and wonderful, but still expect the cuts. We don't know how deep these cuts are going to be, Mr. Speaker, but without the detail we can only assume that a number of ministries across the board are going to be affected in very real ways.

And I would assume, Mr. Speaker, that would include the Ministry of Justice and would include operations in the courthouse, especially, Mr. Speaker, when we see a reduction in

the number of civil servants. We see a reduction in the number of civil servants that individuals on the opposite side want in order to carry out the good work that many ministries and agencies of government perform for Saskatchewan people. But at the same time we have the minister asking for changes here for more flexibility, but not saying whether or not that flexibility is intended to improve access or to worsen access. I think that is a concern and that's a problem.

I wish, Mr. Speaker, the minister had been more clear in his second reading speech, suggesting why he needs this additional authority. If he had been more clear — if he had said, well actually it's our intention to reduce the number of individuals working in the court system, and it's our intention to reduce the level of funding to the court system, and it's our intention to restrict the hours and the accessibility of the court system, and this is why I need the flexibility to do it — well I may not agree with the decision, Mr. Speaker, but at least the minister would be upfront in stating his rationale as to why he's going down a certain path. That hasn't been the case. What we have seen, Mr. Speaker, is simply, I think, ambiguous language that doesn't clearly enough state why these sorts of changes and this sort of additional authority and responsibility ought to be awarded to the minister. And I think that is a concern. And it comes across the board.

It's interesting that this issue, this issue of reducing the civil service, is an interesting concept to think of at the same time as this piece of legislation introduces two new roles. So we know if the minister is planning on introducing new roles within the provincial system, and if members opposite are determined to slash the civil service by X amount over the four years, these two new positions are going to have to come from somewhere. It's going to have to balance out according to members' opposite math. Now I know the minister today in question period says they actually don't cost out many of the decisions that they make, and that was a comment that the minister made with respect to federal legislation that was passed. And the minister said, well we actually can't cost it out and we don't always cost out the decisions that we make. Well, Mr. Speaker, that actually was of no surprise to the people in Saskatchewan. But I'm worried that the appropriate costing and the appropriate analysis has not occurred with this decision. That is my concern.

[15:30]

And it's also interesting, Mr. Speaker, that at a time when members opposite are talking about the deep cuts that Saskatchewan people should expect in a short period of time, that they're also wanting to increase the number of MLAs in the province. And now, Mr. Speaker, MLAs play a very important role. But I think the onus is on members opposite to explain why these additional members are needed. And to date, I do not think the explanation has been appropriate, reflective of reality, and really been upfront and straight with Saskatchewan people.

And so when we see decisions around spending, when we see decisions around staffing, when we see decisions around wanting more authority and more power to restrict and change hours of availability for the court system, Mr. Speaker, I have some concerns based on the actions and the track record that we've seen from members opposite so far, especially in this

brief spring session, brief as it has been.

So, Mr. Speaker, I've made a few remarks on Bill No. 11. And I think it's an example of a situation where there may be a piece of legislation and where the minister's remarks may be fairly brief, but, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of content in there, a lot of questions that are brought up by the minister in his remarks. And I think, Mr. Speaker, given the mixed messaging we've had from government members about how Saskatchewan people ought to expect deep cuts, how the number of civil servants needs to be drastically reduced, when the minister comes to this Assembly and says, we want to remove things from legislation and put it into regulation and just trust me, I have your best interests in mind, well, Mr. Speaker, I know that is the oath and the commitment that he took. But you see these too many examples that cause me to want a bit more detail, that cause me to want the minister to be more explicit about the changes that he wants to make and to be more clear on why we should simply trust him to make the proper changes for Saskatchewan people.

And, Mr. Speaker, these remarks about the needed transparency of members opposite, they apply to this piece of legislation, Bill No. 11, *The Court Officials Act*. But they apply just as much to many other pieces of legislation as we go through and we have situations where ministers are simply asking the Saskatchewan people to trust us. Don't worry about transparency; don't worry about the clarity and the succinctness of legislation; just trust me to do the right thing. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm not prepared to simply do that. I want more information. I want better answers and a more clear statement.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude my remarks on Bill No. 11, and I would move to adjourn debate. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Massey Place has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 11, *The Court Officials Act, 2011*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Bill No. 12

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 12** — *The Court Officials Consequential Amendments Act, 2011* be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure today to rise to speak to this Bill, Bill 12, *The Court Officials Consequential Amendments Act*. Again given the comments of my colleague previously, there is not a lot from the minister in terms of commentary when he introduced the Bill. But this is one of those types of Bills where we see amendments to other Acts that are necessary to bring into effect the Bill that my colleague previously spoke to. In particular there is a number of English-language statutes that refer to the court officials or to *The Court Officials Act*.

And there is one amendment in particular that the minister pointed out, was that *The Coroners Act, 1999* was being amended to update the section dealing with the recording of evidence at coroner's inquests. And so as he pointed out, coroner's inquests are different than court proceedings because the evidence given is recorded by a court reporter using somewhat outdated techniques of shorthand or a recording device. So this new provision will create the role of the official reporter sworn in by the coroner before recording the evidence at the inquest, and then they will also prepare a transcript of the proceedings if requested to do so.

One of the things I think that we want to look at more is the impact of the requirement to request transcripts in these types of hearings or inquests because it's often grieving family members who are most interested in the transcript. And in order to get it now, they have to actually request it, and we're not sure about the cost that will be associated with that because sometimes these transcripts can be quite substantial. So it may add . . . and further victimize people who are grieving as a result of the incidents leading to the coroner's inquest.

That in and of itself is something that we need to look at closely. We also want to make sure that we understand the impact on all the other Bills that are consequentially amended by this particular Act and by the impact of *The Court Officials Act, Bill 11*.

There's quite a long description of who the official reporter will be. And first of all, they would need to take an oath. That's the first requirement. And then before they are allowed to record any evidence, they take the oath and make a declaration before the coroner that they will accurately report the evidence. And they may record it by shorthand or by a recording device, and sign the transcript of the evidence once it's prepared. So this sets out how the recording of the evidence is to be done.

And the key clause is 53(5), where it says: "The evidence taken by an official reporter need not be transcribed unless a transcription is ordered by" the minister or the counsel, the chief coroner, or any person who requests it. And indeed in 5(d)(ii), the requirement there is for any one person who requests it, that they pay an amount that the transcriber may charge. And again we don't know what kind of amounts those will be. So that may be of concern to people who are grieving and very interested in the transcripts of the inquest, the coroner's inquest.

Other Bills that are amended are Bills like *The Court Security Act* and *The Creditors' Relief Act*, as well as *The Executions Act* and *The Pre-judgment Interest Act* where they will strike out *The Court Officials Act, 1984* and switch it to the new Bill, *The Court Officials Act, 2011*. And also there's a striking out the inspector of legal offices and substituting a new amendment, inspector of court offices. All in all, those seem to be fairly straightforward changes, and changes that are required as the result of the introduction of Bill 11.

I guess the only other comment I might have at this point, Mr. Speaker, is thinking of the role of the coroner and coroner's inquests. It reminds me of a young lady named Shannen Koostachin from Attawapiskat Indian Reserve who actually died in an untimely automobile accident. And I'm thinking

about the coroner's inquest at that time.

Shannen was living in Attawapiskat and was promised a new school. And because Minister Strahl wasn't able to provide the school despite having promised one, she had to go to school away from home, and she had to go to school a couple of hours or several hours south of her hometown, and was doing very well there and in fact had received recognition from the United Nations and several national awards for her participation in demanding appropriate and proper buildings for schools for children on Attawapiskat Indian Reserve. Unfortunately the government was not able to deliver — and indeed we've seen much of that in the news lately — and Shannen died tragically in a car accident far away from home. And I'm thinking about the coroner's inquest at that time and the impact on the families and whether or not they had to pay for the transcripts for that inquest, if indeed there was one.

At any rate, it's somewhat disappointing that we aren't able to support the motion that was raised earlier to encourage the federal government to deal with these types of horrible situations on Indian reserves that have accumulated over the years. They're not easy problems to solve, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I think it's one that this House should encourage. And indeed when motions are brought forward to support that kind of unanimous consent in the House of Commons, it would be . . . It's really sad to me as a new legislator that we can't support it here at this level. In fact I'm very disappointed in that.

At any rate, in terms of the changes to *The Coroner's Act* at this point or needed for the implementation of Bill 11, *The Court Officials Act, 2012 — 2011*, I guess. I don't know why . . . Oh yes, it was introduced in December 2011. I would say at this point, we're going to take a close look at it. There are other of my colleagues that want to speak to this. And at this point, I would like to move to adjourn debate.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Nutana has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 12, *The Court Officials Consequential Amendments Act, 2011*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 13

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 13 — *The Constitutional Questions Act, 2011/Loi de 2011 sur les questions constitutionnelles*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I rise to speak on Bill No. 13, *An Act respecting References, Constitutional Questions and Challenges to Regulations and making a consequential amendment to The Court Of Appeal Act, 2000*. And this is a bilingual Bill, so we have both English and French versions of this particular piece of legislation.

The minister's given a brief overview of the Bill when it was introduced on December 13th, 2011. And a number of the issues that are set out in here relate to the procedures that are required to refer a constitutional question to the court, including service provisions and other things like that, which are . . . Basically the rules are being brought up to how other court applications are dealt with. It also clarifies those situations as to when the litigant in a proceeding, where a constitutional question may arise as to when they may advise the Attorney General of Saskatchewan and, in some situations, the Attorney General of Canada. And basically these are a new version of a system that we've had.

Clearly there have been some problems in litigation over the last number of years, and this legislation is here because it's trying to collect, connect, or correct a number, a number of problems. And there aren't that many constitutional reference cases, so we could probably go through each one of them and figure out where the issue is that the government has had with a particular reference. But practically some of those kinds of questions we'll have to end up looking at in committee.

But sort of the heart of the legislation is part II, the reference provision. And this is a situation where there's a reference to the Court of Appeal for an opinion. And there are obviously constitutional lawyers and others who would've spent a lot more time looking at these types of legislation over the years. But I think we need to look very carefully at what this part II reference section says, and especially a reference to the Court of Appeal, section 2(1). It starts off:

The Lieutenant Governor in Council [effectively the Premier] may refer any matter to the Court of Appeal for hearing and consideration, and the Court of Appeal shall hear and consider the matter.

So it's giving the power to the executive branch to send something to the Court of Appeal. And it doesn't give the Court of Appeal any discretion. It says shall; it doesn't say may. So there's a fairly clear directive to the court to hear and consider the matter. Now it doesn't say how they should consider the matter or what their decision should be, but it does pretty definitely say you have to do something with it.

[15:45]

If you go then to the next page or to section 2(2), it goes to another kind of curious clause in a way. It says:

If the Lieutenant Governor in Council [if the Premier and cabinet] includes in the terms of reference that the opinion and reasons of the Court of Appeal shall be deemed a judgment, the opinions and reasons of the Court of Appeal shall be deemed a judgment.

That's kind of like Dr. Seuss or something. I mean it's pretty obvious that, you know, it just sort of says what it says. But then you say, well why does it say what it says here? The reason, as far as I can tell, and this where I have some questions and I think we'll have more questions when we get into committee on this Bill, is that it doesn't necessarily say that subsection (1) of this same section 2 is a situation where there can be opinions that are not appealable. So effectively what

happens is the cabinet, the Premier and the cabinet, get to decide whether a decision of the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal is appealable to the Supreme Court of Canada before it's actually sent and before there's a decision that's made by the court.

So under section 2(1), those are matters that would be sent to the Court of Appeal, and it's not a judgment and so therefore it's not appealable under this legislation. At least it doesn't say those words, not appealable, because they don't appeal very much actually. They're not . . . I think somebody would notice, but that's what they're doing here. But subsection (2) says okay, if we want the Court of Appeal's opinion but we also want the option to go to the Supreme Court to look at a particular issue, then we'll tell you that before you even make your judgment the first time around.

So in risk management there are certain things that one does as a person, as a company, as a government. You kind of figure out what the track is and where something might go. If you have a particular question where you wouldn't mind an answer that's outside your own organization, but you don't want it maybe to go much farther than that, well you use subsection (1) and get an opinion effectively. So if you go to subsection (2) and have it deemed to be a judgment, then that allows it to be appealed.

So I'm not quite sure of the history of this particular clause or what the government is intending here, but it is assumed, I think, that anything that's done pursuant to subsection (2), whether it's an opinion or ultimately a judgment which is appealable, that these things are done openly and everybody knows that this is what's happening. But I didn't see any specific reference in this legislation that this all needs to be done in an open fashion so that the public can see what is happening. And that may be assumed or there may be a reference in some other place that I don't have in front of me today.

But I think it's a question that we need to ask because if in fact what we're doing here is creating a new method of getting private opinions on constitutional issues for the Premier and the cabinet without telling anybody that they're doing that, then we don't want that. And I would be asking the minister very specifically that question when we get to committee, and in some ways, it may be that it's something that should be amended to be clarified. We also don't want situations where the government, the Premier, and the cabinet are hedging their bets. They'll say, well we'll go for an opinion, but we don't want it to go to any judges other than the judges in our court. That also seems a little bit strange.

Now it's possible that these are budget Bills, and court hearings and all of the things that surround the constitutional reference can really get quite expensive if you don't have lots of parameters on them as far as costs. And there appear to be a couple of other clauses in this Bill that go to costs. And we've seen that in some of the other legislation that we've been looking at in this session, that there are ways of controlling the costs that end up maybe being the reason the Bill is here. Now obviously the minister won't say that directly, so we have to imply from what he has said. One of the procedural positive things, I suppose, but also a cost-cutting measure is to allow for

an appeal court judge to hear procedural matters and dispose of them in a fairly straightforward manner during the hearing. That's the kind of maybe procedural point that all lawyers can be happy with and pleased with.

But some of these other questions that are part of this legislation raise some interesting issues. And I know that I look forward to having a chance to talk to the minister and the various lawyers within the Department of Justice who have been drafting this legislation so that we can understand fully what the intention is of the department and of the minister, and also maybe to correct some of these things that are not as clear as they should be. Or maybe they're not as clear for a very specific reason; I will hold my judgment on that until I have had a chance to ask people about this in committee.

But with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move that we send this Bill on to committee.

The Deputy Speaker: — Is the Assembly ready for the question? The question before the Assembly is the motion by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 13, *The Constitutional Questions Act, 2011* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

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

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 13, *The Constitutional Questions Act, 2011* be referred to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

The Deputy Speaker: — This Bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

Bill No. 14

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 14** — *The Securities 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. I'm pleased to rise to speak on Bill No. 14, *An Act to amend The Securities Act, 1988*. This particular legislation appears to respond to requests from a number of different groups to correct or perhaps modernize the securities legislation to do a few things. And the minister has referenced these, but that was back in December, so maybe I will remind us what we're talking about here.

Basically the first one relates to financial advisors, and it allows them to do their business through a professional corporation. So that's similar to doctors and lawyers and other professionals. So

it allows for the advantages and I suppose the disadvantages of incorporation of a professional practice. There's always lots of discussion about that.

There's also some changes that allow for better organization of the whole financial services sector organizations. And we're not, I don't think, necessarily opposed to that because normally these kinds of amendments come forward at the request of the organizations.

Now clearly all securities legislation worldwide, but especially in North America, was challenged by the year 2008. And the rules that were meant to protect both the advisors, but more importantly the customers, ended up being challenged right to the limit. And I think that what we will find as we go through some of this legislation in committee is that the recommendations that are coming here come from within the financial services industry, but they're the kinds of provisions that are coming on a national basis through discussions with various provincial organizations and basically conversation between provinces and territories and the federal government. So what we will be asking is further clarification about that as we move forward with this particular legislation.

Now there are some parts of the amendments, and I assume these are some of the ones that come nationally, that relate to credit rating organizations and their ability to assess different financial instruments for security purposes. And anyone who has examined what happened in the world financial markets in 2008 can go back to see that some of the adjustments or flexibility that was given to credit rating agencies was what caused huge problems in the mortgage markets in the United States as they consolidated residential mortgages and some small-business mortgages and then sold them as securities around the world.

So I think that some of these provisions that we're seeing in this legislation relate to those types of requests, and what we'll want to ask when we get into committee is how much, or where we sit on the scale of further regulations. What kinds of codes of conduct, what kinds of rules are we adopting or sharing — if we do it on a national basis — that will protect individuals?

In Canada we were lucky enough to have a very good report prepared on the banking industry by my former law partner, Mr. Harold MacKay. And he did that at the request of the federal Finance minister, Paul Martin, and he spent probably a couple of years listening carefully to the financial services industry which included obviously all of the banking institutions, but all of the other ones that were similar to banks and the credit unions and other institutions.

After lots of deliberation and much advice from many different parts, he came down with a big report which I will just summarize by saying it was a report that said we need to be very careful in allowing for the various different types of financial institutions to share assets throughout the whole system.

What our Canadian bankers or Canadian financial institutions were interested in doing in those years was to become more competitive, more like their American, Japanese, British, but most specifically for us as Canadians, more American in their

style of banking. But the advice given by Mr. MacKay and accepted by Mr. Martin and by the federal government was that there could be some changes made, but that the fundamental structure of the Canadian banking system should stay the way it was. And all Canadians, all people in Saskatchewan, we can all thank Mr. MacKay and Mr. Martin, I guess Mr. Chrétien, for sticking tight on that because we were able to weather the financial difficulties of 2008 and other subsequent shocks to the system much better than most of the countries of the world.

[16:00]

And, Mr. Speaker, if it's confirmed in the committee when we look at this legislation that the changes that are being proposed here also move in that tempered, balanced, common sense, Saskatchewan way, then I think the minister could probably have support from us as we proceed with this legislation.

So, Mr. Speaker, I move that we send *The Securities Amendment Act, 2011* to committee so that we can ask some more specific questions. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 14, *The Securities Amendment Act, 2011* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — To the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

The Deputy Speaker: — This Bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Pleased to enter in as it relates to debate for Bill No. 35, *The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Amendment Act, 2011*. And this Bill is a consequence of fixed election date legislation, a date that was chosen by the Sask Party government, and I guess the occurrence or the potential for it to

occur at the same time as a federal election in 2015. So this is a direct consequence to then move the date to, potentially, to spring of 2016. I believe the first, it was the first Monday in April of 2016 would be when our election in Saskatchewan would be held, the next general election in Saskatchewan would be held if the Prime Minister and the federal government choose to proceed with an election in 2015.

Now I don't know whether or not the Premier has had conversations with the Prime Minister on this file or not and if he has some understanding of whether there's any likelihood of the federal government moving their election date or not. But certainly this Bill is a consequence of that, unintended consequence if you will, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of the two dates coinciding, certainly which would raise some problems for voters. And certainly a fix or a resolve is required.

When we are looking at a piece of legislation, however, that relates to elections in this province and our electoral process, certainly we want to be cautious as we review any changes made by this government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because the record of that government as it relates to democratic functions within Saskatchewan has been poor, Mr. Deputy Speaker, whether it's the interference with the independent chief electoral hiring process, Mr. Speaker, where this government stalemated a process and in fact reduced the, likely, the effectiveness, efficiency of that office and the important function it fulfills to Saskatchewan people, where it politically intervened in what's supposed to be an independent process to uphold democratic process in Saskatchewan. That's certainly something that's been disappointing by this government, something we should keep in mind when now this government's making changes to electoral process.

I suspect we should also keep in mind the fact that this is the same government that put forward voter ID [identification] provisions and requirements that were intended to serve one purpose, and sadly that was to reduce the participation of young people in this province, First Nations and Métis people in this province, like the seniors in this province, in the electoral democratic process that we should uphold with great pride, Mr. Speaker. I know certainly at that point in time, disappointed with the anti-democratic approach by this government, I know we were certainly solidly on the record and I was solidly on the record with great concern around that sort of activity that's intended to thwart the democratic process and not enhance it.

And it's again to this point that we're disappointed by this government on so many fronts that when they choose to bring forward legislation — and I speak particularly to the voter ID provisions, certainly to the intervention in the chief electoral process — we have a government that chooses to thwart the involvement of all Saskatchewan people in that process instead of working to improve voter outcomes, improve the participation of young people, Mr. Speaker, who frankly I think have a lot to offer to that process, to improve the involvement and engagement of First Nations and Métis people in this province which, Mr. Speaker, I'd argue have a lot at stake and have a lot to offer to that process. And certainly when we look at seniors, many seniors that were disenfranchised by this government and their actions, their deliberate actions, Mr. Speaker, I'm disappointed by this government on that front.

And I hear some heckling from ministers opposite on this front, but many of those seniors, Mr. Speaker, have in fact fought, Mr. Speaker, and served their country and their nation to uphold democratic practice and function around the world, Mr. Speaker, my grandfather being one of them, and a veteran who's provided service to in fact enshrine and promote democratic practice. It's disappointing to see a government be so deliberate in their approach to in fact reduce that democratic function here and process here in Saskatchewan, a place that has often been a leader in the world, a leader as it relates to these sorts of jurisdiction.

You know, and it's interesting. We're getting some heckling from members opposite, and we know, we likely suspect, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that that has a lot to do with the stress of the cabinet shuffle that's coming up, Mr. Speaker, in this Assembly. And there's a lot of members opposite that are thinking am I in, am I out, Mr. Speaker. Is my paycheque going to be bigger or is it going to be smaller? Am I going to be demoted and embarrassed or am I going to be provided new opportunities, Mr. Speaker?

So this is an interesting piece that we see from members opposite. And you know, I look and I suspect, you know, and I see members, I would suspect certainly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that Moose Jaw will have a seat at the cabinet. I would hope and expect that the fine city of Moose Jaw would be represented at that cabinet table. I would fully expect that Prince Albert will have a role and a place at that cabinet table, Mr. Speaker. I know new members from Regina. There's all sorts of individuals who would likely be placed into cabinet.

The Deputy Speaker: — Why is the member on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — A point of order, Mr. Speaker. The member for Rosemont, I believe, is supposed to be speaking to Bill 35 which is *The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Amendment Act*. I'm not entirely sure he was on point, Mr. Speaker, which as he well knows as a veteran of the House is one of the prerequisites of speaking to a Bill, that you actually speak to a Bill. I know he's very concerned about the leadership campaign though, Mr. Speaker, of which he's currently engaged and I believe this may have . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — I realize that it's getting a bit later in the afternoon, members.

[Interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. Order, please. I realize it's getting a bit later in the afternoon and there is a bit of leeway in member statements on both sides of the House. I would remind all members of the place where we have the privilege of working in and that we respect the long-standing traditions of the House. I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And it's my pleasure to continue in debate of Bill No. 35, *The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Amendment Act, 2011*.

Executive Council amendment Act, 2011. So we're talking about Executive Council on this front, but also about changes to

the electoral process, Mr. Speaker. And as we're looking at the changes brought forward by this government, we certainly have to be cautious as we review them, Mr. Speaker. Because as I've said, when this government has intervened with legislation in the past as it relates to our democratic process, the results have been disappointing and not in the best interests of Saskatchewan people. And we have too many examples, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on that front, whether it was the interference in the independent Chief Electoral Officer's hiring, Mr. Speaker, or whether it was putting voting rules in that prevented so many from — particularly young people, First Nations and Métis people, and seniors, Mr. Speaker — from participating in the last election, Mr. Speaker.

And these are the kind of actions of a government that are very deliberate in their electoral goals, but less interested in the best interests of Saskatchewan people and a Saskatchewan that functions best when all people are involved in that process — young people, First Nations and Métis, seniors, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And certainly that's where we think where Saskatchewan should be focusing their energies. How do we have broader engagement, more engagement of all Saskatchewan people? So we are a tad suspicious of this government when they bring forward electoral change or changes to the democratic process.

We see recently, Mr. Deputy Speaker, further changes to that in fact, through the redistribution process, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Without any sort of a rationale, this government's forging ahead — breaking with basically the rest of Canada, the vast majority of Canada, certainly Western Canada — in not counting, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you can imagine, young people in that redistribution process, not counting young people in that redistribution process.

So when we go to look at Bill No. 35, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and when voters go to the polls next election, that will be determined by this legislation and in correspondence with the federal government as to when the date of that legislation is. What the sad reality is is that we're going to be dealing with constituencies that this government is forging ahead in a process that is going to discount the voice and importance of young people, and that it could be said by many to be nothing more than a gerrymandering process of the electoral boundaries, Mr. Speaker. So we have concerns on that front.

On another front, Mr. Speaker, when we go to that next election, not certain of what that date will be, again we need to be focusing our efforts to reverse the damaging changes to eliminate so many from voting and from exercising their franchise, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And that's something that's important to this province, something that's important to Saskatchewan New Democrats, something we're going to be pushing for — that we're at our best when all Saskatchewan people are engaged. We're at our best when we can encourage a broader engagement of First Nations and Métis people in that electoral process who have specific needs, or of young people, Mr. Speaker, or of seniors. So many different gains and improvements we should be making, and instead we see a government that forges ahead with reckless legislation or deliberate legislation that doesn't serve the democratic interests of Saskatchewan people and doesn't serve the interests of Saskatchewan people, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I guess the other aspect that we're going to be dealing with because of this government is they're forging ahead to create three new constituencies. They want to fund three new MLA positions. And when you add up the cost of these offices and the staff and the communications allowances and all the different costs that go with that, this comes at a cost of over \$700,000, I understand, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So this government is pushing ahead with an increase in the number of MLAs or politicians, Mr. Speaker, at the same time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that they're reducing — if you can imagine — services and programs in our classrooms, through our health services, and for Saskatchewan people across this province.

So they're saying to Saskatchewan people, well brace yourselves for cuts to long-standing and important programs and services; but oh, by the way, we're going to push forward our electoral best interests by creating new seats for MLAs at a significant cost to Saskatchewan people — something that's a significant concern and again putting this back into the, I guess, anti-democratic context that we can view this government when we look at electoral changes in the past of this government.

So we're hopeful that the, you know, that this government can reverse some of those, that direction that they've taken. And certainly we hope that the Premier is able to have some conversation with the Prime Minister to establish when this federal election and when the provincial election are going to occur. Certainly there's more pressing matters, Mr. Speaker, for this Premier to be advancing with the Prime Minister, examples that were raised here today in the Assembly as it relates to the simply unacceptable and unfair funding of First Nations education in this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, something that comes with a direct consequence to our economy, to our social well-being, and to the individual lives of so many in this province.

[16:15]

Given the opportunity here today in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, the government was provided the chance to work together across the aisle to provide one voice on this most important issue, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And that government chose to reject that opportunity even though, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I might say that in the federal House of Commons, federal House of Commons, all parties and all members were able to support a motion and work unanimously towards goals that are so important to all Canadians and, might I say, incredibly important to Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So again we're continuing to get heckled by members opposite who are certainly stressed and concerned about the cabinet shuffle that's coming up. They're thinking, am I in; am I out; you know, all those kinds of stresses that members opposite have, Mr. Speaker.

But we are going to stay focused on the priorities of Saskatchewan people. We'll continue to analyze Bill No. 35, Mr. Speaker, what seems to be a pretty straightforward change in consequence of the Act put forward by the government. But we certainly view that also through the lens of so many decisions and actions of this government that have not been in the best interests of Saskatchewan people, that haven't been in the best interests of our democratic process, and we expect

better on all those fronts. Certainly we'll be raising questions and doing consultation with respect to this piece of legislation and many others, Mr. Speaker, but at this point in time with respect to Bill No. 35, *The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Amendment Act, 2011*, I move adjournment of debate.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm happy to rise today to speak to Bill 36, the last Bill that's been introduced in this somewhat uninteresting legislative agenda, but at any rate, this Bill, this one is actually quite interesting, Mr. Speaker, and I'm happy to have a chance to make my comments to it today.

The Act is called the Act to amend *The Constituency Boundaries Act*, and given the weight of the Bill, on paper it's only one page, but I think there's volumes to speak about this particular Bill, Mr. Speaker, and certainly me and my colleagues are going to do our best to raise those issues both here in the House and of course with the public.

So the first thing I want to talk to is the comments of the minister when he introduced the Bill back in December last year . . . or no, it was March 5th when it was finally introduced here. And I just want to find the minister's comments . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well I think they were good. Okay, well not being able to find them, the first section . . . All right. Thank you to my colleague. The first thing he raised was the view of the government that the process must reflect the increase in population since the boundaries were last drawn. It's certainly agreed that we have had a population increase since the last census. And he's confident that it should happen before the commission is struck in order that the commission can do its work properly. So he announced that it was time to come to recognize a population change and the need for increased representation by increasing the number of constituencies in the province from 58 to 61.

It seems to be an arbitrary number, Mr. Speaker. It's not really clear why the need is now. Certainly this province has had more MLAs in the past, and the government saw fit that it was time to reduce them. And the increased population is really kind of a relative question, Mr. Speaker. Indeed editorial comments from *The StarPhoenix* last week indicated that there's all kinds of markers that we could talk about when it comes to the proper, what is proper in terms of the number of people in each riding.

Every jurisdiction's different. Every province is different, and the needs of each province are different. So there's no magic way or mathematical way perhaps to find the exact right number for the number of constituencies that any legislature needs.

But what was pointed out by the editorial in *The StarPhoenix* on Friday was that Saskatchewan has an average 17,807 voters per riding. So let's say 17,000 voters per riding. Now let's look at Manitoba. How many people live in each riding in Manitoba? Twenty-one thousand, Mr. Deputy Speaker, so that's 4,000 people more in their riding. And then if you go to Alberta, our neighbour to the west, we have 44,000 voters per riding in Alberta.

And so again, where's the right number here? Where's the right math? It's not clear where the minister is pulling these numbers from in order to determine that we need three more MLAs in Saskatchewan.

Let's carry on. Let's look at British Columbia. In British Columbia there's 52,000 members per riding in the province of British Columbia. So 52,000 compared to 17,000. And we need more MLAs? Let's look at Ontario while we're at it. Ontario has 120,000 voters per riding on average compared to Saskatchewan's 18,000. So they have 10 times more voters per riding. And yet this minister sees fit to announce that we need more seats because our population's going up.

I'm not sure where he's getting that calculation from and why he thinks it's important, how that fits into the rest of Canada. And I think we would certainly want to see something from this minister on why, why we need to have a considerable public expenditure when indeed there appears to be no need when we look at Alberta, Manitoba, British Columbia, and Ontario. So four other provinces have significantly higher averages per riding. And yet this minister, in times of prosperity, austerity . . . I guess this would be the austerity, prosperity one where he thinks that we need to increase the number of MLAs.

Another point that was pointed out by the editorial, and that I'm in absolute agreement with, is the cost. So we are told that the average cost of an MLA is about \$225,000 per year. So that's expensive. You add three; that's a quarter of a million dollars. And we're being told there's budget cuts coming, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We're being told that the civil service is way too big. How's that going to fly with the public when we know that important civil service jobs . . . And I come from the civil service. I spent seventeen and a half years with the federal public service. And every time a cut went, it meant people were going without and services were being lost. Somehow the idea that you can just banish people from the public service and the work will continue simply doesn't work, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The cuts in public service hurt. They hurt the people that lose the jobs certainly, hard-working civil servants who are in public service just like everyone here is. And it also hurts the people that are affected by the cuts, and those are the people who receive the services. It's difficult. Every time a cut is made in public service, it affects the workplace. It affects the morale of the people working there. I've been through a number of cuts and freezes and downsizing in the public service. It's a really difficult time for employees. Morale goes down. It affects

production, and there's a lot of fear going around the workplace. And finally with cuts like that, often there's suspensions in management. Because there's people that are being let go, management people are being appointed as acting management. And it really destroys the ability of the public service to work effectively.

So cuts in public service and adding three MLAs, with all the attendant costs that go with it, just is not making sense to me. It's like speaking out of both sides of the mouth. I don't understand how this is going to happen and why it's necessary.

And I guess the other thing, Mr. Speaker, that has occurred to us, and other of my colleagues have spoken to this, is if this was such a pressing need — and certainly the minister knew about the increase in population well before the writ was dropped — why wasn't this issue raised with the people of Saskatchewan at the time of the election? Why wasn't this part of the Sask Party's campaign or platform? Because this is a pretty significant change to the shape of the government, and it's a cost that is going to affect the taxpayers — \$750,000 a year — and yet it didn't make it into the platform. So either there's no organization on the part of the platform people, or the minister decided it wasn't important enough to tell the people of Saskatchewan about.

However, it was introduced shortly after the election in December. So it's really unfortunate that the minister and the Sask Party decided not to talk to the people of Saskatchewan about this at the time of the election. I think the public and anybody who is studying this is going to have to draw their own conclusions about why that was done.

The minister had pointed out the difficulties of travel for MLAs, and I think again, one of the journalists pointed out today that it's kind of, he said, a silly question. And it's, when's the last time you've had to travel to your MLA's office to deal with an issue? And indeed I think if any of the MLAs here present look at their records and what their constituency assistants are dealing with, I would imagine, and I know it's certainly my case — and my office is easy to get to — my constituents pick up the phone or they email me or they fax me or they Twitter me or they go on Facebook. There's all kinds of ways for constituents to be in good contact with their MLAs and it doesn't require travelling to the MLA's office. And it certainly is very easy in downtown Saskatoon for constituents to come to my office. Even when it's easy they don't come; they phone.

And that's the point of the article, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that people have ways to connect these days that don't require travelling long distances. And I appreciate the fact that rural MLAs have to travel. That's important. And there's communities that are far spread out and that's important too.

And the problem being with that, Mr. Speaker, is even based on the math again, we've heard news from the Premier, or word from the Premier, that it might actually be only one additional rural constituency and it may be two urban constituencies. We don't even know what the plan is yet because the minister . . . Or we've heard that's what the Premier's thinking but there's no word from the members opposite as to how these three seats are going to be configured. But certainly if there's two in the urban ridings and one in the rural ridings, then it wouldn't make

any sense at all to have . . . or it wouldn't make any difference to rural MLAs if there was only one additional rural riding. And certainly based on population, if that's the concern as the minister has stated, there will likely be rural . . . urban ridings, and it won't help with the concerns that the minister's raising about distances. Rural ridings will likely get bigger, if we're looking at population as the determination for the commission when they actually are formed.

So there are some inconsistencies here that just don't seem to have been clearly thought out, and we're certainly looking for some clear answers from the other side of the Assembly for why this what appears to be illogical decision, unannounced decision, and no consultation type of decision before . . . and actually binding the Boundary Commission as well in terms of telling them that there's three new ridings when they really aren't necessary.

One of the things that the journalist said is — this is Murray Mandryk — said, "Even in the inconceivable event that you would need access to your local MLA — is there any reason to think they are much busier now than they used to be . . ."

He goes on to say, "Well, if they are busier, it's not likely busier working at government business." And he points out that government sits much less than it used to, and so arguably there's less committee work. And I think certainly from the paltry legislative agenda that's been put forward this particular session, there isn't a lot of legislative work going on either. So it's curious to . . . Mr. Mandryk and I would agree. Why is this even necessary if the number of days are less, the legislative . . . There's Fridays off. And we understand that some MLAs can even conduct another career while being an MLA. So again what is the concern in terms of the amount of committee work that's . . .

[Interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: — Order, please. I know my hearing isn't quite what it used to be, but I am having difficulty hearing the member, and I would ask all members' co-operation in allowing the member to make her comments. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you. I was having trouble hearing myself, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The addition of the three constituencies is of concern, but nowhere is it as of much concern to me as the additional part of this Bill. And that's the second piece of this one-pager, where in section 6 of *The Constituency Boundaries Act* they are proposing to amend . . . repeal it, sorry. Subsection 13(2) is going to be repealed. And there's a new formula. The following is substituted: "The constituency population quotient is to be calculated in accordance with the following formula." CPQ equals TP minus NP [northern population] over 59. CPQ is the total constituency population quotient. TP is the total population and then the northern population. So that's of concern because again it's creating these additional three seats where it's probably not necessary.

[16:30]

But the clause I really did want to speak to is clause 2(k). And that says:

Clause 2(k) is amended by adding “that is 18 years of age or older” **after** “total population of Saskatchewan”.

Mr. Speaker, I have a 16-year-old son and an 18-year-old son, and my 18-year-old voted for the first time this year. He was quite excited about being involved in the electoral process and it really meant something to him to be able to get up and cast a ballot — I guess maybe more special because he cast it for his mom. But it was an important day for him. I know it was an important day for me to see my children becoming adults and engaging in the democratic process. That’s something when I grew up that was important in our household, and it’s a message I think that I’ve carried with me my whole life — that the right to vote is one of the most important things that we’ll ever do in terms of the freedom of our country and the way our democratic society has evolved.

Now in *The StarPhoenix*, one of the things they pointed out about this provision in the Bill to amend the population calculation by deleting children, by not allowing anybody under 18 years of age who can’t vote, to count, it really raises a lot of serious, serious questions about what this government’s motivation is and why they felt it necessary to introduce this particular amendment at this time, without discussing it with the people of Saskatchewan during the election period and letting them know what their motives were. And we don’t know what the motives are. We do have what the minister had to say about it, and he’s saying, “It is a fundamental principle in our democracy that each vote should be of roughly the same value throughout the province.” So if children are excluded, it would mean they don’t have value, is the way you can interpret that.

We know they can’t vote, but if you look at what the editorial from *The StarPhoenix* says . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Of course we know they can’t vote, Mr. Speaker. That’s obvious. You have to be 18 years old to vote. But what *The StarPhoenix* said, it says “Premier Brad Wall’s plan to base future ridings on the number of voters rather than total population also warrants some serious thought. With . . .”

[Interjections]

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. *The StarPhoenix* says:

Premier Brad Wall’s plan to base future ridings on number of voters rather than total population also warrants some serious thought. With four years to go to the next election, it makes little sense to count only those who already are 18 when those who are close to age 14 will be eligible to vote when the writ is dropped.

So he is excluding at least four years of voters in the next election by not counting them now. And there’s no rationale given for that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There’s no indication why he is saying that it’s only 18 years of age or older. At a very minimum, if that is the logic he’s using, it should be 14 years of

age. And then we have to adjust that every time there’s a new election. So it just doesn’t seem to be well thought out.

And my son came home from school, my 16-year-old, a while back and he was talking, the kids at school were talking about the fact that they’re losing a week of holidays next year in February if the new school education amendment Act goes through. And what he told me is he said, mom, Brad Wall hates kids. Now, you know, I think that’s pretty harsh . . .

An Hon. Member: — You can’t mention the member’s name.

Ms. Sproule: — Did I say a name? I’m sorry, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I’m just learning all the rules here so my colleagues are helping me out here. I apologize for that. The Premier, I guess, is what it should have . . . I have to paraphrase and I guess I can’t direct quote in that context.

The minister went on to say when he was discussing the reasons for introducing this particular amendment to *The Elections Act*, or constituency boundaries amendment Act, he said, in Saskatchewan:

While the two northern constituencies have special rules for obvious reasons, in Saskatchewan we have one of the lowest permitted size variances of plus or minus 5 per cent between constituencies. It is our view that to ensure votes of equal value . . .

Now he’s using the word equal, and the minister knows about equality and what equal means and that rights are often . . . Equality means different things to different people. For populations where there are a large number of children, and as my other colleagues have pointed out, quite often very high proportional ratios of Aboriginal children, that this is not equality, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And the minister knows that. That this, in fact, is excluding people from being counted when it talks about the life of that particular constituency. And it just seems really disappointing that this government thinks it’s appropriate to exclude children from that quotient.

Children are part of the community. And it leads me to think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that if somebody under 18 showed up at my office, I’m not sure whether, you know, do I represent them any more or not? Because I’m being told they don’t count when it comes to establishing the size of the constituency. So do they count when they show up here in the legislature? Do they count when government is making policy about children? We are representative of the people and if my children aren’t those people, then there’s something wrong with this message. And I really hope that we continue to see at least the fifth estate taking account of this and taking note that this is something that just doesn’t make sense. It was not talked about in the election at all. It didn’t show up in any of the platform documents. It seems to be sneaking it in at number 36 in the legislative agenda, you know. At least it’s something that we can pay a lot of attention to in the agenda, but other than that . . .

The minister went on to say that, “By using the most recent census data to determine who is of voting age . . . [And again the concern there is, is that’s excluding some of our most precious people, children under 18] rather than using the voters list, we’re using the best available data.” And he went to say

that “The Bill would clarify that if a commission is already established at the time the Bill comes into force.”

Again the timing I think is important, but it shows that this is something that’s quite likely muddying the waters in terms of how the new Boundaries Commission’s going to approach its work. And certainly with the new census data coming in and that work having to begin soon, the deadlines are established in the legislation. So we know that it’s coming. And for the minister to introduce this kind of change at this point in time while they’re struggling with the census data, I can see from his perspective why it would be a useful time to do it, but to really take the steps he’s done to exclude children and voters, non-voters or at least non-voters under 18. He’s willing to allow voters, non-voters, be counted in the population counts if they’re over 18, but children aren’t counted. And that’s something that’s really of concern.

Indeed the fifth estate, Mr. Mandryk, said today that . . . He’s arguing, you find it to be . . . This is a quote:

You find it to be an exceptionally convoluted argument for the premier to first claim that more seats are needed because rural ridings are becoming physically unwieldy, and then make rural ridings even larger by changing the format so children under 18 are removed from the formula that determines the constituency boundaries? True, but eliminating those under 18 years from the formula might be advantageous to preserving those Sask. Party rural ridings (with fewer children) at the expense of the more-inclined-to-vote-NDP urban seats (with more children). Yes, Mr. or Mrs. Average voter, a government *would* set aside such democratic principles and even a lot of its own rhetoric about the children being our future if it meant gaining an upper hand in the electoral process.

He goes on to say:

What’s that? You say the need for MLAs to be closer to their constituents is a particularly ridiculous argument because your MLA lives in Regina anyway? Well, I can’t argue with you there.

So it says, “You can’t also figure out why they are adding five per cent more Saskatchewan MLAs at the time of ‘austerity’ . . .” And they mentioned that earlier, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the cost associated with this Bill, we’re looking at three-quarters of a million dollars per year to have these three additional members sitting in this Assembly.

It’s really hard to understand why this is something that’s important to the government at this time. The government’s already set targets to reduce the civil service by 16 per cent in four years through attrition. And again even attrition in that kind of context is really difficult on people that are left behind in the public service. I’ve lived through it and that sort of downsizing and carving out . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Of course they’re retiring. That’s what attrition means. But what it means is the work doesn’t retire.

And that’s the issue, Mr. Speaker. Too often in management, it’s easy to just allow a position to remain unfilled when someone retires or leaves the unit. And I can tell you from

experience, that creates incredible stresses on people in the public service and it really sometimes poisons the atmosphere. It often leads to acting appointments. And anybody who has worked in the public service knows these things, and they know how difficult these kinds of cost-cutting measures or leaning measures has an impact on people in the public service.

Public service is an important part of the function of a democratic government. It’s an important part of a healthy society. And when we have cuts, this kind of austerity, it’s really unfortunate that public servants are the ones who suffer — and the taxpayers and the people.

I think, having been in government for seventeen and a half years, I certainly have enough opinions about how public service could be better managed. I never moved into the management sphere; I was happy with my career as a public service lawyer, so I didn’t really need to, I didn’t have any occasion to make those improvements when I was in the public service but certainly saw the struggles that my management went through when those kinds of austerity measures were imposed. I lived through a freeze in the early ’90s when the federal government froze, virtually froze the public service and there were a lot of negative impacts on the employees and on the services that were provided.

So those kinds of austerity measures, particularly in the light of the message that we’re hearing that this is the Saskatchewan advantage and this is boom times and everything’s great and we’re getting all these announcements about, you know, research and handing out all kinds of grant monies and yet . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. Marchuk: — Leave to introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the . . . Leave is granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Marchuk: — To you and through you to all the members of the Legislative Assembly, I’d like to introduce Mr. Ernie Gaschler, executive director of the Insurance Brokers’ Association of Saskatchewan. They are here at the legislature, at the building today to host a reception and dinner for members of the Assembly. We look forward to meeting with Mr. Gaschler after the session. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. With leave to introduce guests.

The Deputy Speaker: — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Leave is granted.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much. I’d like to join with the member from Douglas Park in welcoming Ernie Gaschler to the Legislative Assembly. Certainly the IBAS [Insurance Brokers’

Association of Saskatchewan] lobby, on an annual basis, is one of the more informative and well conducted public policy outreach endeavours in the province. And certainly one of the kickers for the event, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the draw that goes for the purple blankets. I had the privilege to have been so lucky to win in the draw. And I know that Carmichael Outreach was very appreciative of receiving those blankets, and I know that others through the years welcome that.

But first and foremost, the work that IBAS does in representing insurance brokers throughout the province and ensuring that their public policy perspective is well articulated and well presented to the decision makers in this legislature is something that's been well-known for many years. And, Mr. Gaschler, we thank you and your folks with IBAS for that good work.

So on behalf of the Official Opposition, we'd join with the member from Regina Douglas Park in welcoming Ernie Gaschler and representatives from IBAS to the Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

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

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 36 — *The Constituency Boundaries Amendment Act, 2011* (continued)

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. One of the things I was saying earlier was my concern, the concern that my 16-year-old son had about the loss of a week of holidays. And I think this kind of message is also going to resonate with students, those under 18. And we're already hearing a number of concerns from them about why don't I count? Why aren't I part of the electoral process? I am part of the community. I am part of the soccer team. I'm part of the school. And yet when I have a concern about what's happening to me, there's no representation. There's no one MLA that's . . . I'm not counted in the population count.

And I think that's a really scary message to send to young people, particularly when they aren't all that engaged in the electoral process to begin with. I know as a teenager, politics wasn't one of the really high things on my mind when I was a teenager, but if I had heard this I would have, I know I would've felt left out and been somewhat disappointed and perhaps even a little bit angry. I think that's what we're hearing from kids now, and my son's age group are going to feel that they're even more further removed from the electoral process. And again, particularly the ones that are 14, because they will be voting in that election. And I think that point is well-taken by *The StarPhoenix* editorial board.

[16:45]

So those are the kinds of things that I fear the government hasn't thought through very clearly. And if there is an agenda here for an advantage, then that's the only conclusion that we might be able to come to. Because if what the pundits are

saying is that really it's just helping advance rural seats for the sake of demographics, then there's a concern there, Mr. Speaker.

So I think that the concerns about the size of the rural ridings is a valid one. I'm not going to say that's not a concern. I know; I grew up in the country. I know how far distances are. And I do a lot of travelling around the province with some of the cultural work that I do. And I've been in pretty much every corner in the last few years, from up to Lloydminster down to Stoughton and Kenosee. And from those two corners, I've been over to Swift Current and up to Tuffnell, Saskatchewan, and all kinds of places. I know the distances that are involved in travel in rural Saskatchewan. But I think, even so, the number of people . . . and there's a quote here from some article that population is the most important thing about democracy. And if it isn't as equal as we can possibly make it, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I don't know why and what would motivate this government.

So I think we need to look to the pundits and the analysts, and we need to look to what the political economists are saying and say, what is really happening here? What is the actual motive for this Bill? Is it to protect voters because we want to make sure voters are equally represented? Why would we exclude children and young people under the age of 18, particularly when they're going to be voting in the next election? Why would we exclude them from that process of being counted?

And I guess ultimately, Mr. Speaker, what is the goal of this government? I mean, we have austerity warnings coming in the budget next week. We have a cut, 16 per cent in the civil service over the next four years, when we are arguably at the most prosperous time in our province's history, when there's people who have needs, and those programs are being cut. And yet we think it's important to add three more MLAs?

We know what we do. I'm starting to figure out what we do. I'm new to this, but I'm starting to figure out how this place works. And the work we do is important. But I don't think adding three more is critical to what we're doing right now. It certainly won't make a difference. It may tone . . . The volume might go up a little bit. That might be the only thing that will happen if we add three more MLAs to the mix at this point.

If we're going to be austere, let's be austere here first. Let's show leadership in this House and in this Assembly. And if austerity is needed, there are ways to find austerity right here. I mean, I look at the CPA [Commonwealth Parliamentary Association] dinner last night, wonderful event. That cost a lot of money, Mr. Speaker. And I'm seeing these things throughout this building as I'm starting to get used to what it means to be an MLA. And if there's austerity needed, maybe this House could be the model for that, rather than adding three new MLAs at the tune of \$750,000 a year — a quarter of a million dollars a year. So we're looking at \$3 million per term for adding these three MLAs when we're cutting the civil service.

So on two sides, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm finding that this Bill makes no sense. It was not announced to the public during the campaign, so I think there are some serious questions that needed to be answered about that. And the pundits are looking at that now. It's cutting out children under the age of 18 who, you know, some of whom will be voting in the next election,

and it's adding a considerable cost at a time of austerity in terms of how this government is treating the budget next week. And I just don't see the use or the merit in having this Bill at this point in time.

So I know that some other of my colleagues are looking forward to having an opportunity to comment on this Bill. I think the public certainly needs time to absorb the impact of this. And my son and his friends are going to have to think about it seriously too, and I expect that we'll be hearing from some of the younger people as the next few weeks go through.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I would move to adjourn the debate on this particular Bill, and thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Nutana 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. 15

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert that **Bill No. 15 — *The Uniform Building and Accessibility Standards Amendment Act, 2011*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise and participate in the debate on *The Uniform Building and Accessibility Standards Amendment Act, 2011*. Certainly it's one that we look on with great interest. If you're going to be doing any building in the province, UBAS [*The Uniform Building and Accessibility Standards Act*] as it's colloquially known throughout the building sector, is something that a lot of folks have a lot of opinions on.

But as relates to this particular amendment, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this would seem to be a fairly helpful set of amendments. And we'll look for ways to expand the debate on it, expand the discussion on it in committee, I know will be a particular focus for us.

But in terms of the preliminary work that we've done to date, Mr. Deputy Speaker, reaching out to affected parties in the sector, we for example heard back from the good folks at SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] stating that they were indicating support for the proposed changes. They welcomed the opportunity to comment again just as they had welcomed the opportunity to be consulted on this legislation before it went forward. So again that was one particularly important bit of consultation that we'd gained some assurance on, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Certainly the minister quoted SARM as being consulted and supportive when this legislation was introduced and given second reading, a second reading speech on December 13th. So

in that regard, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it seems to be fairly straightforward.

One of the things that UBAS currently does is adopt the National Building Code of Canada as the minimum standard for construction, renovations, additions, and change in use of occupancy of buildings. Again referencing the second reading speech of the minister, Mr. Deputy Speaker, quoting further from that speech:

Although the provincial government adopts the National Building Code for the province, municipalities are responsible for enforcing the code within their jurisdiction, that is, they are provided autonomy with respect to whether they would like to adopt more stringent standards as well as autonomy to decide on how these standards will be enforced.

So again sort of setting the envelope and then there being autonomy and self-direction within that for municipalities, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The minister further stated that:

Currently the UBAS Act exempts farm buildings, including houses, from being required to meet these building standards. At the time this legislation was created it was thought that applying the National Building Code to farm buildings would be an added burden to the farming community. Today that thinking has changed. The farming community now believes that they're being treated differently because their health and safety isn't being addressed through application of the National Building Code.

The important quote here, Mr. Deputy Speaker:

My ministry has heard that many in the farming community would like to ensure that their homes and other buildings are built or renovated to the same standard as the non-farming community.

And again this is the kind of consultation that quite frankly should take place, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you're going to . . . And I think is pointed out or is intimated in the Minister's remarks, this is the kind of consultation that had gone previously in terms of whether or not UBAS would be too much of an imposition for those in the farming community and the National Building Code. And again that the government has now determined that that is no longer the case and that there's room to move and to bring everyone to a level playing field. In terms of this regulatory change, we think that's positive and we're glad to see the progress.

As well, as was referenced by the Minister again, there are provisions in the UBAS Act that do allow rural municipalities to apply building standards to farm buildings:

The rural municipality must pass a resolution and request a regulation change. Government must then consider this request and amend the regulations. This regulation change will then apply building standards to farm buildings in part or all of their respective municipalities. However [and this

is a very important however, I might add parenthetically, Mr. Deputy Speaker] this provision only applies to rural municipalities. Cities, towns . . . and resort villages are currently unable to apply any building standards to farm buildings that might be located within their jurisdiction.

Again pointing out the sort of differential on the legislation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the way that this is being transitioned in. So I guess one other thing that is provided in the legislation is the removing of

. . . the need for government to amend the regulations every time a rural municipality wants to apply building standards to farm buildings in their jurisdiction. It will also extend this autonomy to all municipalities. With these amendments a rural municipality, city, town, village, or resort village will simply pass a bylaw declaring that the building standards apply to farm buildings in all or in part of their jurisdiction. By removing the need for a government regulation, we speed up the process while reducing unnecessary administrative work across government.

And again, that would seem to be fairly straightforward, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we'll see how that plays out in fact.

Again, referring to the Minister's second reading speech: ". . . although this proposed amendment reduces the administrative burden, it is not a deregulation of building standards." Again you know, you try to make the regulatory regime smart and responsive and easily navigated for people as they set out to work with the regulations, but that balance is important, Mr. Speaker, in terms of ease of access and ease of navigation of the regulations on the one hand, but not providing something that is unduly complicated or that's red tape for the sake of red tape. But on the other hand, you've got to make sure that regulation is there to provide assurance on the quality, to provide insurance on any number of fronts, Mr. Speaker, that work being undertaken is work that is as it should be and that there aren't a number of consequences that would flow from that work not being as it should be under the regulations.

I think it's also interesting that the minister in the second reading speech pointed out that:

Since 1990, 20 rural municipalities have been granted regulation changes so that they can apply building standards to farmhouses . . . simply allowing municipalities to apply the National Building Code across the board through an amendment to the Act makes this process less onerous on the farming community, less onerous on government, and ensures consistent protection across the province.

Again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, trying to strike that balance between adequate and appropriate regulatory oversight, but not forgetting that there's a point to having regulations in the first place, Mr. Speaker, and that is to ensure that quality that should be there.

I guess one of the things that the minister said towards the end of his second reading speech, amending the UBAS Act so all municipalities can apply the National Building Code to

farmhouses through their building bylaw serves several important purposes: honouring the autonomy extended to municipalities under municipal legislation, providing an adequate mechanism for applying building standards, and simplifying the regulatory burden on municipalities. Again we'll hopefully see this result borne out.

The minister's betting that this will, the net effect of this legislation will provide:

. . . safer, more secure homes, buildings, and communities that support this government's [and some fine rhetoric, rhetorical flourishes at the end of this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, communities that support this government's] commitment to safety and security and the growth of prosperity and opportunities in partnership with local government.

I guess we were with them up until that point, Mr. Speaker. Any time they start talking fancy like that, we get a bit suspicious. And we start to check in our wallets, as it were, as to the actual effect of the legislation.

But as much as that tempted us to get off the path with this particular piece of legislation, it would seem to be on balance, adequately consulted on, seems to be in the train of legislative developments that have gone previously. I'll have a bit more to say after we reconvene at 7 o'clock, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but at the moment I would allow the Deputy Government House Leader to do his thing.

The Deputy Speaker: — It now being 5 o'clock, this House stands recessed until 7 p.m. this evening.

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Draude	477
Chartier	477
Docherty	477
McCall	477, 506
Norris	477
Bjornerud	478
Nilson	478
Reiter	478
Vermette	478
Cheveldayoff	478
Belanger	478
Marchuk	506

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Forbes	478
Wotherspoon	479
Brotten	479
Vermette	479

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Women in the Legislature

Campeau	479
Chartier	480

Heritage Month in Moose Jaw

Michelson	480
-----------------	-----

5 Days for the Homeless

McCall	480
--------------	-----

Saskatchewan Agriculture

Toth	481
------------	-----

2012 Saskatchewan Healthcare Excellence Awards

Marchuk	481
---------------	-----

Saskatchewan Cross Country Skiing Association Annual Provincial Competition

Moe	481
-----------	-----

QUESTION PERIOD

Possible Takeover of Grain Marketing Company

Nilson	481
Wall	482

Human Rights Commission

Sproule	483
Morgan	483

Funding for First Nations Education

Wotherspoon	484
Harpauer	484
Wall	485

Federal Crime Legislation

McCall	485
Huyghebaert	485
Morgan	485

POINT OF ORDER

Harrison	486
The Speaker	486

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

New Emergency Youth Shelter

Draude	486
Chartier	487

SaskPower to Fund University Research Chairs

Norris	487
Brotten	488

CONDOLENCES

Kenneth Roy MacLeod

Wall	488
Nilson	489
Morgan	489

Allan Stevens	
Wall	490
Nilson	491
Reiter	491
Brotten	491
Linton Alexander MacDonald	
The Speaker.....	492
Willard Lutz	
The Speaker.....	492
Harrison (transmittal motion)	493
MOTION UNDER RULE 59	
Funding of First Nations Schools	
Wotherspoon	493
ORDERS OF THE DAY	
GOVERNMENT ORDERS	
ADJOURNED DEBATES	
SECOND READINGS	
Bill No. 10 — <i>The Parks Amendment Act, 2011</i>	
Harrison (referral to committee)	493
Bill No. 11 — <i>The Court Officials Act, 2011/Loi de 2011 sur les fonctionnaires de justice</i>	
Brotten	494
Bill No. 12 — <i>The Court Officials Consequential Amendments Act, 2011</i>	
Sproule.....	497
Bill No. 13 — <i>The Constitutional Questions Act, 2011/Loi de 2011 sur les questions constitutionnelles</i>	
Nilson	498
Harrison (referral to committee)	499
Bill No. 14 — <i>The Securities Amendment Act, 2011</i>	
Nilson	499
Harrison (referral to committee)	500
Bill No. 35 — <i>The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Amendment Act, 2011</i>	
<i>Loi de 2011 modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur l'Assemblée législative et le Conseil exécutif</i>	
Wotherspoon	500
Harrison (point of order)	501
Deputy Speaker (point of order).....	501
Bill No. 36 — <i>The Constituency Boundaries Amendment Act, 2011</i>	
Sproule.....	503
Bill No. 15 — <i>The Uniform Building and Accessibility Standards Amendment Act, 2011</i>	
McCall	508

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