



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

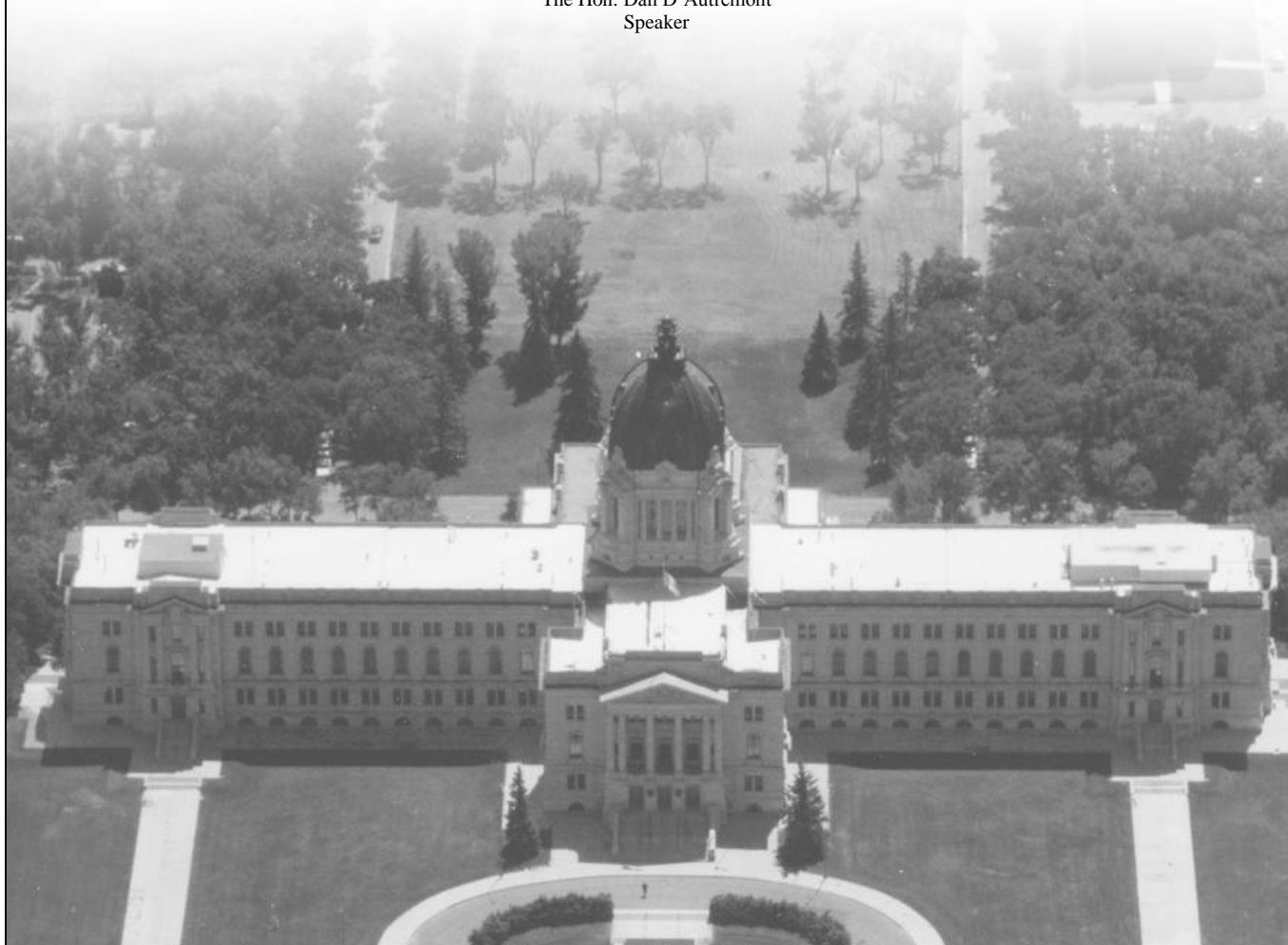
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Hon. 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, 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, Hon. 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, Jeremy	SP	Meadow Lake
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Hon. Nancy	SP	Martensville
Hickie, Darryl	SP	Prince Albert Carlton
Hutchinson, Bill	SP	Regina South
Huyghebaert, 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, Hon. 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, Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
Ottenbreit, Greg	SP	Yorkton
Parent, Roger	SP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Phillips, Kevin	SP	Melfort
Reiter, Hon. Jim	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Ross, Laura	SP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
Sproule, Cathy	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Steinley, Warren	SP	Regina Walsh Acres
Stewart, Hon. Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Tell, Hon. 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, Hon. Randy	SP	Biggar
Wilson, Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Wyant, Hon. Gordon	SP	Saskatoon Northwest

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, through you, I respectfully request leave to make an extended introduction.

The Speaker: — The Premier has asked for leave to make an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the Assembly, it's a pleasure to introduce some very distinguished guests that have joined us and are seated in your gallery. I'd like to introduce Mr. Mohd Haniff Rahman, Mr. Hares Lisot. I should indicate Mr. Haniff Rahman is the consul general of Malaysia in Vancouver. Mr. Hares Lisot is at the consulate of Malaysia in Vancouver. And they're joined by Mr. Hazil Jematt who's the consul of investment, Malaysia Investment Development Authority. They're based in Los Angeles, California. We want to welcome these three gentlemen to the Legislative Assembly today, Mr. Speaker.

Many will know that Canada was one of the first countries in the world to recognize Malaysia's independence and establish diplomatic relations in 1957. Since then our country and specifically our province have forged a very mutually beneficial relationship. In fact, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan was Canada's largest exporting province to Malaysia in 2011, providing 40 per cent of all of Canadian exports to that country.

Malaysia is a buyer of Canadian wheat. The majority of that wheat comes of course from the great province of Saskatchewan, from our producers. And in the last five years, our exports to Malaysia have averaged \$218 million annually, primarily in the areas of agricultural products and pulses but significantly in potash. In fact by the end of 2012, Malaysia's expected to become Saskatchewan's fifth largest offshore market for potash.

Mr. Speaker, while in our provincial capital here in the province, the delegation will be meeting with the ministers. They'll be meeting with the Minister of Advanced Education, the Minister Responsible for Trade and Resources, as well as the Minister Responsible for Tourism Saskatchewan. They met already briefly and had lunch, I think, with the Provincial Secretary and other officials.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think the Provincial Secretary passed along to them our intention to include Malaysia in our next Asian trade mission. We were in the neighbourhood not too long ago, and we very much look forward to building this relationship

through that kind of an in-person meeting, Mr. Speaker.

I want to say, in welcoming these gentlemen to this Legislative Assembly, thank you. Thank you through them to the people of Malaysia for the trade relationship we have and the mutual benefit that flows from that relationship. Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all members to welcome them to this Legislative Assembly today.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join with the Premier in welcoming the consul general and the two consuls here to our Legislative Assembly.

Malaysia is another parliamentary democracy like ours, so we have many things in common. One of the interesting things though for us in Saskatchewan is to realize that Malaysia is about half the land mass of Saskatchewan but it has almost 30 million people. And so they have very different political issues to deal with at home. But internationally one of their most important exports is oil, in the same way that we export oil. And so when we are sending our potash there and our food there, we're helping with all of the people issues at home, and we all can work together.

I think that as Malaysian citizens you would really like our motto for our province, which is "from many peoples, strength," because I know Malaysia is one of the most diverse ethnically of any country in the world, and that's also important that you can show the world how you can live together with many groups of people. So we're very happy to have you here and we look forward to many decades more of trade with you. Thank you.

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

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I respectfully ask leave for an extended introduction.

The Speaker: — The member for Regina Walsh Acres has asked for leave for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, it is an honour to rise today and introduce guests seated in your gallery. Mr. Speaker, joining us today are a group of first year students from my alma mater, the University of Regina. They are here because they are some of the first recipients of the Saskatchewan advantage scholarship, which reduces tuition by \$500 per year with a lifetime maximum of \$2,000. The students were here earlier today for an announcement that over 4,000 scholarships have been authorized to date worth \$2 million.

Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure of meeting some of these

bright, young students earlier today and I'd like them to wave as I introduce them now: Christopher Bryant, Anna Currie, Courtney Domoney, Allison Fletcher, Aaron Fritzier, Brooklyn Urban, and Breana Whipler. Mr. Speaker, as well as some of their parents: Erica Fletcher, Connie and Gordon Fritzier, and Raeleen Hamann.

Mr. Speaker, these students are here to recognize this government's commitment to keeping post-secondary education affordable, and I'd ask that all members of the legislature welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the member from Walsh Acres in welcoming these students and parents to the Assembly. In the Assembly we often get to have the opportunity to debate issues related to the post-secondary sector, including affordability and the financial picture on campuses. So it's always a good opportunity and a time when we can have students in the Chamber to remind us why we have those debates here on the floor of the Assembly.

So I'd like to join with the member and all members in welcoming these individuals to the legislature today. Thank you.

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

Mr. Parent: — Mr. Speaker, to you and through you and to all members of the Assembly, I would like to introduce 36 grade 8 students and their teachers, Tanya George, Crystal Lambert, Skylar Walkingbear, and chaperone Mike Wyka from Caswell Community School, seated in your west gallery.

Mr. Speaker, 100 years ago the children of the first classes at Caswell Community School played games at recess among the livestock in Robert Caswell's pasture. Today the Caswell neighbourhood is well-known for its character homes and quiet side streets.

Mr. Speaker, I invite all members to welcome these students to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join in with the member from Meewasin in welcoming the students from Caswell School.

This is a very special school for me. My kids graduated, three of them, from Grade 8 in Caswell. And I actually taught at Caswell for a few years, and so I know the school well, and I'm only about a block away from the school. It's a great school and it's great to see you here. Welcome to your legislature. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to introduce to you and through you to all members of this

honourable Assembly, Mr. Brennan Turner seated in the west gallery.

Brennan grew up on a farm near Foam Lake where his family has been farming since 1929. Brennan went to Notre Dame College in Wilcox and went on to obtain his degree in economics from Yale University while playing hockey there.

After school Brennan returned home with an idea and saw an opportunity here in Saskatchewan. With the end of the mandatory Canadian Wheat Board, Brennan saw an opportunity to bring grain farmers and buyers together. Brennan is the founder and president of Farm Lead Resources Ltd., which is a risk-free, non-subscription website service that helps farmers find buyers for their products. It also allows grain buyers to post offers online. He has been working hard on his new venture and is in town at Agribition this week.

I wish Brennan all the success in his new business and all his endeavours, and I ask all members to welcome him to his Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Through you and to you and to all the members of the Legislative Assembly, I'd also like to welcome Mr. Turner to his Legislative Assembly and congratulate him on the fine work that he's doing in this post-single-desk world. We know there's a lot of work that needs to be done, and we really congratulate him on all the work that he is doing. So thank you and welcome to your Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, seated in your gallery, it's a pleasure to see the students that have joined us here today. And I see one very familiar face there, and that's Aaron Fritzier who has joined us.

Aaron is a very bright young man with a big future ahead of him in this province. He is studying business at the University of Regina, and he's someone that I count as both a friend and someone that I count as a youth advisor to myself, Mr. Speaker. So it's a pleasure to have Aaron Fritzier join us here today. I ask all members to provide him the warmest of welcomes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, Caswell is a great neighbourhood, and it's so great that it actually has three MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] to pay attention to the needs of Caswell.

And I do want to join with the member from Meewasin and Centre in welcoming the students from Caswell, as my constituency also covers a good part of the neighbourhood. And I recognize a number of familiar faces there from the neighbourhood and from the park, so I want to welcome all of the Caswell students, teachers, and chaperones today at the

Assembly. Thank you for coming here.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to stand today to present a petition in reference to cellphone coverage, Mr. Speaker. And the prayer reads as follows:

To undertake, as soon as possible, to ensure SaskTel delivers cell service to the Canoe Lake First Nation, along with the adjoining communities of Cole Bay and Jans Bay; Buffalo River First Nation, also known as Dillon, and the neighbouring communities of Michel Village and St. George's Hill; English River First Nation, also known as Patuanak, and the hamlet of Patuanak; and Birch Narrows First Nation, along with the community of Turnor Lake, and all the neighbouring communities in the northwest part of our province.

Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed the petition are from all throughout these communities and many other communities, but the ones that have signed this particular petition, Mr. Speaker, are from Jans Bay and Green Lake. And I so present.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present petitions on behalf of concerned residents from across Saskatchewan who are concerned about our finances. The prayer reads as follows:

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

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

These petitions today are signed by concerned residents from Swift Current. I so submit.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Saskatonian Wins B'nai Brith Award

Mr. Norris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to congratulate Orest Chorneyko on receiving the B'nai Brith's 2012 We're Proud of You Award. Orest was

given the award at the B'nai Brith's 58th annual Silver Plate Dinner on November 14th in Saskatoon, where I had the honour of being joined by the Minister of Advanced Education, the Attorney General, and about 900 other people at the event.

The Saskatoon B'nai Brith chapter presents the annual award to a citizen of Saskatoon who has provided an exceptional level of volunteer service. Mr. Speaker, Orest's community involvement covers a wide span of areas including sports, charity, and tourism. He has served on the boards of Saskatoon Sports and Tourism, Saskatoon Prairieland Park, as a director of the 2010 World Junior Hockey Championships, and as the leader for the Royal University Hospital Foundation's corporate multi-million campaign. Mr. Speaker, Orest is a model citizen with values that reflect and reinforce the very best of Saskatchewan.

The Silver Plate annual dinner is a major fundraiser for the B'nai Brith. Mr. Speaker, this year's dinner raised approximately \$50,000 for various youth-oriented organizations supported by B'nai Brith. This year's new charity of choice was the Ronald McDonald House.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating Orest Chorneyko on receiving the 2012 B'nai Brith award, and I ask all members to join me in thanking him for his outstanding commitment and dedication to the people of Saskatoon and Saskatchewan.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[13:45]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

New Football Teams in La Ronge Area

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, the La Ronge and area now has two high school football teams. Recently the Churchill Community High School Chargers made history by winning their first game as a new team by defeating the Big River Rebels 31 to 21. The Churchill team was newly formed this fall under the coaching of teacher Gabe Andrews.

Senator Myles Venne high school on the Lac La Ronge Indian Band Reserve also fielded a new football team this year known as the Huskies. The Huskies are coached by teachers Devin Bernatchez and Glen Trites. The Huskies played their first exhibition match against the Churchill Chargers on October 17th. Both teams played exceptionally well for novice players. The Chargers beat the Huskies by a score of 26 to 12. The interschool competition has created a lot of excitement in La Ronge, and perhaps one or two of the players will one day be wearing Roughrider green.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all my colleagues to please join me in congratulating the good work of La Ronge high schools and thanking coaches Gabe Andrews, Devin Bernatchez, and Glen Trites for giving their time to providing healthy options for our youth.

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

Moose Jaw Health Foundation's Festival of Trees

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For those of you who may not have heard the news, there's a phenomenon in Moose Jaw that continues to amaze year after year. This past Saturday was the 21st annual Moose Jaw Health Foundation's Festival of Trees.

Marj and I, and along with 440 other guests, experienced a night of truly epic fundraising in the friendly city. This year's theme was A Canadiana Christmas, eh!. And we were treated to an evening of exceptional Canadian-themed music, decor, and food including the iconic poutine. This room's ceiling was decorated with stunning pine boughs and several antler chandeliers, and of course the elaborate displays and auction items that have become synonymous with the Moose Jaw Festival of Trees.

What sets apart this particular Festival of Trees is the depth of continuous community support. You'll find guest tables of supporters who attended the very first Festival of Trees and now their children are attending as well. Next-generation businesses help to keep our event one of the most successful in the province.

Mr. Speaker, this amazing event raised over \$311,000. A night of this is meticulously planned by many volunteers and local groups.

Mr. Speaker, Moose Javians have once again shown their generosity of time and dollars. I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating them on their sense of community, and yet another hugely successful event. Thank you.

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

Canadian Western Agribition

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, once again it's that time of year when Canada's agriculture industry gets a chance to truly shine as Regina hosts the 42nd annual Canadian Western Agribition. Over that time, Agribition has developed into one of the biggest agricultural events in the world, attracting more than 500 exhibitors. This world-class event has earned the title of the best beef show in North America with over 3,500 head of livestock.

But this show doesn't stop at the livestock. It's also host to the Grain Expo. Although Agribition is an important place for farmers, it is always of interest to non-farmers as well. Agribition is a multi-faceted attraction of trade, entertainment, and education. Through the Agri-Ed program, it is expected that approximately 6,000 children will learn this week about the importance of continuing agriculture for future generations.

Last year the event brought in an impressive \$27 million in only six days. One hundred and twenty-six thousand people visited Agribition, and 800 of those individuals came from 70 different countries. They all came because of their great interest in the agricultural products western Canada has to offer.

Mr. Speaker, we are fortunate to live in a province that believes

in the future of agriculture. People in Saskatchewan have a connection to the land and it has made us world leaders in teaching people how to grow the good food we all eat. Please join me in thanking the Canadian Western Agribition president, Bryan Hadland, and the rest of his team for putting together another incredible showcase that displays the hard work of our agricultural producers.

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

Research Chair Established at University of Regina

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight a recent announcement at the University of Regina about research funding. Cisco Canada announced this week it will provide the University of Regina with \$2 million over a 10-year period to establish a specialized research Chair. Through this funding, the University of Regina will establish a record . . . Chair in e-governance. The Chair will look at how governments can more effectively communicate with citizens, businesses, and other governments through enhanced use of technology.

The Chair will research ways to incorporate the latest technologies into daily work — improving client satisfaction, lowering operating costs, and providing faster service. The Chair will be located within the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy at the University of Regina.

Mr. Speaker, we are very excited to see the University of Regina partner with a world leader in networking like Cisco. The establishment of this research Chair will further enhance the university's reputation for excellence in innovation in Saskatchewan and outside of the province. As a government we've always encouraged our universities to look for partnerships with industry, particularly when it comes to research. This is a great example of such a partnership.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan I'd like to thank Cisco Canada for this generous donation and to congratulate the University of Regina and the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy on establishing this new research Chair. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Saskatchewan's Economic Growth

Mr. Michelson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Conference Board of Canada's *Provincial Outlook* autumn 2012 report shows the Western provinces remain in the best position to ride out the current global economic weakness. According to the report, Saskatchewan's economy has performed strongly and the province's near-term prospects are more favourable than the rest of the country. Capital expenditures in Saskatchewan's potash industry are accelerating, putting our province on track to overtake Alberta in 2013 and 2014 as the fastest growing economy in the country. In Saskatchewan and Alberta it is forecast that the real economic growth will remain at or above 3 per cent in 2014. This is the best forecast growth in the country.

Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to ensuring Saskatchewan's positive economic growth continues. This is why we released *The Saskatchewan Plan for Growth: Vision 2020 and Beyond*. Our government has set targets that will make our economy one of the fastest growing and best performing in the country, including investing 2.5 billion in infrastructure over the next three provincial budgets, increasing exports by agriculture and food products by \$15 billion by 2020, and cutting the provincial debt in half from its 2007 level by 2017.

Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to ensuring that Saskatchewan's economy continues to lead in provincial real growth, and we are committed to making Saskatchewan the best place to enjoy life, to work, and to raise a family. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Video of New Democratic Party Debate

Mr. Hickie: — Well, well, well, Mr. Speaker. Last Saturday the NDP [New Democratic Party] held its first leadership debate. A video of that debate is now posted on the NDP website. It starts with a brief opening video showing the past leaders of the CCF [Co-operative Commonwealth Federation] and the NDP in Saskatchewan. But when I watched this video, it seemed like something was missing. There were pictures of Tommy Douglas, Woodrow Lloyd, Allan Blakeney, Roy Romanow, Lorne Calvert, and the current leader of the NDP.

But still, it didn't seem quite right. I couldn't put my finger on it. It was like there was some sort of missing link in the history of the NDP. It seems to me there should have been someone between Lorne Calvert and the current leader, but he must have been a forgettable character, Mr. Speaker, because even the NDP seems to have forgotten him.

Mr. Speaker, I really hope the NDP will go to this link on their website, do some research, figure out who is missing, correct this terrible historical oversight, and fix this video. Other than that, it was a great video. It's like a chain that links today's NDP to the past. But you know what they say, Mr. Speaker: a chain is only as strong as its weakest link.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Information Services Corporation

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party legislation to privatize ISC [Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan] arrived with no mandate from the people, and people don't believe this sale makes any sense at all.

Murray Mandryk wrote in the *Leader-Post*: "So, lower dividends, possibly less money from the sale of ISC than the government is suggesting and more costs to both users and taxpayers? Why would the government even bother?" *The StarPhoenix* editorial board wrote, "... the proposed model

seems to be the worst of all worlds." And the Saskatchewan land surveyors said their association "strongly opposes this contemplation by the government."

Mr. Speaker, ISC functions very well as a Crown. Why won't the Sask Party accept all the advice that it should stay a Crown corporation?

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

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't know if we want to continue the great columnist of Murray Mandryk, but I know he did say earlier when we were talking about the NDP having ISC in the legislation and then having it out, he said it was like the NDP were caught with their pants down on this one, Mr. Speaker. So if we want to quote Mr. Mandryk, that was one of the quotes regarding the NDP.

Mr. Speaker, this is a corporation that served the people in Saskatchewan very, very well. I would disagree with the editorial board, Mr. Speaker, regarding it's the worst of both worlds. We believe this is the best of both worlds, Mr. Speaker. This gives the company the opportunity to grow and expand out of the province with control, some control, Mr. Speaker, left here in Saskatchewan with representation on the board, with membership on the board, and shareholding within government, Mr. Speaker. That way we can ensure the service is here in Saskatchewan as well as allowing the corporation to grow and expand outside the province.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, people in Saskatchewan are surprised by the minister's answers and want to know who asked for this sale. It wasn't the voters in the last election. The privatization of ISC wasn't in the Sask Party's platform, but surprise — now privatization is back on their agenda. It wasn't the business community, who heard no mention from the Premier about privatization because they rely on ISC services, but surprise — something they haven't asked for is now the government's priority. The Sask Party's policy is to prevent Crowns from seeking out-of-province opportunities, but surprise — ISC is being sold for not finding out-of-province opportunities. So who was it, Mr. Speaker, besides the most ideological partisans in their party, who asked for the privatization of ISC?

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

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, I guess we could ask the same question of the members opposite. Who asked for an evaluation to be done in 2003? Who asked for the evaluation to be done in 2006? Who asked for the piece to be in the legislation and taken out? Oh yes, we remember who that was. That was Pat Atkinson, even though the Leader of the Opposition can't seem to remember it, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the people in the last election spoke very, very clearly on a platform that was laid out by our Premier and this

government which was, do not affect any of the Crowns that were protected in the Crown protection Act, Mr. Speaker, but they voted for a government that was pro-growth. Mr. Speaker, 49 to 9 represents pro-growth.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, let's review the facts on ISC. The Sask Party has campaigned for multiple elections on keeping the Crowns public. Fact. The Sask Party committed to keep ISC public in its annual report. Fact. ISC has paid strong dividends that help pay for health care, education, roads, and services. Fact. ISC has an increasingly larger role for government, handling vital statistics and corporate registration. Fact. Other jurisdictions have been very interested in partnering with ISC. Fact. And the Sask Party has a restrictive policy preventing the Crowns from exploring good out-of-province business opportunities. Fact.

So why, Mr. Speaker, would the Sask Party want to sell a profitable, useful Crown corporation or is it simply a fact that they will pursue ideological privatization against any ounce of common sense?

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

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, we're certainly glad to talk about facts. NDP did an evaluation in '03. Fact. NDP did an evaluation in '06. Fact. NDP took out ISC out of the legislation. Fact, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, NDP, the capitalist barons that they are, invested around the world, Mr. Speaker. Fact. Mr. Speaker, they lost \$90 million in Navigata. Fact, Mr. Speaker. They lost \$15 million in Channel Lake. Fact, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, they lost \$10 million in Craig Wireless in Manitoba. Fact, Mr. Speaker.

I can go on and on about the facts under the NDP . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Keep going.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — No, we'll keep going later maybe but, Mr. Speaker, the fact is ISC is positioned very well in this province and positioned very well to be successful around the world. Fact.

[14:00]

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

Health Care for Refugees

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's been a few weeks since Conservative MP [Member of Parliament] Kelly Block put out a household flyer, bragging about the elimination of health care for refugees in Canada, including refugees living here in Saskatchewan. My question to the provincial Health minister: what discussions has he had with the federal government to ensure that refugees here in the province are treated with dignity and receive the health care that they need?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the member is correct that in April of this year the federal government announced changes to supplementary health benefits for certain categories of refugees. I can tell the member that ministers, provincial and territorial ministers of Health, had a discussion with the federal Minister of Health in the late summer of this year, Mr. Speaker, about these changes and these concerns.

We know that, Mr. Speaker, once the decision was made in April, there was a change that was made quietly by the federal government to reincorporate some of those categories back into, into the supplementary benefits that are covered. But, Mr. Speaker, to this point there is certainly still a lot of confusion between the federal government and provincial Health ministries in terms of what exactly is being covered because it's not exactly clear which categories are not being covered with supplementary benefits. And we continue those discussions to determine what the federal government is intending by this policy.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, and through the confusion individuals who need care are suffering. While the decision to eliminate the health care for refugees is a federal decision, the impact is being felt by people here in the province and individuals who access the provincial health care system.

I've been in contact with a refugee who's in Saskatchewan and receiving chemotherapy for cancer that was diagnosed after he arrived here to the province. While his chemotherapy thankfully is now being covered, the anti-nausea medication that he needs in order to do the treatments, Mr. Speaker, is not. And for anyone who has a loved one or a friend who's gone through chemotherapy, they know how important anti-nausea medication would be to actually take the care.

As a result of not being able to afford the anti-nausea medication, Mr. Speaker, this individual had to go to the emergency room because he was so badly dehydrated. This is not humane treatment in my view, Mr. Speaker, and I don't think it would be humane in the view of most Saskatchewan people. To the minister: does he agree that it is a humane treatment for a man who's receiving chemotherapy treatment to not have anti-nausea medication at a cost of only \$200 per treatment?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Certainly in the discussions with the federal government we have determined, we believe, there are 11 different categories that the federal government is now using to determine which refugees receive benefits across Canada. Those benefits, it has been stated by the federal government that coverage would follow if the need is urgent and essential in nature. And yet as the member has identified, we clearly have cases in Saskatchewan where reimbursement to this point is not forthcoming from Health Canada.

And so we have proceeded to provide in this case — and I know the case that the member's talking about — we have proceeded to provide cancer care for this individual, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't . . . And that is the policy that we will go forward with in determining on a case-by-case basis of which benefits that we will be able to provide in the province of Saskatchewan now that the federal government has made this change. We're going to do that, Mr. Speaker, because as I've said, it seems that there are now 11 different categories that the federal government is using. And so we'll proceed on a case-by-case basis.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am told, Mr. Speaker, that the individual is able to receive chemotherapy treatment, and that of course is a very good thing and a necessary thing. I am told very recently though, Mr. Speaker, that the individual still is required to turn to charity in order to have his medications covered for the anti-nausea medication.

So in the state of this confusion, while it's a total mess between the communication between the province and the federal government, people are falling through the cracks and people are suffering. Other provinces, Mr. Speaker, across the country have responded in a way where they're providing coverage during this confusion. Manitoba for example, next door, is providing coverage to fill the gap and sending the bill to Ottawa.

So my question to the provincial minister here is: will the provincial government act in a humane way, provide coverage now upfront while this matter is being sorted out with the federal government in order to ensure that people who are falling through the cracks because of the mean-spirited cuts have the care that they need to live with dignity?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, we have . . . As the member has indicated, other provinces have approached the federal government about reimbursement, and certainly in this case as well as other cases, we have approached the federal government. When the federal government denied that coverage, Mr. Speaker, it was our opinion that the health region, in this circumstance, as well as the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency, continue to provide service, and we will worry about who's paying the bill at a different time.

We believe that the needs of this patient and all patients in this type of situation, considering that it is in this case a situation of cancer, that require coverage, Mr. Speaker, and we'll certainly endeavour to ensure that that coverage is provided.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, providing health care to refugees is not only the humane and compassionate thing to do. I think it's also the economically smart thing to do. I've met many refugees who come to this country fleeing religious persecution or fleeing war. They come here, Mr. Speaker, with nothing.

They work hard. They get jobs. They pay taxes. And they give back to the community. So even if it costs us upfront, Mr. Speaker, we know the benefits to this country are great and they're long-lasting.

Mr. Speaker, it doesn't make sense to deny pre-natal care to a mother while she's pregnant, knowing that a sick baby actually costs the health care system more in the long run. It doesn't make sense, Mr. Speaker, that a man undergoing chemotherapy treatment doesn't have anti-nausea medication, knowing that he shows up in the emergency room because he's dehydrated.

So my question to the minister: instead of a one-off basis, will the provincial government step up to the plate as other provinces have done, ensure that the benefits that were taken away, the health care that was taken away by the feds, will be there now for the Saskatchewan refugees who are here, Mr. Speaker?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — As I said, Mr. Speaker, in one of my previous answers, we are working closely and the Ministry of Health is working closely with the federal government to determine what exactly is intended by the changes to the federal program in terms of supplementary health benefits. While it may appear that this is a fairly clear policy change by the federal government, what we are learning is that we believe that there are now 11 different categories, and individuals will fit into different categories.

Certainly there may be some existing programs that refugees in Saskatchewan could be covered under, including the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan or the SAIL program, the Saskatchewan Aids to Independent Living program, Mr. Speaker. But again that would depend on their particular circumstances. And to this point, we're working through all of those situations as they arise in the province.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Land Transaction

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. There's a great injustice being done to our province and to our people who work very hard to protect important wildlife habitat. The Saskatchewan Party's had a busy summer of closed-door deals involving Saskatchewan's Crown land.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party's fire sale of Saskatchewan's assets has included a giveaway of Crown Wildlife Development Fund land next to Greenwater Provincial Park. A quarter of valuable, accessible, and expensive wildlife development land has been traded away to Alberta interests. What do the Saskatchewan people get in trade, Mr. Speaker? A piece of swampland further from the park.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of the Environment explain why the valuable Crown wildlife development land adjacent to the Greenwater Park has been given away by his government?

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

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, nothing could be farther from the truth. The minister alleges that land was given away. Certainly no land was given away . . . Or the member opposite makes that allegation. Wildlife protection is something that we take very serious. We're looking at individual parcels of land, what needs to be done to ensure that that protection goes forward. And in this particular case, it was examined and it was a decision that a trade of land was to be made and it was indeed made.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, trading valuable wildlife lands for a swamp stinks. But this deal gets even smellier, Mr. Speaker.

In your gallery today is Jerome Plaskan. This Wildlife Development Fund land was owned by his parents, Steve and Anne Plaskan. This was their family homestead. This land had great importance to this family, which they sold to the government in 1974. In 1984 the Plaskan family tried to buy back that homestead land for their parents' 50th wedding anniversary, but they were told no. It seems that they just weren't politically connected enough because now the land has been sold under the Saskatchewan Party watch to an Alberta friend of the Sask Party and not to a pioneering family, Mr. Speaker.

My question to the minister again: if the Crown land was not for sale to the original owners, why was it up for grabs for your Alberta friends?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much. I thank the member for the question. This land was appraised and it has been in question for quite some time. Discussions were going back and forth on it. It was appraised at a value . . . Both quarters of land were close to . . . I believe they were within \$10,000 in appraisal in difference and a decision was made to trade the land, to swap the value, and to ensure that wildlife protection continues.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party did a better job admitting their error in an email they sent to a concerned citizen. And the minister wrote, "As you are aware, a decision was made in April of this year and to proceed with the trade." But the minister writes he made the deal anyway. He said, "The ministry recognizes that there was a lack of adequate prior consultation regarding this trade."

This deal should have never been approved in the first place, and the minister admits that. But even though the minister admitted that the Sask Party made a huge mistake, he's still asking and making the people of Saskatchewan pay the price for it. Once again to the minister: why would you approve a land sale that you've admitted has gone completely wrong? And will he apologize to the people for this horrible mess and to this family that's here today?

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

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, I will take no lessons from the member opposite about consultation. This government consults far and wide when it comes to *The Environmental Assessment Act*, when it comes to the Environmental Code, Mr. Speaker. We continue to do vast and wide consultations to ensure that we have a growing economy and that we have environmental protection in place.

Mr. Speaker, in this particular case there's always a question if more consultation could be done. Our ministry is undertaking more consultation whenever necessary, Mr. Speaker. But at the forefront will be a growing economy and ensuring that we have wildlife protection and environmental protection in a sustainable way. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, smelliest of all is the Sask Party seems to believe these days that anything that's not bolted down is up for sale. They are putting up our personal information Crown for sale. They are having a fire sale of 300 affordable social housing units. And with this land sale near Greenwater, the deal is as fishy as they get. As Jack Woulfe wrote in a letter to the editor on the deal, "There is a bad odour here that someone in government covered this up and slipped it through."

Mr. Speaker, I don't know if this deal turned rotten as a result of the Sask Party government's incompetence or as a result of their recent decision to go back to their 2003 ideology of privatization and fire sale of everything, Mr. Speaker. My question again to the minister: what will the people of Saskatchewan lose next after the Sask Party's wall-to-wall sale?

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

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much for the question. Certainly I've received correspondence on both sides of this issue, some that were in favour of this transaction taking place, some that were against this transaction taking place. I consulted with ministry officials who have been dealing with this for many, many years, Mr. Speaker, and a decision was made. A decision was made on appraised values with \$10,000 difference. The money changed hands, the two. But at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, wildlife protection remains, and we have the environmental protection at the forefront, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

[14:15]

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

Business Location and Global Transportation Hub

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The province of Saskatchewan has spent millions of public dollars to develop the Global Transportation Hub, the GTH, and related infrastructure west of Regina.

Currently a \$25 million project, a Kal Tire distribution plant, is at our doorstep but at risk of being lost to another province — Manitoba. Mr. Speaker, a spokesperson at Kal Tire said last

week that they couldn't hold out much longer, that a decision had to be made, that this mess had to be sorted out. It would seem the perfect location for such a plant would either be at or near the GTH. To the minister of the Global Transportation Hub: when did Kal Tire first engage at the GTH and why did they choose not to locate there?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Economy.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Global Transportation Hub is, of course, an operation on the west side on the city of Regina that is expanding very rapidly, anchored by CP [Canadian Pacific] Rail and Loblaws. A number of other companies are locating there. There's about 400 acres currently developed land that's available that is for sale now and we're moving along very, very well.

With respect to Kal Tire, on Monday of this week, a couple of days ago, I was in Vernon, BC [British Columbia], sat down with the officials from Kal Tire. They indicated that it was their preference to locate outside of the Global Transportation Hub. They have made an offer on a purchase of some land and indeed are moving forward. They were very, very pleased at the discussions that we had on Monday and we look forward to further ones with them.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — The deal hasn't been sorted out though yet at this point in time and I understand they've been engaged, the Global Transportation Hub. This plant seems like a natural fit for the Regina area and economy and for our province. The GTH has been built by the public, by taxpayers, and is largely controlled by government. Despite the lofty rhetoric about the GTH and also our economy, we're at risk of losing these new jobs and a boost to our local economy, in fact \$25 million of an investment that's on our doorstep, Mr. Speaker. To the minister: was the asking price for land at the GTH more than Kal Tire was willing to pay? If so, why are these costs so high that it's driving away investment?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Economy.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, the premise of the member's question is completely false. The folks from Kal Tire indicated that it was a visibility issue with respect to the property. They wanted to have access to the bypass as it will be built at some point in the future.

They were very, very happy at the response of this government. We talked to them on Friday. I was on a plane on Monday, sat down with them Monday afternoon, sorted out their problems as of today, and had a telephone conference call with him just prior to lunchtime this afternoon. They are very, very pleased. I would want the member opposite to know that we believe that this facility will be moving forward. We'll be having further discussions with them after question period here this afternoon, with other folks after question period this afternoon.

But I would say this: this province is a business-friendly province. The people of Kal Tire were very, very receptive to the actions of this government and knowing full well that this is

a province with a lot of growth prospects ahead of it.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, this file's gone on for months, and there's been a lot of confusion and there's been a lot of conflicts, Mr. Speaker. And the public, let's be reminded, the taxpayer, has in fact built the GTH. In this whole affair, the Sask Party in fact holds all the cards and wears many hats as far as making this deal happen, whether it's in the RM [rural municipality], at the GTH, or at all, Mr. Speaker.

Now we hear some positive words from the minister here today at the eleventh hour of making this decision. But it represents something very interesting, Mr. Speaker, is that the province itself has a vested interest in the GTH. It wears many hats on this front, and this is a circumstance that's rife with both confusion and conflicts of interest. My question to the minister: why so much confusion? Why so many conflicts of interest? And why is this file so off track, Mr. Speaker?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Economy.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, the whole concept of the Global Transportation Hub was started under the NDP. They couldn't get it right, however, and couldn't get it put together. The fact of the matter was that it took a change in the administration of government in this province before it started out there.

Now we have a facility out there that's employing hundreds of people. It's creating a tremendous amount of economic development for the people of Saskatchewan. There are people now employed out there that never would be under the NDP, Mr. Speaker.

The fact of the matter is, is the people from Kal Tire chose another location.

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Will the member for Athabasca come to order, please. I recognize the Minister for the Economy.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — The people from Kal Tire chose a different location. We support that. They have made that decision. I spoke with the vice-president, John Mullin, not more than a couple of hours ago. He indicated his extreme pleasure with the actions of the province of Saskatchewan. If you would just get on board with this program, it would do the province a lot more help.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 72 — *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2012*

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 72, *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2012* be now introduced and read for the first time.

The Speaker: — The Minister for Crown Investments Corporation has moved first reading of Bill No. 72, *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2012*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — First reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be read a second time?

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 73 — *The Municipalities Amendment Act, 2012*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Government Relations.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 73, *The Municipalities Amendment Act, 2012* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — The Minister for Government Relations has moved first reading of Bill No. 73, *The Municipalities Amendment Act, 2012*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — First reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Next sitting of the House.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 74 — *The Cities Amendment Act, 2012*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Government Relations.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 74, *The Cities Amendment Act, 2012* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Government Relations has moved first reading of Bill No. 74, *The Cities Amendment Act, 2012*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — First reading of this

bill.

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Next sitting of the House.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 75 — *The Northern Municipalities Amendment Act, 2012*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Government Relations.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 75, *The Northern Municipalities Amendment Act, 2012* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Government Relations has moved first reading of Bill No. 75, *The Northern Municipalities Amendment Act, 2012*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — First reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Next sitting of the House.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 76 — *The Municipal Board Amendment Act, 2012*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Government Relations.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 76, *The Municipal Board Amendment Act, 2012* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Government Relations has moved first reading of Bill No. 76, *The Municipal Board Amendment Act, 2012*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — First reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Next sitting of the House.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answers to questions 78 through 114.

The Speaker: — The Government Whip has tabled answers to questions 78 to 114 inclusive.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 70 — *The Education Amendment Act, 2012 (No. 2)/Loi n° 2 de 2012 modifiant la Loi de 1995 sur l'éducation*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Marchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 70, *The Education Amendment Act, 2012 (No. 2)*.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Education has consulted extensively with our education and government stakeholders about these changes. We have consulted the Saskatchewan School Boards Association; the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation; the League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents; and the Saskatchewan Association of School Business Officials. We have also consulted with other ministries including the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Government Relations. We undertook these consultations to ensure the proposed legislative changes reflect the current needs of educators, students, and their communities. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to have this opportunity to explain the significant changes included in this legislation.

First, Mr. Speaker, I propose to amend the compulsory school age that is presently seven years of age to six years of age. The present compulsory school age has been in place since 1940 and is not consistent with other jurisdictions in Canada. Most Saskatchewan children in grade 1 are six years of age, so this change will not result in a significant increase in enrolment when the compulsory age is changed from seven years.

Research shows that children who have access to education at earlier ages have improved academic and social outcomes. This change will not only bring Saskatchewan in line with practices across Canada, it will also benefit students in the long term.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to propose a change to the definition of school to reflect that pre-kindergarten programs are also provided at school sites. The change will also reflect the different approaches for delivering the province's education programs through virtual schools as well as custody and care facility schools.

The change to the school day definition is intended to reflect the regulatory amendments we are enacting on January the 1st,

2013 regarding the new school year. The new definition recognizes that a school day could be comprised of instructional time and non-instructional time. The proposed revision to the definition of school day has been identified as necessary during our work to finalize new regulations for the school year.

Mr. Speaker, research and experience is highlighting the importance of early years programs for children. Pre-kindergarten programs provide early interventions that contribute to children's school success. The proposed amendment would grant the Ministry of Education the authority to develop policies and regulations for pre-kindergarten programs which will continue to contribute to more consistency and accountability among the province's pre-kindergarten programs.

Mr. Speaker, there are presently sections in the Act for non-compliance of various provisions of the Act related to school attendance, school safety, administration, just to name a few. Through our consultations with stakeholders, we found that fines in their present state are out of date or are set at too low a rate to serve as any kind of a deterrent. As a result, Mr. Speaker, fines are rarely applied. Our stakeholders want to retain the fines but have told us that increasing the fine amounts would serve as a more effective deterrent for offences.

Mr. Speaker, I propose that fines associated with various offences be increased. Fines are presently from \$500 or less for an offence. I ask that fines be increased to a minimum amount of \$5,000 for a first offence, and I also ask that fines increase to \$10,000 for subsequent offences. Increasing the fine amount to these levels will send a clear message that non-compliance is taken seriously, which will in turn give school divisions the backing they need to impose fines if necessary. Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation and the Saskatchewan School Boards Association have indicated their support of increasing these amounts to serve as a better deterrent.

Mr. Speaker, we want to make it easier for newcomers to enrol in schools by clarifying who is considered a provincial resident. The present wording in the Act does not sufficiently describe who is a resident for the purposes of participating in our education system without cost. The regulations prescribe that tuition fees be charged to those who do not meet the criteria. Most provinces and school divisions accept children of temporary residents, refugee children, and reciprocal exchange students. However the Act presently does not clarify these considerations.

This change will also support those who come to Saskatchewan from other countries on temporary work permits with children. At the present time we provide publicly funded education to those who come to Saskatchewan with young families from other countries on temporary permits for post-secondary education. This change would clarify that this right is equally applicable to those who are here on temporary work permits. Their children are entitled to be educated in the province without charge, and the Act will now explicitly state this. This change would further support our government's promotion of permanent immigration to the province. Mr. Speaker, given the province's commitment to attract new residents, it is important *The Education Act* be updated to ensure families who have chosen to call Saskatchewan home are not charged tuition fees

for their children to go to school.

[14:30]

Mr. Speaker, families residing along the borders of school division boundaries are often faced with a situation in which the nearest school is in a neighbouring school division. These families undergo a long process so their children can attend the neighbouring school in a school division in which they do not reside. They must submit a request for boundary changes to school divisions and the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Education then processes a minister's order for the submission to amend the boundaries. Last year, Mr. Speaker, there were 22 requests for boundary changes. Of those, 90 per cent involved a student who lives within just 5 kilometres of the school division boundary.

Mr. Speaker, I propose an amendment to create buffer zones that would allow students within 5 kilometres beyond the school's division boundaries to attend school in that division. Mr. Speaker, we want to ensure that the neighbouring school division has the capacity to accept the student, therefore there are considerations to be made before the division accepts the student.

For example, the division will accept the student if they have capacity in the school and on the bus the student will take to attend the school. Additionally the receiving school division has to determine that they have the program that meets the student's needs. If these considerations are met to the satisfaction of the school division, the student would be able to attend the school without the family, division, and ministry having to undertake the boundary revision process.

Mr. Speaker, I recommend that the reference to making capital grants with boards of education and the conseil scolaire be updated. Capital agreements will retain ministry authority to issue capital grants and will allow terms and conditions to be attached. Formal capital agreements will also be used for shared partnership arrangements under the authority of *The Government Organization Act*.

Mr. Speaker, I recommend we clarify the submission of returns to the Ministry of Government Relations, who will include this provision in that ministry's statute. As a result there is no need to duplicate this provision in the Ministry of Education statutes. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I ask that we repeal the statute in *The Education Act*.

Mr. Speaker, I propose a redefinition in *The Education Act* that will allow for regulations to be made prescribing property classes and tiers similar to municipal legislation. The change would be retroactive on January 1, 2013 and apply to the upcoming tax year. The change will allow more flexibility whenever changes are required around definitions of property classes.

Mr. Speaker, my final proposal is based on a report in 2009 that recommended adding an additional board representative from La Ronge on the Northern Lights School Division. Presently there is only one member at large allowed for each of the two subdivisions of La Ronge. Since La Ronge is the only town in the Northern Lights School Division, the mayor of La Ronge

and the school division have expressed the need to increase the number of members at large. The Act presently allows only one member at large for each subdivision. The new authority will allow the minister to grant such requests, providing that the general principle of representation by population is met and is subject to regulations.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, the proposed amendments to *The Education Act* demonstrate our responsiveness to the changing needs of Saskatchewan families and school divisions. We will continue to work with our stakeholders to implement these changes. Our work together supports students, families, and school divisions. Our work together strengthens our education system to better support student achievement.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move therefore that Bill No. 70, *The Education Amendment Act, 2012 (No. 2)* be now read a second time.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Education has moved Bill No. 70, the education Act, 2012 (No. 2) be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today to provide some preliminary comments about Bill No. 70, *An Act to amend The Education Act, 1995 and to make a consequential amendment to The Education Amendment Act, 2012*.

This bill has quite a long title because it's amending two pieces of legislation. I think I'll deal with the second piece of legislation first. The amendment to *The Education Amendment Act, 2012* bill that was passed earlier this year relates to the surprise announcement about the school year beginning after Labour Day. And when that announcement was made, they would move fairly quickly to try to create the legislation that would actually do what the Premier announced and it wasn't totally thought out as far as how it would work. And so what this legislation appears to do is to make sure that that pronouncement or surprise from the Premier is accurately recorded in the legislation.

And so where does that show up in this legislation? Well it shows up in the definition of school day. In the previous legislation, school days only included those days where there were actually students and teachers, and the students were receiving instruction. It's obviously clear in a regularly or finely operating educational system that there will be days where the teachers are working and the administration are working, but the students aren't actually in the schools. And so that particular issue had to be clarified. So that's the consequential amendment to *The Education Act* from last spring.

Now the amendments that are being proposed to *The Education Act* have been identified by the minister as coming from the community, coming from the teachers, coming from the school boards, coming from the officials within the Education department or ministry where they have identified specific

problems that have arisen over the last number of years. And that's entirely appropriate. And there are, I think, a number of positive changes here, although we will obviously have to check them out with all of the various people who have interest in this, including the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, and the School Boards Association, and obviously parents and people within the community.

And so part of the process in looking at this is to say, did the minister make the right choice on the solution to a particular problem or a particular issue? Now I think many people would be, in Saskatchewan would be surprised that the present legislation identifies age seven as the start of compulsory schooling. So basically compulsory schooling was from age seven until your 16th birthday. You know, most people would have thought it was age six, and this proposal that's coming forward today from the minister confirms that sense.

It's also interesting that that definition about compulsory attendance is part of our rules around how we protect children, and we have protection for children in many pieces of legislation. But one of the places where we do that is in *The Education Act* because what we say is that in our province any child, between now what's going to be the age of six and sixteen, should be full-time attendants at school.

Now this is something we take for granted in Saskatchewan and in Canada, but in many parts of the world children don't have that option. They end up being pulled into the workforce at very young ages — sometimes 12, sometimes even younger.

And so I think we need to remind ourselves that when we put these simple definitions in our legislation, we're actually making very proud, bold statements about the importance of education for children. So I think that's a, it's quite an appropriate step to make sure that we have the age now being six and that it will be in the legislation.

Also together with this proposal then comes a whole number of other changes that clarify that the K to 12 or the kindergarten to grade 12 education part of our system, which this the Minister of Education is responsible for, also includes what we would call pre-kindergarten. So those are probably the, you know, five-year-olds or four- or five-year-olds who are part of the school system in many parts of the province.

Now this particular legislation is enabling legislation setting out the responsibility of the minister as it relates to children prior to kindergarten. And what we know is that even the kindergartens in our province have been downsized or reduced over the last couple of years. And so when this responsibility is expanded beyond kindergarten to pre-kindergarten, we hope that there's a similar initiative going to the Minister of Finance and the Treasury Board around making sure there's proper funding for this important part of our education system.

The evidence is clear. Many people have identified this, perhaps Dr. Fraser Mustard more than most, is that having the appropriate schooling and care for children as young as possible makes a huge difference in their success in life. And the flip side of that is it makes a huge difference in the amount of money that we are required to spend with children who haven't received proper training. So this responsibility for the minister

to have the responsibility for pre-kindergarten programs is important and, as is stated, it clarifies that the Minister of Education is responsible. It clarifies that this involves programming. It involves funding. It involves setting standards. And it recognizes that specific funds need to be provided to boards of education or conseils scolaires on an ongoing basis.

Now what we hope doesn't happen is that existing budgets will be given to the school boards across the province and they'll be told, well yes, add another year or more in your responsibility but we don't have any more money. Because what that does is further exacerbate the financial difficulties that we're already seeing within the education system over the last couple of years.

So pre-kindergarten is important for many purposes. It also is often something that is dealt with in conjunction with daycare, which we know is an important issue in the province as well. And we hope that the powers that are given to the minister under this legislation will also allow for then coordination for daycare to be provided across the province.

And so we'll continue to watch that particular area and, after discussion with people in the community, we may have some further suggestions about how to strengthen the wording here and also maybe to strengthen the clear point that there needs to be additional funds with the additional responsibilities that are set out here.

Now when you go through the legislation as was stated by the minister, there are many, many issues or a whole variety of issues that have been identified by teachers and school boards and people within the ministry. And so what we end up having to look at is, well what kinds of things are being added? And clearly as it relates to the pre-kindergarten area, there is a need for new material and new types of programs and this legislation clearly gives the ministry the power to do that. Once again I hope that it will also include appropriate funding to make sure that these jobs are done.

[14:45]

So now another area that was identified in or by the minister in the legislation, where there's a fix in a slightly different area, relates to the Northern Lights School Division. So here we have a very specific amendment that recognizes that in the Northern Lights School Division, given the great distances involved and in the size of the board, that they needed to have some flexibility on the rules. The flexibility allows for another member at large to appropriately represent the area in the North, and I think that that change is appropriate.

We'll obviously be checking with people in the North as to whether this gets everything exactly right so that they can actually accomplish what was requested. But it's a good concept to make sure that there's sufficient representation from the many communities that are part of the Northern Lights School Division. So practically that's a very specific change.

Then we go on to a change which is outlined in a couple of areas, and I guess there are amendments that relate to fines. The way the legislation was originally written, it included a specific fine for a particular problem. And so where there was a

violation, for example under existing section 69 which involved a breach of the conflict of interest around contracting with the agency, ultimately you would end up being guilty of an offence and subject to a fine of not more than \$100. There's another area where there's some fines that are also identified.

What the legislation has done is consolidated all the fining provisions into section 364 which relates to general offences and fines. And I think that's an appropriate way to deal with this. It gives the flexibility to have higher fines where appropriate and maybe in some cases, eliminate fines if that's the appropriate step as well. So these particular changes reflect, once again, individual requests from school boards or from the ministry.

Now there are also some issues around making sure that transportation services can be provided to pre-kindergarten children. The legislation has been very specific as to who can be involved in the school busing arrangements, and clearly there were a couple of reasons for that. One was to make sure that the budgets were being used appropriately. But the second one obviously is to make sure that the insurance policies that were obtained by the school boards to cover the activities within the school board responsibility would be clear as to who could be indemnified.

And I think all of us recognize that school buses are to be used for the purpose intended, and they're not set up to be regular transportation for family members or other people. So that legislation is being changed here, as I understand it, to make sure that the pre-kindergarten-aged children can be included as part of the responsibility of a board of education.

And this whole issue around transportation of pre-K [pre-kindergarten] children has many other aspects to it, because often younger children are not there for a full school day. So there will be many other adjustments as well. I think that those types of issues will have to be reviewed by people within the field to make sure that this legislation actually catches all the nuances that are there. But it's important that children obviously are protected and included appropriately, and that there won't be any gaps in the insurance coverage, for example, for these children.

Now another area that is quite interesting, and I found the solution proposed as appropriate, and that relates to the whole issue of boundary adjustments for students. It doesn't happen, obviously, so much in larger municipalities in Saskatchewan, but in rural areas the boundaries for education can be quite important for families. And so the proposal to set up a buffer zone of, I think it's 5 kilometres, of the school boundary to allow for discussions between school boards to make sure students are able to go to the most appropriate school, I think is a good solution. One of the things that we will be asking school boards about and teachers about and families about is whether 5 kilometres is the appropriate buffer zone or if it maybe should be something a little more or something a little less.

I know for my own personal experience, when I was in high school we lived on one side of the street and, when I was in I think in grade 9 or 10, we moved across the street. It happened to be in another school division, and there was a great deal of discussion between the basketball coaches as to which high

school I should play for. But I got to stay with my old school and so effectively had a buffer zone like is set out in this legislation. So I know it's a practical proposal and it will . . . hopefully it has enough flexibility in how it's been drafted to solve the problems that are there.

I know that it's, because school funding is tied to individual students, it becomes an issue of financial consequence for boards as well. But ultimately the question becomes, what's in the best interest of that child as a student? And it appears that the drafting of the legislation has captured that issue as being the main issue, and it will eliminate quite a few meetings and applications and many other things that have gone on over quite a number of years around making a boundary change every time a certain child hit a certain age so that the appropriate school would be identified for them to go to.

So I laud the department for coming up with this particular solution, but once again I say we will be talking with teachers, with school boards, with parents, with students, to see whether it has sufficient flexibility to deal with the problem that's been identified.

Then we go on to other provisions that have been changed. And once again there's an interesting clause I think that many people don't realize is in the legislation, but section 149(1) as it exists right now says that:

Except as otherwise provided in this Act, no person shall employ a pupil under the age of 16 years during the hours that school is in session, without the approval of the principal.

And then it goes on to say there's a fine of not more than \$100 if that provision is breached. And so practically I guess it would be the employer who hired a student during the school hours without approval, they would end up paying this penalty.

Well what's being proposed here is that the fine provision would be reduced, and then the change would be made that it goes to the general offence and fine section 364, and there the fine will be not up to \$100 but up to \$5,000 or \$10,000 for a subsequent offence.

So this is a, you know, fairly substantial fine, and it does relate to people who are hired to do work during school hours. And so I don't think people always realize that that's a particular issue, and obviously some young people really do like to work. And I guess you'd have to be very careful not to offend this provision or make sure you get the appropriate release from the principal of the high school.

So, Mr. Speaker, that's a particular protection again, so that practically *The Education Act* and the amendments here but *The Education Act* in general, it provides protection for children. So this provision, which in a way complements *The Labour Standards Act*, also then provides protection for children.

So one of the other provisions in the legislation does deal with the whole issue of parents making sure that children actually go to school. So this is the whole area of I guess truant officers and the role that parents or guardians have in making sure children between the age of six, coming six in the new legislation, and

16 make sure that they're in school.

And so at the present time there hasn't been a very substantial fine, and once again it was a fine up to \$1,000. This legislation will change that and allow for a fine once again under the general offenses and fines section 364 of up to \$5,000 for a first offense and then up to \$10,000 for subsequent offenses for violation. This area gives obviously more, quite a bit more power to the school board in dealing with truancy of children that is in some way condoned by a parent or guardian.

But I know from my own personal law practice that I had more than a few cases over the years of being hired by parents who were quite offended by the heavy-handedness of the school board officials who were given this job of making sure that there was compulsory attendance of children. And I know that ultimately the solution was always in better communication between the parents and the school board and between the school and the teachers and the students.

But I think with a very large potential fine like this one now introduces, it may be that there will have to be even further discussion in the regulations or in some other place to make sure that there are appropriate further steps in between before you can finally get to this fine stage. Because as I've indicated, it's often a communications issue between the teachers and the students, school board and student and parents, and that to have this heavy a penalty available by the school board at that stage would I think cause some further challenges, and although I suppose on the other side it'd probably end up with more work for lawyers trying to sort these things out. But ultimately the goal is to have the children in school. And we will continue to make sure that that is the goal, not giving heavy-handed power to a school board. I know that that's clearly the goal of the teachers and of the school boards, but sometimes when we make these changes around fines we don't always think through all the consequences.

[15:00]

So we will be asking what other processes will be put into place, whether they will be in the legislation, or they should be in the legislation, or whether they are in the regulations, or whether they'll be in local school board policies. Because I think in the final analysis, if these fines of that size ever show up in court, the judge will want to know all the steps that have been taken by all the people involved because clearly these types of fines are a last resort. And so I think that it's appropriate that we seek some advice from the community, from school boards, from teachers about that particular issue.

Now there are a number of other provisions that are set out in the legislation where, once again, there are these penalties up to \$100. But with the changes that are coming, which includes fines from up to 5,000 for a first offence or 10,000 for a second offence, section 162 may end up being a section that we want to change or that we want to watch very carefully. And the reason that I say that is that that particular amendment, where they've actually repealed it, it doesn't necessarily allow for responsibility to be pinned onto parents or others as it relates to this. So I think that what we end up having to do is make sure that the provisions that are going to be in the new legislation will have the coverage that we want without losing some of the

flexibility and ability to solve problems otherwise.

Now the next section in this section is . . . Section 17 of the legislation deals with section 173(3) and the simple existing clause is, "Where neither a pupil nor any of his or her parents are either Canadian citizens or permanent residents, a board of education may charge tuition fees in the amount prescribed in the regulations." And so the new provision under that section, which is the amendment, does provide some more information I guess, or a further definition that I think may be of assistance, but it appears that it may end up also having some problems. And let me explain why I say that.

Effectively what this provision is to deal with is those people who come as visitors or as refugees or exchange students, and so the new legislation has taken the same clause and then said that they can charge tuition fees calculated in accordance to the rules for people who are not residents or where children of people who are residents, but also:

" . . . where neither the pupil nor a parent of a pupil is:

a Canadian citizen or permanent resident;

lawfully admitted to Canada as a temporary resident;

a refugee or the subject of a refugee claim made in the previous year;

or a reciprocal exchange student".

So it limits it to those places and it doesn't give any discretion to the board of education, and it doesn't appear to give any discretion to the minister. That's the point that I want to make here is that, there may be some other situation that isn't covered by these words where it would be appropriate to have the people included and have them get an education.

And this type of very, I guess, strict but not welcoming kind of legislation, we always have to watch carefully at that so that it doesn't cause other problems. Now it appears they've tried to cover all possibilities, but we know from visiting with our fellow legislators from the United States that this whole area of the ability of the school system to take all comers, all the children in the community into school, is of great consternation in Texas and Arizona and New Mexico, parts of California, because of the number of unregistered people or whatever. And we want to check and make sure that this legislation doesn't create some problems that have arisen there if we'd ever end up with a similar situation of people who are living in Saskatchewan.

Now I think practically we all know that that's not how we do things in Saskatchewan so it shouldn't be a problem, but identified here as something that we should watch, something that we should keep track of to make sure that we don't get into a similar situation.

Now as we move on in the legislation, we get into a whole area of where people are bringing in or basically there's a specific . . . It's almost like a criminal offence set out in section 193 which probably most of us haven't ever had to deal with. But basically it says, "No pupil shall bring explosives, firearms or

other dangerous instruments, weapons or materials to the school premises.” And, “No person shall allow a pupil to bring . . .”, so in other words a parent or other, to bring these items to school. And if you’re guilty of this, you’re subject “to a fine of not more than \$100.”

So effectively that whole provision is being removed, and actually the whole section is being taken out of there. And I guess, you know, it’s a practical one and clearly some of these types of offences would be covered under the Criminal Code anyway. So that’s not necessarily a major problem, but it is interesting which things are included here.

Now a further area relates to the reports that go to municipalities around collection of school taxes and then around the definitions of property classes, and clearly all of these changes relate to the fact that school boards no longer have the ability to levy taxes and are receiving funding directly from the provincial government. And so therefore some of the provisions that have been there for many, many years are no longer necessary.

So we understand the proposals that are here, but it does remind us that when that ability to do local taxation has been removed, there’s also a responsibility on the provincial government to make sure that sufficient funding does go to the school boards. And that’s an area where we’ve had many calls over the last year around class size, around the elimination of the teaching assistants, around just the overall funds available for the school boards of the province. And so by removing some of these clauses in this agreement, it reminds us that we also have a task to respond to the public and deal with the issues around taxation which are effectively issues around school funding.

And it’s a sad fact of Saskatchewan that many school boards are put in a difficult spot, and they’re not able to provide the education that we expect them to do. And as I said earlier, by adding the responsibility for the pre-K programming and funding, we need to make sure when we’re looking at the proposed budget of the Ministry of Education, the budget of the government, that they have sufficient funds to deal with all of these extra responsibilities.

So what we’re doing in this legislation is making sure that some of these traditional ways of basically taxations, any vestiges of that is removed from *The Education Act*. Now there’s another part of this legislation that effectively sets out the rules around how the capital grants and agreements are entered into between the ministry and the department. And we’ll be looking at these ones very carefully as an opposition in light of advice we get from school boards especially but also from teachers and members in the community. Because one of the clearest methods of accountability around the funds does relate to the grants and then the agreements that are entered into, and we want to make sure that the responsibility goes to the funders around shortfalls that may be there.

And it’s quite obvious already that with reduced funding or the flatline funding that school boards have now, it’s very difficult for a local school board to end up negotiating or getting more funds because of pressures right across the system. So there needs to be a recognition and a responsibility by the Minister of Education but also the Minister of Finance that when they make

simple central decisions, it actually has consequences for children who are in classrooms, for teachers, and that those issues are extremely important for the people of the province.

And so now as we get towards the end of the legislation, there are quite a few clauses that relate to fines and different issues that have arisen around fines, and most of these are now being dealt with through a general fines provision.

So practically, the legislation has many different issues that are dealt with here. I know that what we will do as members of the opposition is that we will check with the school boards. We’ll check with teachers. We’ll check with parents to make sure that these proposed new rules around our education system are being complied with. They clearly come from requests from the community, but as I said earlier, the choices that are made are choices that are made by the ministry, and they may not always be the best ones for everybody concerned.

So, Mr. Speaker, I know that a number of my colleagues who have been involved in their careers in the education area will have many comments. I know we’ll also be gathering comments, as I said, from the various partners within the community. But I appreciate the chance to outline some of the things that we’ve seen in this legislation on a first review of it. And at this point, I would move adjournment of the debate.

The Speaker: — The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 70, *The Education Amendment Act, 2012* (No. 2). Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. Before we move on to the next item, I would request leave to do an introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

[15:15]

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — At this time I would like to introduce, sitting in the Sergeant-at-Arms chair, Don Maloney. And it is Don’s 69th birthday today.

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 71 — *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2012/Loi de 2012 modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la réglementation des boissons alcoolisées et des jeux de hasard*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Crown Investments.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to rise and introduce for second reading, Bill No. 71, *An Act to amend The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Act, 1997*.

Mr. Speaker, as I announced yesterday, our government has recently completed a review of alcohol regulations in

Saskatchewan, and the amendments I am introducing today will implement some of those changes. *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Act, 1997* establishes the foundation for the regulations and licensing of alcohol and gaming products in Saskatchewan.

In October 2010 Throne Speech, government announced a regulatory accountability initiative aimed at reducing red tape for Saskatchewan businesses. As part of this initiative, government established the red tape committee as a subcommittee of the legislation and regulation review committee. The committee's mandate is to work alongside government ministries and agencies to review Saskatchewan regulations and identify amendments to eliminate rules and processes that create unnecessary restraints and challenges for businesses operating in Saskatchewan. The regulation of alcohol was the first area reviewed through the new committee process.

During July of 2011, an electronic survey of stakeholders involved in the industry was conducted. We heard back from permitted restaurants; taverns; manufacturers such as breweries, brew pubs, and wineries; festival organizers; service clubs; major venue operators; and sports and recreation facilities. The survey asked participants to identify irritants and concerns with alcohol regulation.

At the same time, SLGA [Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority] undertook a review of alcohol regulations and policies to identify areas where unnecessary regulation was occurring. SLGA strived to balance the concerns of private business, to modernize liquor regulations with the need to ensure that the sale of beverage alcohol continues in a socially responsible manner. In many cases, Mr. Speaker, the alcohol regulations we examined had not been put under the microscope for decades, meaning many rules on the books were outdated, often inconsistent with current social practices and in some cases simply no longer relevant.

As a result of the committee's work, Mr. Speaker, I was able to announce yesterday that our government will be introducing more than 70 changes to alcohol licensing and regulation that will increase flexibility for businesses already involved in the sale and service of alcohol, create new opportunities for businesses seeking to get involved in the industry, simplify application processes, reduce reporting requirements, remove unnecessarily regulation, simplify procedures, and provide clarity for permittees. Implementation of all of the changes will require amendments to the Act, will require amendments to some regulations and some SLGA policies.

I am pleased to take the first step towards implementation by introducing Bill 71. The change that may be of the greatest interest to the public are amendments that will give restaurants the option to offer their patrons BYOW, which means bring your own wine. This change will bring Saskatchewan in line with most other provinces which already afford this opportunity to their restaurateurs. The decision on whether to offer the service will be entirely with the restaurant operator as well as the decision of the amount of corkage to charge patrons that choose to take advantage of this opportunity.

One of the new business opportunities arising from the review

of alcohol regulation which requires amendments to the Act is the creation of a permit for catering businesses that wish to provide alcohol service in addition to food. Right now a restaurant or tavern with an alcohol permit that offers catering services can provide food and alcohol at a catered function. Unfortunately businesses that do not provide food catering services from a permitted premise, such as a restaurant or a tavern, are not able to provide alcohol services as well. This not only puts this business at a disadvantage to their colleagues that can serve alcohol; it creates added process for the person seeking to host a catered event. Amendments included in Bill 71 will facilitate the creation of a catering permit, which will be advantageous to both non-permitted catering businesses and their patrons.

In 2008 we introduced the concept of having permittees recork partially finished bottles of wine at the request of the customers. This change has been beneficial for both permittees and their customers because it allows permittees to sell a bottle of wine knowing that they are not encouraging customers to overindulge. Customers are able to buy the bottle of wine knowing that they are not compelled to finish the whole bottle of wine and that they can take the remainder home to finish later.

Since that time, we've heard from permittees that focus on unique types of beer who have requested similar treatment. With the growing interest in microbreweries and unique, imported beers, I believe it is time to allow permittees the ability to recork partially consumed bottles of beer upon request of the patrons. This provision is not intended to apply to single-serve bottles of beer but to the unique beers that come in a larger container size that generally cannot be consumed in one sitting. As with the previous decision to allow permittees to recork partially finished bottles of wine, this change will better enable the public to enjoy this type of beer without overconsuming and will give permittees greater flexibility in offering these types of products.

In response to concerns that we heard from golf course operators, the Act is being amended to allow golf courses to sell alcohol to patrons, in closed containers, for consumption on the course. Current legislation provides that permittees, including golf courses, sell alcohol in open containers. While this makes sense for most types of permittees, I believe we need to recognize the unique circumstances faced by golf courses where service is infrequent, and the players wish to purchase more than one or two drinks to consume during the round. Notwithstanding this change, golf course permittees will continue to be responsible to ensure individuals are not overserved and that there is no service to minors.

The last change I will address respecting reduction of red tape and increased business flexibility will allow patrons to carry beverage alcohol between two separate but adjoining permitted premises. Although changes to the Act will accommodate this occurrence, permittees will have discretion whether they will allow alcohol sold in the adjoining premises to be consumed in their establishment.

As I mentioned, amendments to the Act will simplify application processes. Currently when a person applies to SLGA for a permit to sell and serve alcohol, the application

must be accompanied by approvals from various municipal authorities proving the applicant has obtained building, fire, health, and safety approvals. Under the current provisions of the Act, SLGA cannot issue a permit unless those approvals have been received even though this is not an area that SLGA regulates. The municipal bodies providing the approval regulate and monitor these areas. SLGA adds no significant value to the process, and the requirement significantly delays the time for which it takes to process an application.

Removing the requirement that applicants forward these approvals to SLGA will reduce the wait time for alcohol permits. The reduction in wait times and improved service to SLGA's customers can be accomplished without risk to public safety because the authorities that have been properly tasked and trained to approve building, fire, health, and safety issues will continue to do so. The changes simply remove a duplicate level of oversight that is currently occurring.

The other area where application processes will be simplified is in communities that have not had a permitted establishment or SLGA store for more than 60 days. Currently if SLGA receives an application in one of these communities, SLGA is required to notify the municipality and provide notice in the *Gazette*. This allows the municipality an opportunity to determine whether it wants to pass a bylaw precluding the establishment of an alcohol-permitted business in that community. While we believe the level of community involvement is important, it does add significant time to the applicant process for businesses seeking a permit in those municipalities.

To balance community interest with that of business, amendments to the Act will increase the length of time without a premise or store that triggers this additional process from 60 days to one year. As well, franchises will be included in the types of businesses that have not been present in the community. In addition SLGA will continue to provide written notice to the municipality of the application. However the amendments will remove the requirement that SLGA publish a notice in the *Gazette*.

Mr. Speaker, two of the changes in this bill will enhance SLGA's ability to continue to contribute to public safety in alcohol-permitted establishments. Intoxicated individuals would be able to remain in a permitted establishment until safe transportation can be arranged for them, and the Act will be clarified that permittees have an obligation to contact the proper authorities if they know of or become aware of any unlawful, detrimental, or prohibited activity taking place on the premise.

I will speak first to the amendment that will allow permittees to allow intoxicated individuals to remain in the premises until safe transportation can be arranged. This is an issue SLGA has heard concerns about in the past. The Act as it currently reads requires that intoxicated individuals leave the premises. However it's not always safe for them to do so, and permittees have expressed concern that making the individual leave can put their safety at risk. With the change, permittees will be able to keep intoxicated persons safe in the establishment until they can be safely removed.

The other amendment that will contribute to public safety is the change that will clarify that permittees are accountable for

illegal activity occurring in their premises. The intention of the new provision is not to create an obligation for the permittee to actively seek out and stop illegal activity, but it does require them to take responsible steps if they are aware of the illegal activity occurring. For example this includes calling the police if the permittee is aware of drug sales occurring in the establishment. It is not our intention to put permittees or their staff in harm's way, but we do have to recognize the role permittees have in keeping our alcohol-permitted establishments safe for the people who use them.

Mr. Speaker, the changes contained in Bill 71 are just a sampling of the changes that I announced yesterday. And while I am happy to be putting forward these changes, I can assure you that we will not be waiting decades before looking at the liquor regulations once again. Going forward, we will continue to review and identify possible improvements on an ongoing basis, and government will continue to focus to eliminate red tape and improve the business environment in Saskatchewan.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude my remarks and move second reading of Bill No. 71, *An Act to amend The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Act, 1997*.

[15:30]

The Deputy Speaker: — The Minister of Crown Investments has moved that Bill No. 71, *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2012* be read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise to speak to Bill No. 71, *An Act to amend The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Act, 1997*. I appreciate the minister's comments about the explanation for the legislation. I note from the information that we've received from the minister that in the press announcement yesterday, there were 77 changes announced. It's only 10 of those changes that are included in this legislation because most all the other ones can be dealt with in regulations or in policy.

So I think it's important to note that, that this particular legislation has some important things to do but it's only a portion of all of the changes that were talked about in the initial announcement yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, we support most of these changes in the legislation. We know that they come from a careful review of all of the regulations that are in place and there are things and choices that are made. Part of what we will be doing is examining all of the changes but then also specifically the changes in the legislation together with people in the community. And these changes affect so many people that I think there will be quite a conversation.

Now while we do support these changes to the liquor and gaming regulations and legislation and the policy, I think we also need to state very clearly that there is another side to this whole issue, and that is the area of addictions. We're in a special week to recognize addictions, addictions counselling, and things like that that we have in our province. And it is a bit ironic that we're dealing with this particular legislation during

that week. And so what we would also encourage the government to do is to make sure that they're looking at the other side — all of the hurt, all of the damage to people, all of the damage to families and communities that happens because of the use of alcohol. And in this area it's always important to get the right balance to make sure that there's effective responsibility on the individuals using the alcohol products, but at the same time making sure that those who need the help get the help. And that part hasn't yet been announced or hasn't been reaffirmed and so we will ask a number of questions there.

Because when the young people come forward and talk about the dramatic and drastic effects that consumption of alcohol by underage people can have to their lives and to their futures, we need to listen. When the Mothers Against Drunk Driving are speaking about these things, we need to listen carefully. And so whatever we do in dealing with the legislation and the regulations, we always have to make sure that we keep track of the important side of providing the appropriate treatment, the appropriate places. And whatever revenues that we get through additional use of alcohol, which maybe these rules changes will result in, we have to make sure that an appropriate share of that money goes to dealing with the problems that already exist as a result of the abuse of alcohol.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the changes in the legislation are quite interesting but they're quite straightforward. And I think that effectively what the legislation does is make Saskatchewan's rules a little more in line with other jurisdictions in Canada. And it doesn't go as far as what we saw happen in a referendum in the state of Washington last fall, where basically alcohol sales were opened up to every retail establishment. And anybody who has been to Spokane or Seattle or Yakima, you get surprised when you go to the Lowe's hardware store and see all of the bottles of alcohol next the hammers and saws in the hardware store. And effectively they made that change in the state of Washington. That's not what we're necessarily talking about here, but what we are talking about is that there is a much broader interest in making sure that the products are available. And so when we look at the specific provisions in this legislation, the changes are quite straightforward.

So what we have is allowing for, for example, catering businesses to have a much simpler way of getting permits for their operations. That's good for catering businesses. It effectively allows for, all the changes put together allow for a simpler world in one sense for restaurants and bars, catering institutions, other places like that to have multiple use of their facilities. And that's not necessarily a bad thing, but it does open up more competition and clearly we'll be hearing from some existing outlets that maybe are having troubles with this.

So the other part of . . . If we actually go through the provisions in the legislation in order, we can see the changes that are here. And some of them just relate directly to the processes of getting liquor licences for stores, and we all have heard over the years that some of these provisions are much more complicated and maybe more expensive than they need to be. This will attempt to respond to some of those concerns and I think we're not necessarily opposed to that, but clearly we'll be asking about it.

Another provision that's been removed is, there's been a rule that all the prices for all types of drinks that are available in a

facility should be posted on a wall somewhere so you can look at them. And that rule has been changed, that they don't have to be posted. But they do, you know, information should be provided to patrons about what kinds of alcohol are involved in each drink, but the necessity for prices to be posted in the same way has been changed. Clearly, clearly businesses will want to let the public know what, what their products cost, so I think that'll be dealt with without much difficulty.

Another area where the Liquor and Gaming Authority has spent a lot of time relates to actual licensing processes. And some of the changes to the section — I think it's 56 — will allow for, I guess, less of a hassle in putting together your application. Because I know, once again from my law practice, people would come in and say, well how do we put together an appropriate package of information for the Liquor and Gaming Authority? And ultimately in the law firm you always had one or two lawyers who would try to keep up to date with the latest policies that were coming from Liquor and Gaming so that you could help your clients get the information together. But I think the goal here is to maybe reduce some of the great detail around some of that, and I think that's not necessarily a bad idea.

Then we go on to some of the processes around publication of notice and making sure that the local community knows that a new restaurant is going in where they're going to serve alcohol. I think that some of that information will be provided but catering businesses won't have to do it in quite the same way. Other events will take place and some of these notice provisions will not be required in the same way.

The next provision is — and once again you have been reminded there is only 10 of the 77 provisions are actually in this legislation, so most of the ones that the public will have heard about are dealt with somewhere else — but the next provision is section 75. And the amendments are being proposed to that particular subsection 75(1) to deal with the issue of serving alcohol on golf courses. And it's kind of an interesting one. But basically the rule was that people who purchased alcohol on a golf course — from the beer cart, I guess, as they're colloquially known — would have to receive the product with the cap off or opened if it's a beer can because that way it would be consumed there on the course. And that's as far as the approval had gone.

What they're obviously saying here is, well if you want to buy two bottles of beer, you can have one with the cap on, one with the cap off. I don't think that's a major problem. I think people would understand that, and it also goes to deal with the ability to put a cap back on a bottle of beer if you haven't finished it. That's, I don't think, usually a big issue in Saskatchewan. Most people don't get involved there but some of the larger containers of beer, this may be an issue. And so the legislation is changed to deal with that.

I think one of the interesting concepts, and there's changes to various parts of the legislation to deal with this, does relate to the process or to the system whereby we'll catch up to other places where you can bring your own wine or your own beer to a restaurant if you go out to the restaurant. This works quite well. I think Quebec comes to mind as the place where it's probably the easiest.

But effectively, the restaurateur is happy to have the business. They will serve wine if you want, or if you bring your own wine, they will charge you a fee for the glasses and maybe the service related to it. But it'll be very clearly stated on the menu how much that costs. And if it's a restaurant you go to normally, well then you would know what the procedure is. It looks like we'll be able after some, probably some work to get the proper processes in place, do the same thing in Saskatchewan. And I think it will be something that gives another option for people who dine in our restaurants. And I think that's a good thing, to encourage people to use the restaurants we have in the province. So a number of the actual legislative changes relate to that fact of bringing your own wine, having it used partially, taking some of it home, some of those kinds of things. They're all, they're all important ones to do.

Now when we get to section 126 there's an amendment, there's a rule here that says that you can't stay in a public place if you're intoxicated and you can't stay in a permitted premises if you're intoxicated. And so, practically, this has caused problems in Saskatchewan related to our cold weather in the wintertime. And effectively this is obviously a request from people who have breached this rule because they don't want somebody to be injured or something worse. And so that's a practical solution that's in the legislation, and we'll see that.

[15:45]

It goes on to also talk about the kinds of entertainment that are available in permitted premises, and clearly the legislation will be changed to allow for regulations. And those regulations will clearly set out more of the rules. And as I stated before, only 10 of the 77 changes are in the legislation. All the others are in the regulations or in the policy choices made by Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming.

So practically, what we have here is a legislation that appears to follow in line with the announcement that was made yesterday. We continue to say that this legislation is important but that there also is another side to this and, as I stated earlier at length, we have to be part of both sides of this particular situation. And I know that the minister who's bringing forth this legislation doesn't have the responsibility on the addictions side. I think it comes through the Ministry of Health. So we would be looking forward to hearing what the Minister of Health will have to say as we look at the provision of services right across the province.

We'll be speaking with people across the province about this particular legislation. I know some of my colleagues will have comments as well, and we'll work with the government to make sure that any changes are in accordance with a reasonable, balanced approach to the use of alcohol in Saskatchewan. And with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'll move to adjourn the debate.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Leader of the Opposition has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 71, *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2012*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 60

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Stewart that **Bill No. 60 — *The Animal Products Amendment Act, 2012*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm pleased to enter the debate today on Bill No. 60, *The Animal Products Amendment Act, 2012*. And basically what this Act sets out to do is, it's about the ability of the provincial government to put in place a system whereby animal products are produced and then processed for people to eat, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And the reason this bill is before us is because the federal government on December 31st, 2013 will be getting out of the business of inspecting food, Mr. Deputy Speaker, so the province has to step up to the plate and figure this out.

This is another example of the federal government off-loading its responsibilities on to the province and creating more difficulties for the people here in Saskatchewan. What does the bill specifically set out to do? In the minister's second reading speech, he talks about the animal . . . What this is, it's an amendment to a previous Act. So what does this bill do? It updates this previous bill and will enable third party delivery of meats and brand inspection.

So right now the current Act allows only for government-employed inspectors to deliver these services, so this will allow third party delivery of meat and brand inspection. It works in tandem actually. There's Bill No. 59 which comes before this one, *The Animal Identification Amendment Act*. But *The Animal Products Act* needs to be amended to allow for a new brand inspection delivery system.

The other thing that the minister has said that it sets out to do, or the goal is, he calls it: "Another major initiative under this bill is to provide the livestock industry the flexibility it needs to move forward with a producer marketing assurance mechanism." So in order to be able to enable this, the bill is adding, provisions are being added to the bill to enable industry-led producer marketing assurance funds, and these funds would allow industry to collect fees to establish the fund. And these fees would go into a fund that would then be used to compensate producers when livestock buyers default on payment.

So the gist of Bill No. 60, *The Animal Products Amendment Act*, as I said is to create basically a provincial system for inspection. We all know . . . So this bill is very much about food safety. And we only need to look back a few months ago, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to an incident with XL Foods just a couple of months ago where we had the largest ever beef recall. More than 2,000 meat products were recalled in the XL Foods beef issue, inspection and E. coli scare. Actually it wasn't really a scare; it was a reality. Just until even a couple days ago, Mr.

Deputy Speaker, they were still discovering cases. There was one just a few days ago linked to XL Foods, and so that brought the total up to 18 cases of E. coli coming out of XL Foods.

So we know as consumers that we need to be assured that our food supply is safe and secure, that when we go to the grocery store that what we purchase will not make us sick. So making sure that we have a strong food system is absolutely imperative with good regulations. But not just regulations; you need to be able to ensure that you're resourcing inspectors properly with the skills but the money necessary to be able to hire the right amount of inspectors to be able to do the work.

XL Foods, if you'll recall, the federal minister that comes from Saskatchewan, it took the Americans refusing our beef to lead to the recall. We had a minister, a federal minister here who was, well, evasive and unwilling to recognize the issue. And in fact I think in one news conference he left it up to a civil servant, Mr. Speaker.

So in terms of consumer confidence, that is absolutely imperative that with our agricultural products, we need to know that they are safe and good to eat because there can be very real consequences, especially for those who have suppressed immune systems, whether from illness or if you're an elderly person or a young person. Some of the food-borne illnesses can be more harmful to others than some, but they're not good for anybody, Mr. Speaker. And we don't ever want to think that we would be at risk of contracting a food-borne illness because our food inspection system failed.

So this bill is very much about consumer confidence, but if you think about it too, this isn't just about consumer confidence. We need to think about our producers too and the impact that XL being shut down for more than a month had on them. And actually in fact the US [United States] and Taiwan had imposed restrictions on beef imports from the XL Food plants, and I believe that the US is still not accepting beef from XL.

So consumer confidence is a big piece of that, but when we think about employees and producers, the producers who are providing the animals and the employees who are processing them, this is huge. So you think about all the folks who were laid off at XL Foods. The reality is, that's fewer dollars in their pocket. Even if they're EI [employment insurance] eligible, the reality is now it takes, I know here in Saskatchewan, up to six weeks to receive your first EI cheque. It used to be a two-week waiting period, but with federal cuts now, it takes about six weeks to be able to receive that first EI cheque. So some of these folks who were laid off maybe are just getting processed now for those EI cheques.

And the other points, even though you might be eligible for EI and the money eventually arrives, 55 per cent of your wage sometimes is not enough to be able to continue paying your mortgage or all your utilities and the cost of living. And XL Foods is a very large employer in Brooks, Alberta, so I suspect that there's probably even families who had one or two earners in a family who both worked at XL Foods which would be extremely problematic, which would be extremely problematic because then there would be no money coming into that household, Mr. Speaker. So this is about consumer confidence, but it also is about the ripple effects that it has on many other

people, particularly the producers who lose the capacity to have their products processed but also the employees who work at a plant like XL beef.

The other thing you have to think about in a community like Brooks, I remember reading somewhere that the wages lost at XL Foods, it was \$200,000 a day in lost wages in that community — \$200,000 a day for more than a month, Mr. Speaker. So not only does that impact those families and individuals, but what does that mean to all the other businesses in that community? Whether it's the grocery store, the gas station, whomever it might be, the clothing stores, what does the loss of \$200,000 a day mean to a business, Mr. Speaker? It has a huge, huge impact.

So getting food inspection right is about consumer confidence, and it is about our economy as well, Mr. Speaker, because if we don't get this right, the cost can be huge. It has a huge human toll with people who wind up sick and sometimes even die. We've had cases of that happen here in Canada, incredibly tragic, where we had a federal minister who still is this minister, the Minister for Agriculture, who had the audacity to comment about death by a thousand cold cuts, which is absolutely insulting and hurtful to so many people, Mr. Speaker. So death by a thousand cold cuts. Can you imagine that someone, anyone would say that, let alone someone in that position?

So this again, Bill No. 60, *The Animal Products Amendment Act* is about making sure that we have a safe provincial system because the feds are bailing once again on the people of Saskatchewan. So it's about consumer confidence, making sure our food supply is safe. It's about making sure our workers and our producers are protected because if things go awry, it's not their fault. I know producers work really hard to produce the best quality beef and other products humanly possible, Mr. Speaker. We should be very proud of that here in Saskatchewan, but if we don't have a good, strong food inspection system and we don't have confidence in that, it has huge ramifications.

So I know that I have colleagues who will also be weighing into the debate and discussion on Bill No. 60, *The Animal Products Amendment Act, 2012*, and I look forward to their remarks as well. And with that I would like to move to adjourn debate.

The Speaker: — The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 60, *The Animal Products Amendment Act, 2012*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 61

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. McMorris that **Bill No. 61 — *The Railway Amendment Act, 2012*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A pleasure this

afternoon to have the opportunity to enter in on the debate on Bill No. 61, *An Act to amend The Railway Act*. The Bill itself, Mr. Speaker, not too long, a few pages, but certainly covering some important content. If we look at the actual Act itself, it is fairly substantial and has had a number of additions to it over the years, and this, Mr. Speaker, is one more set. And that is not an unfamiliar thing to do with legislation as things change within the province, as problems arise, or as situations come to the fore. It's appropriate, Mr. Speaker, that from time to time we look at pieces of legislation and ensure that they are in fact serving the best interests of the community as it relates to the issue that the legislation speaks to.

So in this situation, Mr. Speaker, we're dealing with the subject of railways. Obviously a very important topic. There is something about railways and trains that captures the imagination of many Saskatchewan people and many people around the world in fact. And we can think of the history of Saskatchewan, and we know how important the railway has been to many communities. It's an important link to our past, and I would argue, Mr. Speaker, that railways are also very important for our future. We think of communities, Mr. Speaker, a lot of activity revolved around the railway. And when a railway was in a community, it meant that services could be provided. It meant that individuals could travel as they needed to, and there could be an elevator there in many instances, Mr. Speaker, for farmers to bring their crops to.

[16:00]

So it's a very important issue. And we know that that's been part of our history as a people here in Saskatchewan with our development. But we know that there have also been changes, which sometimes they have been changes beyond the control of this Assembly, and sometimes they've been changes coming from the federal government, and sometimes, Mr. Speaker, they've been changes from around the world.

But we know because of these changes, communities have had to adapt and evolve based on the current reality that they face. And so we see, Mr. Speaker, how at one time railways were hugely important. And they still are hugely important — I shouldn't say, one time — and for that reason, Mr. Speaker, they have captured the imagination of many Saskatchewan people. And there are those that love the history involved with the railway. And even when there's little children, I know children love little train sets because it's an important aspect of our history. It's an important aspect of our story. And they still continue to serve a very important role here in the province.

But we know, Mr. Speaker, there have been changes, as I alluded to in my earlier remarks. And in situations where we once had a very extensive railway network, because of actions that we have seen at the federal level, Mr. Speaker, we have seen many of the railways closing in different parts of the province. And that has major implications, Mr. Speaker, because in many of these areas, local economic activity remains. And that of course is a wonderful, important, and a good thing.

So it's necessary that as we consider what the future looks like for Saskatchewan, we have to ensure that the decisions we make around railways are in fact in the best interests of the

province in the historical, cultural sense, but more importantly in the economic sense, Mr. Speaker, in the services that they provide and in their ability to encourage and facilitate industry in a given area.

And we know, Mr. Speaker, that if goods are not being transported on the railways, they would then be transported in other ways. And that of course raises implications for our highway system and the maintenance of those roads. As more goods are forced from the railways to the highways, that is more wear and tear on our roads, so the maintenance of the roads, and puts a greater demand on repairs in given areas.

Also, Mr. Speaker, it raises the issue of how to most efficiently and effectively transport goods and products. And we know that, Mr. Speaker, that with bigger trucks on the road hauling goods longer distances, this does raise implications for other traffic. It raises implications for the actual roads themselves. And so we need to I think as a province look at opportunities and look at ways where we can ensure that rail service continues in a given area and serves the needs of local communities. We need to ensure that that process is facilitated and encouraged and made as smooth as possible.

So with that as the guiding principle that we have when we approach the issue of railways, we need to ask ourselves as a legislature, how can we best facilitate that process? Are there barriers? Are there steps that need to be addressed in order to ensure that we can have as many shortline railways as possible within the province? And that when communities come together and look at ways that they can ensure that their economic needs are being met, Mr. Speaker, we need to make that process as easy as possible, I would say. And, Mr. Speaker, it's often the case that when a local community faces that kind of issue of the railway no longer existing or facing that possibility, it's not through their own fault. It's through forces beyond their control in many circumstances. So it's important that we as legislators look at ways to facilitate that process.

So as I read the . . . As I look at the piece of the legislation, which as I said is not overly long as legislation goes but does have some decent content to it, and as I read the minister's second reading remarks, which are a time for the minister to clearly state why this piece of legislation is happening, I see, Mr. Speaker, a desire to encourage that process, which I at face value would say is a positive and constructive thing.

And this amendment that's being proposed in this piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, is speaking to the issue of facilitating the process where there may be a buyer for the rail line and how the two sides making the deal can most easily come to a successful conclusion. As the minister stated in his remarks, he said that "*The Railway Amendment Act* outlines the railway abandonment process, which requires railway owners to offer to sell their railway lines to interested parties before being allowed to permanently abandon their railway."

So it's the recognition, Mr. Speaker, that in an instance where the railway is being abandoned in a particular area in the province, if because of the people living in the area and their attachment to the rail line and most importantly because of the economic activity in the area, Mr. Speaker, if they are in a position where they still need that rail line, it's a requirement

of, Mr. Speaker, the current owner when they are about . . . before they abandon to provide that opportunity for others to take over the railway. And that is an important point. I'm not here to discuss the larger national picture with respect to rail lines. But here in Saskatchewan when we can take steps to ensure that service is provided in the best possible way and where service can continue based on the needs of a community, I think that's a good thing. Because as I said, Mr. Speaker, it can facilitate and foster business in an area, but it can also prolong the life of our highways, reduce costs for our highways, and can also make our highways safer, which is a concern for anyone who regularly travels on our provincial roads.

So what this piece of legislation here is doing, Mr. Speaker, as the minister said, that:

In the government purchase phase, a municipal government is required to either decline or accept the offer to purchase the net salvage value within 60 days of receiving the offer, and they can only request a net salvage value after they have accepted the offer. As a result they are forced to make a critical decision without knowing what the exact purchase price will be.

So the way that the legislation currently stands, Mr. Speaker, is problematic because what we're asking individuals to do, as the minister points out, is to enter into an agreement for purchase without actually knowing the final dollar amount because of not knowing what the figure is for the salvage value.

So this process, Mr. Speaker, would allow that information to be provided in advance and so that individuals could have all the cards on the table, know what the reality is for the situation, assess that compared to their own ability to pay, or to organize a group together to purchase a shortline and carry on with business. So I see, Mr. Speaker, you know, we often talk about the need as a provincial government to share information with individuals so that they can make informed decisions and, Mr. Speaker, I think that is a positive step.

We also, Mr. Speaker, what this piece of legislation would do is in situations where there is a dispute, it establishes the Highway Traffic Board as the power to evaluate the dispute and as the minister said, ". . . if necessary, issue an order to the parties to enter an agreement that the Board believes is fair and reasonable." So in a sense giving the Highway Traffic Board quasi-judicial powers to come to a solution if in fact there is an impasse and the two sides can't agree on things. It allows the Highway Traffic Board to come to look at the facts, use their expertise, use their experience, and make a decision that would be agreeable to the parties.

And as with any sort of negotiation, Mr. Speaker, from time to time there are instances where, despite two parties negotiating, where the solution is not arrived at quickly. And I could imagine when we're dealing with an issue of railway abandonment and the possibility of a group of individuals buying that railway, Mr. Speaker, I could see how it could be a difficult matter to negotiate because there are many factors to consider.

There is the sentimental attachment that individuals might have to the aspect or the notion of the railway, but on a practical

level, Mr. Speaker, there's the need for the economic activity and there's the desire for communities to maintain their rail service because they understand how important rail service is to the industry in the area. And, Mr. Speaker, that in turn means that in many situations, can mean how . . . can determine the vitality of a community and whether or not there is enough economic activity in the area to support the population who wants to live there and therefore pay for the services that are present in the area.

So it is necessary, Mr. Speaker, I think when we're talking about negotiations that may occur, I think it's important that if we can make that process to operate smoothly and in a more effective manner, I think that is a positive thing. But, Mr. Speaker, at the same time when we are making changes like this to facilitate the process and to make it a more smooth process, we have to ensure that the changes do not have unintended consequences, that it is not creating powers that the Highway Traffic Board perhaps should not have. That's a fair and legitimate question that we should at least ask ourselves before we go down that path.

And, Mr. Speaker, we should ensure that it allows the parties to have all the information they need when deciding whether or not a group could buy the rail line and whether or not a group could sell the rail line. But as I said, when we're looking at issues of abandonment, we're looking at issues of the well-being of a community from an economic perspective, it is necessary to have that full discussion. It's necessary that both parties feel like they're treated fairly, that both parties know there is a dispute resolution mechanism, which it would appear the Highways Traffic Board could provide in this instance if there was a dispute that was unresolved. I think those are positive steps. And I think those are steps that we owe to Saskatchewan people so that they can make the right and informed decisions.

And it is a concern when railways are abandoned, Mr. Speaker, because we know how important they've been in a historical context, but we know how important they are in the present-day context in providing services to communities in order to ensure that the communities can carry on as strong as they want to be and as strong as they need to be.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to talk about railways because they are special, and Saskatchewan people do appreciate the railways in the historical sense but also in the everyday practical sense as it supports the economy and allows communities to do well. So on that note, Mr. Speaker, I would conclude my remarks and move to adjourn debate on this piece of legislation. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 61, *The Railway Amendment Act, 2012*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 62

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed

motion by the Hon. Mr. Doherty that **Bill No. 62 — *The Parks Amendment Act, 2012 (No. 2)*** be now read a second time.]

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

An Hon. Member: — Okay. David's up. I'm leaving.

Mr. Forbes: — No, stay. Stay. Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to rise and speak on Bill 62, *An Act to Amend the Parks Act*, and I hope everyone stays to listen to this because I think this is an important bill and it is one that we should be having some conversations about.

I think that, you know, it is interesting. I believe it was in the 2007 campaign. This government had promised at that point to put into place two new parks. One of course would be a wilderness park. They wanted to give the appearance of being closer to nature, and yet we have not seen that park. This is the first new one.

So you know, Mr. Speaker, we have 34 provincial parks in our province, and they are a wonderful, wonderful part of who we are in Saskatchewan. They range from the Far North to the South, some of the older parks like Moose Mountain or Cypress Hills, heritage parks, recreation parks, wilderness parks. And I hope I have some time to review some of those other 34 parks because they are truly, truly beautiful.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, I remember in 2005 when we were celebrating our centennial that along with several regional parks, I had actually got to visit I think it was close to 30 — somewhere like 26, 28 — provincial parks over the course of that summer. It was truly an amazing experience because I think our parks are a wonderful, wonderful part of our province.

And of course they go back a long history. Many were created prior to the 1930s. But I remember that we've just recently celebrated our 75th anniversary, so I would believe that we're probably up to our 80th anniversary or pretty close to it, maybe our 78th anniversary. But at any rate, it is a beautiful thing, and it's what makes us so special — our province and our provincial parks.

And it isn't surprising that so many people stay home, stay in the province to go to our provincial parks because they really do offer a wonderful experience not only in the summer, when we typically think of going to the beach and going camping and spending time at the lake, but also those parks in the winter where you can go cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, all those kinds of things. And they're truly, truly a gem. And so it is good that we take time to reflect on our legislation that talks about our provincial parks and what we can do to better improve those parks.

[16:15]

But as I said, this government has promised two parks and we're only reading about one today. Now if I'm missing something I'd sure like to hear about it, but their one that they are going to be talking about is one by Emma and Anglin Lake, and in fact it will be called Anglin-Emma Lakes Provincial Park as an interim name. And I understand that that's because they're holding a bit of a contest to get a better name.

But it's a beautiful part of the province too, and I know that people seem to like the idea. The minister talked about how they . . . He says over the last two years they've held two open houses, three trade show events, consulted with 25 various interest groups, five local First Nation/Métis groups and various other folks. They did an online survey. Now there were 5,500 surveys were distributed; 721 came back that were specific to Anglin-Emma Lakes region, and the response was 87 per cent support from the general public. So it's a very, very high support for this. And I think that speaks volumes about that this was a natural choice. And of course this will be a good addition to the park, and it's interesting because of course it will result in an additional 12 821 hectares of Crown lands being protected in a park.

Now it's really interesting, of course, we know about the . . . We've had many debates about wildlife habitat areas and protecting environmentally sensitive areas, ecologically sensitive areas, and this will go up. I'm not sure if it was already environmentally protected lands but, you know, I think that we have, I think there's seven different standards of protection in the province. And of course the lowest is if you're on Crown land and really, essentially, there's limited protection.

The second highest is the provincial park being designated a provincial park land because clearly there should be very little, very little disturbance to that land. And of course the highest is we did a few years ago around the Great Sand Hills where it's very specifically designated as ecologically sensitive areas. And that's the highest level of protection where the only way to remove lands out of the Great Sand Hills is through legislation. And that's very important. So I'm delighted to see that this will create in a sense a park that's over 16 000 hectares because it will amalgamate or absorb the existing Anglin Lake and Emma Lake recreation sites. So this is a good, good thing. And I think that this is, as I said, it will be protecting land in the mid-boreal upland eco region of Saskatchewan, so that's a very, very important area that's of concern.

Part of the Act that he talks about is removing 31 hectares of land from the Coteau Bay area in the Danielson Provincial Park. They're going to do some cottage lot development. I hope we can see some maps about that when we go into committee, that we can actually see what we're talking about. And hopefully that's an appropriate thing. We hope that what's happening with the cottage lot development is a transparent and fair process. I know that when you develop a . . . when you're removing Crown land — and in fact we had those questions in question period today around the fairness and accountability processes — clearly that we need to make sure that that's the case.

Now the minister does go on to say that this will offset a reduction in Danielson Provincial Park, and the amendment also adds 65 hectares of other lands which contain native prairie grassland to the park. So it looks like again, from 31 going out to 65 coming in, a net gain of 34 hectares. This should be an appropriate thing.

But you know, when we're talking about those small gains, I just want to take a moment here to flag that we are deeply concerned about the track record of this government when it

comes to wildlife habitat and protected areas. And we're having a discussion, an ongoing discussion about the community pastures and what does that mean, because they are a significant contributor to the RAN [representative area network] system or the wildlife habitat protected areas. And while we can celebrate 34 hectares going in, we know there are thousands at risk, thousands of hectares at risk in the province as we speak.

It also talks about improving visitor safety while they're in the parks and reducing risks to wildlife. I did find this interesting that the minister did have some stats that dangerous wildlife attractants can include such items as improperly stored food, greasy pots left for cleaning later, or waste improperly disposed of. In 2011, Mr. Speaker, I understand they had close to 1,000 calls regarding nuisance bears and 850 of these were occurring in the parks. So clearly we have to do something about that.

The other one is some amendments regarding Steele Narrows Provincial Park, whereby the description of the park is being adjusted because of some mapping issues, and we always need to make sure we're as accurate as can be.

It's interesting that Highway 699 carved off what they describe as a narrow, as a sliver of land separated from the main park. I hope it's not too big of a piece of land. We're not sure how much. Again it would be interesting to know the exact area, and it would be helpful to see maps regarding that. So this seems to be relatively straightforward, but as I said that we are looking anxiously for the other park. You know, it's been five years and they need to keep their promise.

You know, I've advocated, I would like to see a wilderness park actually in the south part. I know that one area that many people have talked about and have raised the area that's around, actually just north of the Great Sand Hills on the Saskatchewan River, the South Saskatchewan River, where it comes into the province and it adjoins with the Red Deer River. And there's an area called the Chesterfield flats. The forks there, it's an amazing part where you're seeing some hoodoos and just wild nature. It's incredible.

We went through a canoeing trip there one summer. We actually were able to, when we beached the canoes, we went up for a hike in the hills, came across a couple of rattlesnakes. Luckily we heard these rattlesnakes and we were able to watch them from just a couple of feet away. We actually kept a good distance away, but it was interesting to see rattlesnakes in the distance. It was in the fall and they weren't moving too much. They were sunning themselves and just trying to get some extra energy for the winter ahead.

But this is a beautiful part of the . . . You know, our province is so blessed with the wide range of the ecological regions that we have. And that part of the province, you know, it's often referred to as the Saskatchewan breaks. Now many of us have heard of the Missouri Breaks. But the local folks apparently refer to it as the Saskatchewan breaks because you have the Saskatchewan prairie, that level, and you're going up to the next level of the Alberta prairies, and it causes some interesting land formations. And if you've ever had a chance to visit it, it's one that you will remember and it's an amazing, an amazing place. And not far from there, of course, are the Great Sand Hills and how they're protected. And it would be a very

worthwhile area for us to develop, take some time as a province to take a look at the worth of a wilderness park.

Often we think of wilderness parks of having to be in the Far North, in the forests, and they are wonderful as well. They're absolutely wonderful.

But clearly it would be . . . There is a lot to be said for southern Saskatchewan and the unique land features that the prairies and near desert conditions can bring, you know. In fact we had just some writing about this in terms of Candace Savage writing about how it's a little south of there. But that whole area — the Cypress Hills, south Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan forks area, are just, you know, and the Grasslands Park, national park there — it's an amazing part of our province.

And I think that there should be much more done in terms of promoting ecological tourism, environmental tourism in that area. We don't want to see it overdone. We don't want to see, you know, cottages along in that area. But boy, we could do some neat tourism.

And the heritage for the First Nations there is an amazing story to tell, you know. Candace Savage talked about the struggles, the First Nations and the Métis and the fur trading that happened in Eastend and in that area close to Cypress Hills, in the Nekaneet. But if you go further north, that's even more interesting, I believe. But from what I've been able to understand and gather, that we should do something about that. And clearly I think if we were to do a survey across the province, so we all have our own local favourite parks. And so it's interesting when we can add one more, and we have now 35 provincial parks. But I think we could do better. I think that would be interesting.

I recognize the challenges though, Mr. Speaker. And I did speak at length the other night about provincial interests, and again we have to look at this. And we hope that they have done the correct amount of consultations on this, because it's clearly important that when you do a provincial park, you would think that everybody would be happy and supportive. But sometimes that's not the case because there are the unintended consequences of creating provincial parks, taking significant land out of the normal marketplace, and in this case some 16 000 hectares, I believe.

So we have to be careful and we have to take some time and really think about the unintended consequences, make sure people have been consulted, and that it meets a niche in terms of what we want to have in terms of our family of provincial parks, you know, as I mentioned before, that there really are four categories: the wilderness parks, recreational parks, the natural environment, and historic parks. And if you go through the list, they are an amazing, amazing collection of provincial parks. And I'm sure this one, Emma-Anglin Lake Park, will do well, but it won't be something that will be done overnight and will have to be done correctly. And it will be interesting to see how this plays out.

In the past, provincial parks have played a key role in terms of the ecological protection of sensitive lands in the province and the interconnections of people. And that's how people can learn more about those areas, whether they're talking about the

Cypress Hills or whether you're talking about the northern parks — Crooked Lake or Moose Mountain Park; Narrow Hills Provincial Park, a beautiful park; or some of the historic parks. It's a way for people to learn more about their natural environment. And it's important that we do this right and people support them in just an amazing way.

And so I think we have . . . We think this is a good idea, but as I said, I think that the government has one more part that they need to deliver. That was their campaign promise, and we're looking forward to reading more about that. This seems relatively straightforward. It has been awhile in the coming because we know this was a 2007 campaign promise. And so we're looking forward for the other ones, but I do understand it does take some time.

I am concerned about some of the other implications federally, like Bill C-45 and the implication it has for some of the other river systems in Saskatchewan, about what it means for Cumberland House area, what it means for the Churchill River system, what it means for the Clearwater River system.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I know that many of us will have some things to say about this in a few minutes because I think this is an important bill and I know people will want to talk to this bill. And so, Mr. Speaker, I can go on about the different parks and some of my experiences. And I've said, Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park is an amazing park, and we really, really support that, but I think that . . . I know many of my colleagues will want to speak about these bills . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes. And so, Mr. Speaker, I can go on about these other ones, provincial parks that are of interest to us. And I think that we can take a look at what the minister has to say. And so with that, Mr. Speaker, I know that many of us will want to gather in on this, and so I would like to move adjournment now of Bill No. 62, *An Act to amend The Parks Act*. Thank you very much.

[16:30]

The Speaker: — The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 62, *The Parks Amendment Act, 2012 (No. 2)*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 63

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Doherty that **Bill No. 63** — *The Regional Parks Act, 2012* be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to enter into debate here today as it relates to the Act that governs our regional parks, specifically the changes that are being brought forward, Bill No. 63, *The Regional Parks Act, 2012*.

And you know, it's a pleasure to enter this discussion because

in many ways these are some of the most treasured assets we have as a province, all across our province in every corner and so many communities, that truly do enrich the lives of communities, provide places for communities to come together, provide the opportunity for recreation, provide the opportunity for tourism, and do so in a way that often highlights some of our incredible natural assets.

I was just leaving our caucus office and I said to one of our researchers there, Kyall Glennie, and I said, Kyall, I'm just going down to speak around, to discuss our regional parks. And immediately he started recounting stories about Saskin Beach and Leslie Beach in his neck of the woods where he grew up, Mr. Speaker, and talked about some of those stories and what they meant to his childhood, what they meant in rural Saskatchewan to provide some of the recreation infrastructure and some of the places to come together and have these phenomenal experiences.

So our regional parks, for me to speak towards our regional parks is something that I'm very pleased to speak to. I know as I spend time all across this province and certainly as I grew up and our family, we certainly accessed both our provincial parks and our regional parks all across this province. And whether it was down north of Cabri, down on the South Saskatchewan River at one of those beautiful little regional parks that sits there on the hills along the South Saskatchewan River, or whether it's been up in Govan regional park with its great little golf course and pool that serves the entire region by way of Raymore and by way of Semans and Strasbourg — all those different communities that utilize that park for some of the opportunities to access golf or swimming lessons or the lake itself — they're really special places and I have such fond memories as well at that park as a child going in there, particularly in the spring of the year, Mr. Speaker, when the walleye were up at the north end of the lake in the shallows, and just tremendous fishing up at Govan's regional park, Last Mountain Regional Park, and as well that important infrastructure that still exists to this day.

Now the nice thing about these regional parks is that they're infrastructure that we have enjoyed ourselves. They highlight some of our natural assets. But they're also parks that we're able to share with the next generation. And I've had the privilege of not only remembering back as being a young guy about this tall, Mr. Speaker, catching jackfish probably about the same length as myself up at Last Mountain Regional Park, but I also get to share that now with my nephews, Mr. Speaker. And it's a place I regularly take my nephews and am able to share some of those opportunities as well, whether it's fishing or the great pool that they have there.

And I know that when I go up there, there's this aspect of tourism. Families from all over the province have come together to camp or set up for the summer at that regional park, bringing dollars and bringing commerce to the nearby communities and the park itself. But also it's a real gathering point for nearby communities. And when I again speak of Last Mountain Regional Park, I think of how it draws together those communities of Strasbourg and of Raymore and of Semans, of Nokomis and all these different communities who really access it.

And the interesting thing is when you spend a little bit of time around the park, you end up having these incredible conversations with these communities that have come together, and the fact being that in fact in rural Saskatchewan, of course, even though your community is close to another community doesn't mean that you're necessarily always close as communities. In fact some of the best rivalries, whether it's through hockey or sports or activities or between schools, exist between some of those nearby neighbouring communities. But that seems to all change, Mr. Speaker, at the regional park in the summer where it is just that. And these communities all of a sudden that are 20 kilometres from one another are all of a sudden all brought together as a region. And these families are able to come together, intermingle, kids and students are able to connect with kids from other communities, and it's a pretty special place.

So I've got a pretty special place in my heart towards our regional parks, our provincial parks certainly in this province, and of course our incredible natural assets that we have as a province. In many ways I suggest that we're unrivalled. And that's a pretty bold statement, Mr. Speaker, if we think about the entire globe and whether you're thinking of . . . And I know you've travelled to Africa before, Mr. Speaker, and have had wonderful experiences there. And I know some of the landscapes there are certainly remarkable, and it's certainly something that I look forward to seeing as well at some point, Mr. Speaker. But in many ways, I'd put our province up against the landscapes of Africa any day of the week. And the reason I say that . . . Or just the same, we can think about the mountains and the special regions, the Rockies that we're so proud of that many seek and flock to and drive tourism towards. Well yes, that's a special region, but it's also a little bit more homogeneous than we are here in the province with our vast wonderlands and our incredible natural assets.

We might think around the world and all the different incredible terrain and landscapes and special regions that exist. And there are many, Mr. Speaker, which is pretty special, but there's few that could parallel or rival what we have as a province. And if you just think about it, Mr. Speaker, from down in the corner of your neck of the woods, down in southeast Saskatchewan, down almost on the American border, on that often barren land but beautiful land, that landscape that has a bounty of pheasant and deer and in many cases now even moose, Mr. Speaker, that have found habitat all the way across this province. The hills, the rolling hills throughout the South and in through the Big Muddy that this remarkable land with this incredible history . . . And that's so much of what's so special to our province is we have this great history that's also told, and the role of the Big Muddy as we formed as a country and as a province but also well before that.

I often think back, when I'm in some of these remarkable landscapes, what it must have been like 400 or 1,000 years ago in some of these landscapes with those that were here first, our First Nations and the traditional life that they were leading, in many ways a life not without challenge but a life that also had its own element of peace and sustainability to it, Mr. Speaker. And often when I'm sitting at the top of a hill in Big Muddy and hiking down, I often picture what an encampment or what a camp may have looked like 300, 400, 500 years ago. And it also connects us directly back to that experience in recognizing who

our First Peoples are and who our First Nations are to this province.

And moving kind of across the province here, starting down in the southeast corner and coming across through the south central there with Big Muddy and then of course up into Cypress Hills and this changed geography, and here you are on the same parallel really, Mr. Speaker, to your neck of the woods, your area. But over on the southwest corner of the province — so just directly west — we're in this region that is so much different, where we have in fact a forest and hills and lakes that are incredibly, incredibly special, and all the bountiful wildlife and animals that habitat in through the region as well.

What I can say, Mr. Speaker, is that . . . And I'm going to walk through our province a little bit because I've just given a taste of what our southern Saskatchewan is. And then as you think as you stretch all the way up our province, whether it's in through the central parts of Saskatchewan or further north, up through Moose Mountain for you, Mr. Speaker, and then as we head further north, in through that parkland, and our geography changes. But the lakes — Last Mountain and Diefenbaker and our Qu'Appelle chain — all those incredible assets that we have, and certainly intermixed with regional parks that have done such an incredible job of providing places of recreation for communities, for our province, but also a way of highlighting our natural assets and driving tourism in this province.

Moving further up through our province, picture getting into our boreal forest and that beautiful smell that emerges. I know my friend from Cumberland, the MLA for Cumberland suggests that when you're up there, you're into God's country and that it's sort of the best part of the province. But as you move a little bit further north, you emerge out of these beautiful Gem Lakes type country and boreal forest up into the Far North where we're into the Canadian Shield and our vast waterways of the Churchill River and these gem-like lakes and really a land that if you're ever flying across it is just bespeckled with beautiful crystal lakes and waterways all through the North.

And I guess what connects this province from the Cypress Hills — or in through my friend, the MLA for Weyburn's region there — down through the Big Muddy and in that incredible region or across through your region down on the American border up through the Moose Mountain hills or further north to us through Last Mountain and the Qu'Appelle chain, and then connecting north up to the boreal forest and into the Canadian Shield and of course up beyond it, Mr. Speaker, what connects our province and provides opportunities for us to come together and appreciate these regions in many ways are certainly the people, certainly the communities, but also our regional parks, Mr. Speaker.

And they are places that allow individuals from around the world, when visiting our province, to come together and to share in our special regions. They also allow us as individuals to travel within our own province and to find these beautiful places to connect. But it also allows communities, as I say, to connect and to bring together a region.

And far too often in this province we do have a culture of

distinctness between communities. And I maybe shouldn't say far too often. It's just a reality of our rural communities that if you're 15 kilometres over from the community opposite, there is in fact in many ways a separation and a rivalry between those communities. And in many ways, our regional park allows those regions to come together as they are and for families to get to know one another and something that we should . . . and provides a level of recreation that is in many ways has been unsurpassed for many communities.

Now a lot of this infrastructure that was put together in our regional parks network was put together in a different era, an investment that was made by communities, by that co-operative common sense sort of work together spirit of communities coming together and finding solutions. It was also brought together by partnership with governments and have made some really impressive assets throughout this province. But we also have some strain and pressure on some of those parks, and it's important when we're looking at it through this lens that those parks not only serve this generation prior coming together but the generation ahead.

And I think of my good friend opposite, the MLA for Weyburn. I suspect he's spent some time around Nickle Lake, Mr. Speaker, over the years. In fact I think he sails out at Nickle Lake, Mr. Speaker. I suspect he's maybe got a rider sail out there on Nickle Lake in a special place. And in fact I've spent some time down in Nickel Lake in his riding there as well. As a kid I remember catching some walleye off the shore where the creek comes into Nickle Lake and some great fishing. And I know what that regional park provides for that region and brings together a place for those from Weyburn to come and to have recreation and these opportunities but also neighbouring communities. Whether you're from whether you're from Oungre, from wherever in the region, it's a great spot.

And it really does highlight the importance of these provincial or these regional parks to our province. And what I would suggest is that we need to make sure we're doing all we can to be enabling the success of those regional parks and not impeding their success, making sure that they're able to improve their infrastructure and serve the next generation, the children of the next generation. And in many ways this is where these parks will be so historic moving forward because they've been planned by those before us, whether it was 40 years ago or 100 years ago in some cases, Mr. Speaker.

And my big belief around the importance of regional parks and the importance of fishing or hiking or hunting, provincial parks, all that connect that we have. Even those I think that have grown up on the farm, Mr. Speaker, have a close connect to this, that there's a certain sensibility that's gained, an appreciation towards a level of environmentalism, a protection, being stewards of our land and protecting ourselves for a future generation. I believe very much that it's through these pursuits, through these parks, through a connection to the land that fosters a care for that land. And I believe that just the same as many children that have been raised on the farm and have had that connect to the land understand the importance of protecting our land, air, and water for generations forward, I believe that's also been provided by way of some of our sporting pursuits and recreational opportunities facilitated and fostered through our regional park network.

[16:45]

Our regional parks represent something very important to this province, represent a connect for people and communities, represent a connection to our natural environment and what makes . . . building out that appreciation for our natural environment and making sure we're taking the protections and the actions now for the next generation quite frankly, Mr. Speaker. And when we're talking about the importance of that natural environment and those protections, quite frankly it's not simply to protect the quality of life in the province — certainly it is, certainly it supports that — but it's about protecting life itself, Mr. Speaker. When we look at the pressures and realities of climate change and science that we simply have to be dealing with and looking at the legitimate evidence and providing the protections, as I say, now, for future generations.

But our regional parks reflect something else as a province. They respect the same sort of way we came together as communities. They reflect how we form things such as the Wheat Pool, Mr. Speaker, or how we formed the Wheat Board, Mr. Speaker, how we came together with Crown corporations. And these were communities coming together and saying, hey, listen. We have some problems. We have some challenges. How do we bring some solutions to bear? And it was a matter of working together, Mr. Speaker.

And I believe it's that same sort of common sense, co-operative approach that was taken then to deal with the challenges and opportunities of that generation, that we have to take that same sort of approach now. Not saying the mechanisms or the tools or the solutions are the same, Mr. Speaker — quite the opposite — but to draw upon those values that run deep as a common thread across diverse communities in this province, and that's a care for one's community, a desire to make improvements, and a co-operative approach to doing so as a preferred approach, a common sense approach to doing so, understanding that we can do more together than we can do alone.

And that's the reason that regional parks are so important. It's the reason that we otherwise, Mr. Speaker, we'd all simply acquire and build out all the recreational assets in our own backyards or on our own farms, Mr. Speaker. But that's not realistic, and it's not the best way to go about it. The best way to build out quality of life and these opportunities, and the most effective way to do it is to come together in a co-operative way and a common sense way and to make some decisions, make some investments, and provide these exceptional quality-of-life opportunities for communities.

The reason I speak to setting out how important these regional parks are to the province — both to our history and shaping who we are and reflective of our values and important to our sense of environmental stewardship and the importance of action — is that we are very concerned with legislative changes being pushed forward by a government that's been on the hunt for cash, Mr. Speaker. And I think of very much we have communities that are growing and infrastructure that's strained, and they're looking certainly for solutions. And it's a time actually for government to be very active in meeting with communities and listening with communities and looking for the solutions to the challenges and pressures they're facing to make sure that we're making the right decisions now that will

serve us best 10 and 20 and 30 years from now.

And I think of a recent example, Mr. Speaker, where in the community of LeRoy, or just outside the community of LeRoy, there's a beautiful regional park with all sorts of recreational infrastructure, with campsites, with a pool, Mr. Speaker. And I understand that there was some pressures around the infrastructure for that regional park. There was questions around how do we, how do we manage some of these resources to make sure they're on a solid footing for the next generation.

So that's where some of the questions of community . . . As I've been up there, Mr. Speaker, I've had meetings. I've listened to community members on it, Mr. Speaker. There was a lot of questions. What was certainly crystal clear to me is the conviction of every single one of those residents of the importance of that park, the importance of the infrastructure, the importance of that recreational component that's offered back to residents. What was unclear and uncertain was how can they can ensure that that was going to be in place moving forward.

And I believe what was, what would have been appreciated, Mr. Speaker, was a government that was willing to come and work with the region — with people who care very much about their community, care about their region, and care about their park — to listen and to hear some of the concerns and pressures that they were facing as it related to maintenance of infrastructure and ensuring it's on the solid footing that was required for the next generation. But that never happened, Mr. Speaker. We have had a government that's been absent from that responsibility.

So you've got community people then that are left with making some very, very difficult decisions, ones that were only made in the absence of an active government to come out and listen and work together with the community. But now what it's resulted in is the sell-off of a regional park, a regional park, Mr. Speaker, that has been built by the community, that has included public money going into it, Mr. Speaker, that has been a vital part of the memories of the families and residents and farming community that I was speaking with in and around LeRoy, and something that was very clear to me is very important for the residents to ensure was maintained and provided and enhanced for their children and their children's children within that region.

Now my concern, Mr. Speaker, and shared by many, is that this planned sell-off that was forced basically by a government that wasn't willing to come together and work together and to hear the concerns of community may not be the best choice for the community. Taking these public assets that we have some certainty and control over, that we can make sure are there in 25 years and 50 years, Mr. Speaker, now that's in many ways been lost and compromised.

And I think of some of the examples of the other sell-offs of this government at a time where, in many ways, we are hearing about our economy that's growing. And that certainly has some strength to it. But on another hand, we continue to see a government that's failing to make the investments back into some of the infrastructure that makes a meaningful difference in the lives of Saskatchewan people, a government that's actively,

actively selling off assets that are important to us as a province, important to Saskatchewan people, and not providing the sorts of solutions that draw upon the values of Saskatchewan people, which is to lay the facts on the table, look at the evidence, face up to our challenges, dream towards our opportunities and then work together to achieve it.

And in the case of the LeRoy Regional Park sell-off, Mr. Speaker, that was made in absence of a willing partner in government. And I know the concerns that Saskatchewan people and those in the region now have is that they're not certain, it's unclear about how that infrastructure will be maintained and whether it'll be available to the community.

And I think of when we have . . . When we look at some of the other sell-offs of this government, this week they sold off a Crown corporation: ISC, Mr. Speaker. They've been privatizing all sorts of portions of our Crown corporations. But I think of when they came before us and pretended that they had a great deal in selling off SCN [Saskatchewan Communications Network], Mr. Speaker. SCN played a very vital role in supporting the film industry in this province. It played an important role from an educational content perspective from telling the Saskatchewan story, Mr. Speaker.

And this government just a couple years ago came before us and said, well we've sold SCN. But they were pretending it was now going to be the best of both worlds, that the private sector will take on the commitment, will maintain the risk, and provide the benefits to Saskatchewan people.

Well, Mr. Speaker, this one became abundantly clear, Mr. Speaker. The folly in these sorts of sell-offs and privatizations is that those sorts of . . . that their contract wasn't worth the paper it was written on, Mr. Speaker. And just shortly thereafter, the company itself which had purchased it had made some commitments to Saskatchewan people around content and a relationship to the film industry. That was something that was lost by way of a profitable sell-off of that company to another company who now no longer has the commitments that were pretended to be had by the government opposite in selling it off.

So just like SCN, Mr. Speaker, I believe that the community of LeRoy is very worried about losing its control and its co-operative management of that park and now leaving that in the hands of some other entity that they only hope now can fulfill what they wanted to do for the community. It's about presenting risk for communities when what they'd like to have is certainty and control over their futures. And that's something that they should be granted. And it's too bad that we've had a government that's pushed ahead with allowing that sell-off to occur, not actively working with the community to seek out if there were some other solutions, and chatting with residents there — I understand that there were many solutions that could have been there, Mr. Speaker — and recognizing as well what these parks mean to communities.

There's also of course this important link back to tourism, Mr. Speaker, in this province by way of our parks. And I think as well of the government takeover that occurred of Tourism Saskatchewan, something that was driven at arm's-length independently by the entrepreneurs who were highlighting and making investments in our province, highlighting our natural

assets and bringing many people from around the world to Saskatchewan to share in our impressive and special province, now a government that, with its heavy hand, has taken over that arm's-length independent entity.

And the risk and control that many Saskatchewan people feel is that it seems that it's a government who will do anything it can to get its hands on communications dollars, get its hands so that it can . . . it's sort of message management to the extreme, Mr. Speaker, to take control of that \$8 million budget to possibly tell a story that is somehow intermixed or supportive of the narrative of government, Mr. Speaker. And that's not what Saskatchewan people appreciate. And that's the concerns they have about the takeover on that front that's been taken away from those that have skin in the game who were investing in our province, who are highlighting and showcasing our impressive regions, now being taken over by government — but another example of the folly of this current government's approach.

But the two things are different. One was a takeover and taking away from those that were working together co-operatively. The other one is a sell-off of an asset that was built together co-operatively, Mr. Speaker. But they shouldn't . . . There is a connection between the two.

So when I look at this legislation before us I see that many new powers have been placed directly in the hands of the minister. That concerns me, Mr. Speaker, because it's the same minister who wouldn't play an active role in working with LeRoy, the community of LeRoy, that allowed this to occur in secrecy, Mr. Speaker, the sell-off of this public asset that has now threatened the certainty of that community in having the recreational infrastructure it requires.

There's other aspects of this bill that we going to continue to be consulting on. There's some refinement in language. Certainly that's probably something we can support. There's a new role for the Regional Parks Association. That's something that's likely more than reasonable. I know we've got such good people and provincial leaders engaged within our Regional Parks Association.

But where I have real concern is basically looking at this legislation that it's enabling legislation that could allow further sell-offs of regional parks all across this province, Mr. Speaker. And that's something I'll oppose, Mr. Speaker, the sell-off of our regional parks for all the reasons that I've stated — the important role they've played to our history; the values that they reflect that are common threads throughout communities across this province; that co-operative, common sense spirit of coming together; what they serve to a region as a place to come together, a hub for communities to come together, then bring together communities together that might be 15 or 20 or 30 or 40 or 100 kilometres apart and bringing them together for special opportunities to connect at a regional park and allow a really special opportunity for our incredible province.

Our landscapes are natural assets to be showcased in such a proud way that really are unrivalled anywhere else in the world, Mr. Speaker, as I've said, from the Southeast to the Southwest to central Saskatchewan, in through our beautiful and rich North, Mr. Speaker.

What I know is that our regional parks play a very important role to showcasing our province, bringing people together, connecting them to the environment. And I'm very concerned by the sell-off approach of this government, not just on all their Crown corporations that they're engaged in this sell-off approach and selling out approach, but also our regional parks that are so vital to the heart of communities and reflective of who we are.

Mr. Speaker, at this point in time I have many more concerns to put on the record on this bill, many questions to add, a lot more consultation to provide, but at this point in time, I will adjourn debate of Bill No. 63, *The Regional Parks Act, 2012*. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 63, *The Regional Parks Act, 2012*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. It now being at the hour of 5 o'clock, this House stands adjourned to 10 a.m. tomorrow.

[The Assembly adjourned at 17:00.]

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Wall	2101
Nilson	2101
Steinley	2101
Brotten	2102
Parent	2102
Forbes	2102
Stewart	2102
Sproule	2102
Wotherspoon	2102
The Speaker	2116

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Belanger	2103
Wotherspoon	2103

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Saskatonian Wins B'nai Brith Award

Norris	2103
--------------	------

New Football Teams in La Ronge Area

Vermette	2103
----------------	------

Moose Jaw Health Foundation's Festival of Trees

Lawrence	2104
----------------	------

Canadian Western Agribition

Sproule	2104
---------------	------

Research Chair Established at University of Regina

Steinley	2104
----------------	------

Saskatchewan's Economic Growth

Michelson	2104
-----------------	------

Video of New Democratic Party Debate

Hickie	2105
--------------	------

QUESTION PERIOD

Information Services Corporation

Sproule	2105
McMorris	2105

Health Care for Refugees

Brotten	2106
Duncan	2106

Land Transaction

Belanger	2107
Cheveldayoff	2108

Business Location and Global Transportation Hub

Wotherspoon	2108
Boyd	2109

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 72 — *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2012*

Harpauer	2109
----------------	------

Bill No. 73 — *The Municipalities Amendment Act, 2012*

Reiter	2110
--------------	------

Bill No. 74 — *The Cities Amendment Act, 2012*

Reiter	2110
--------------	------

Bill No. 75 — *The Northern Municipalities Amendment Act, 2012*

Reiter	2110
--------------	------

Bill No. 76 — *The Municipal Board Amendment Act, 2012*

Reiter	2110
--------------	------

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Ottenbreit	2111
------------------	------

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 70 — *The Education Amendment Act, 2012 (No. 2)*

Loi n° 2 de 2012 modifiant la Loi de 1995 sur l'éducation

Marchuk	2111
Nilson	2112

Bill No. 71 — <i>The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2012</i>	
<i>Loi de 2012 modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la réglementation des boissons alcoolisées et des jeux de hasard</i>	
Harpauer	2116
Nilson	2118

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 60 — <i>The Animal Products Amendment Act, 2012</i>	
Chartier	2120
Bill No. 61 — <i>The Railway Amendment Act, 2012</i>	
Brotten	2121
Bill No. 62 — <i>The Parks Amendment Act, 2012 (No. 2)</i>	
Forbes	2124
Bill No. 63 — <i>The Regional Parks Act, 2012</i>	
Wotherspoon	2126

GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

CABINET MINISTERS

Hon. Brad Wall
Premier

President of the Executive Council
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Bill Boyd

Minister of the Economy
Minister Responsible for The Global
Transportation Hub Authority
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Power Corporation

Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff

Minister of Environment
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Water Security Agency
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Water Corporation

Hon. Kevin Doherty

Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport
Minister Responsible for the Provincial
Capital Commission

Hon. June Draude

Minister of Social Services
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women

Hon. Dustin Duncan

Minister of Health

Hon. Donna Harpauer

Minister of Crown Investments
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Government Insurance
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Liquor and Gaming Authority

Hon. Nancy Heppner

Minister of Central Services
Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission
Minister Responsible for the Lean Initiative

Hon. Ken Krawetz

Deputy Premier
Minister of Finance

Hon. Russ Marchuk

Minister of Education

Hon. Tim McMillan

Minister Responsible for Energy and Resources
Minister Responsible for Tourism Saskatchewan
Minister Responsible for Trade
Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated

Hon. Don McMorris

Minister of Highways and Infrastructure
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Telecommunications
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Transportation Company
Minister Responsible for Information
Services Corporation
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Gaming Corporation
Minister Responsible for SaskBuilds

Hon. Don Morgan

Minister of Advanced Education
Minister of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety
Minister Responsible for the Saskatchewan
Workers' Compensation Board

Hon. Jim Reiter

Minister of Government Relations
Minister Responsible for First Nations,
Métis and Northern Affairs

Hon. Lyle Stewart

Minister of Agriculture
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Crop
Insurance Corporation

Hon. Christine Tell

Minister Responsible for Corrections and Policing

Hon. Randy Weekes

Minister Responsible for Rural and Remote Health

Hon. Gordon Wyant

Minister of Justice and Attorney General