



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

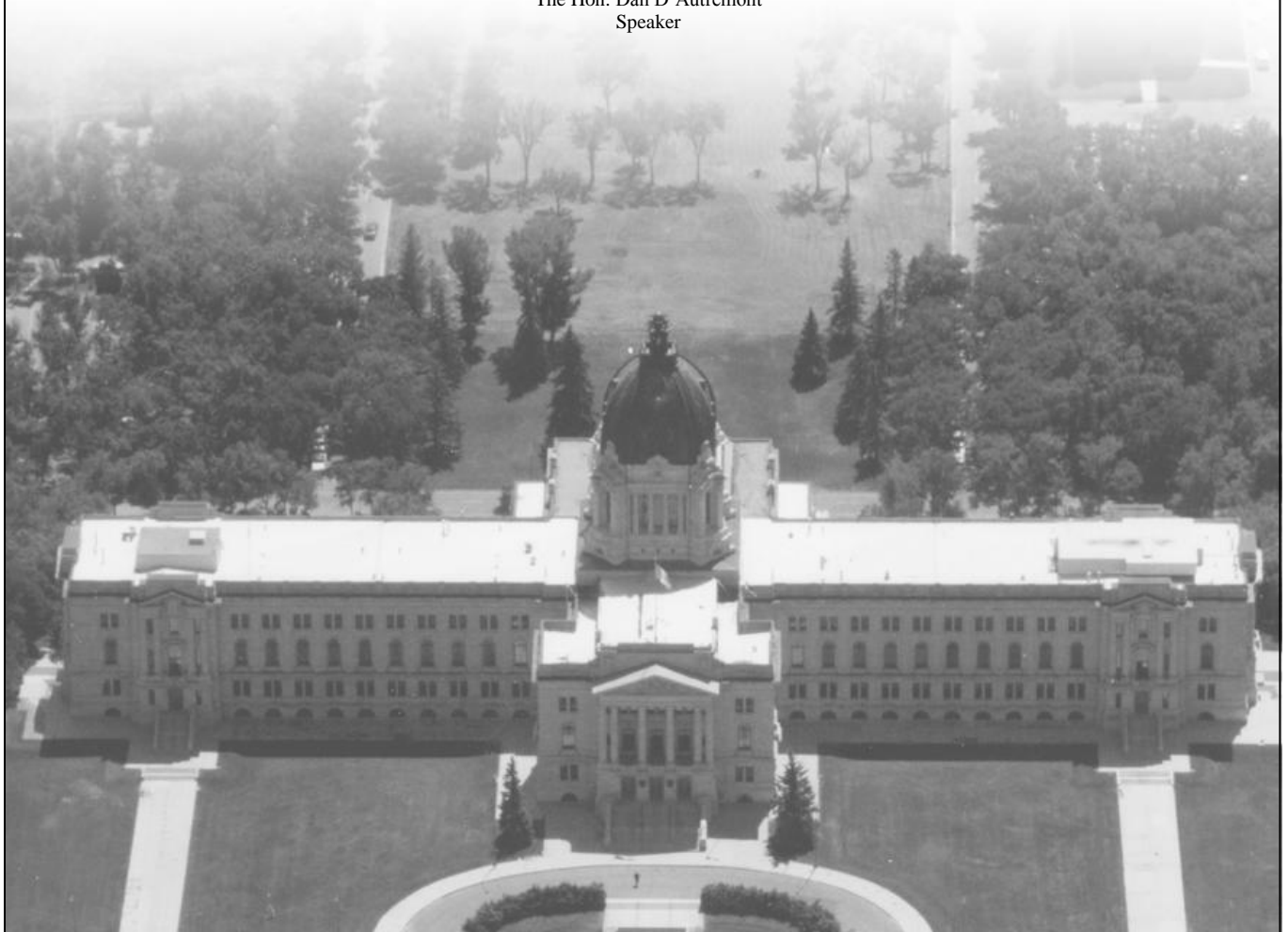
of the

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]

TABLING OF REPORTS

The Speaker: — Before introductions, I will be tabling the 2012 auditor's report volume 2.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would request leave to introduce a guest . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . extended introduction.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, seated in your gallery is a great friend to all of us in this Assembly, and that would be Mr. Ben Walsh sitting at the very top. Of course Ben works in legislative security with the Sergeant-at-Arms, and we all know and care for Ben greatly.

Last week we came in and Ben was wearing, sporting a particularly nice tie of his, Mr. Speaker. And I understand that through the course of the day, there was numerous members that commented on how much they liked Ben's tie. And in fact the next day we were still talking about the tie, and he said to a couple of us, well if you like it so much, maybe we should sell it for charity. Ben suggested that in fact the Regina Food Bank could likely use some dollars at this time of year, and I certainly agree.

And today we're going to kick off the start to the tie auction for Ben Walsh's tie, and I look forward to starting that auction off. I'm hoping I'm sporting this tie at the end of this process. So at this point in time, the process will be this. I'll start off the auction sheet. I'll leave the auction sheet down at the front security desk following . . . kicking it off here today. And I'll start with a bid of \$50 here today, Mr. Speaker. But you know, Mr. Speaker, I'm prepared likely to bid again because this is a pretty special tie and one I look forward to wearing. Not only that though, Mr. Speaker, I believe I'll challenge at this point in time my good friend on the floor opposite, the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy, to see if he'll see my bid, raise my bid, and generate some dollars.

So, Mr. Speaker, all in the spirit of the season, we introduce the tie auction. I'll remind all members and the public at large that they can bid on Ben Walsh's tie at the front desks of security, at

the front of our Legislative Assembly. And on Thursday morning at 9 a.m. we'll determine who's the winner, although, Mr. Speaker, I suggest it may end in a tie.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, I want to join with my colleague across the way in first of all welcoming Mr. Walsh to the Legislative Assembly. Certainly he's no stranger to any of us, and we certainly appreciate his work in this initiative, Mr. Speaker. And I will be taking part and seeing his bid and raising and doubling it, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much. And I'd encourage all of my colleagues to not only welcome him but also do the same.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Advanced Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, thank you, thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, not wanting to get off track on the bidding, but I will participate in that as well. I'll certainly want to match the member from Weyburn and add another 50 bucks to it.

Mr. Speaker, in your gallery are a number of people that were here for a technical briefing earlier today on *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*, which will be introduced later this afternoon. Mr. Speaker, these people are all stakeholders who'd have an interest in the employment Act, and I would like to welcome them to the Assembly today.

Among that group are a number of people that sat on the advisory committee and participated in a number of all-day sessions in getting ready for production and presentation of this bill. Mr. Speaker, these people have provided invaluable service to the province, and I would like to ask that all members join with me in welcoming them to their legislature today.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join in with the Minister of Labour in welcoming his guests to the legislature. He didn't name them all by name but they're quite a crew, important people who have a lot to say about our labour regulations and laws here in Saskatchewan. And we look forward to seeing the bill. Largely they've had a hand in that, but I know there's been others as well, and we look forward to seeing that. And I want to join in with the minister thanking them for their good work and service to the people of Saskatchewan. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood.

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through you, two people sitting your gallery. I believe, Mr. Speaker, both of them are quite familiar to a number of members in the Assembly. They are Roland Lafrance and Lara Zaluski. Mr. Speaker, these two individuals, about a month ago, returned home from the Ukraine where they volunteered with Mission Canada to be part of the Canadian election observer team during the Ukraine's

recent general election. I'd ask all members of the Assembly to welcome them to their legislature.

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's truly my honour today to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, a great group of students, 26 students from grade 12 from Humboldt, Saskatchewan — one of the best cities, I might say. Accompanying them are their teachers, David Millette and Julia Thomson, and I would like everyone to welcome them.

And to represent Humboldt, we will bid \$200.

The Speaker: — At this time I would like to introduce, seated in the Speaker's gallery, His Excellency Bruno van der Pluijm, ambassador of Belgium to Canada, along with support staff from protocol, Melinda Carter and Laurie Hutton. If the members would please welcome them to the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly.

I recognize the member for Saskatoon Nutana.

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the official opposition, I would also like to welcome His Excellency and his assistants to the legislature. And I would like to say to you:

[The hon. member spoke for a time in Flemish.]

And bienvenue à l'Assemblée législative de Saskatchewan on behalf of everyone.

[Translation: welcome to the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan.]

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would want to join with all members of the Legislative Assembly to welcome the ambassador to the Legislative Assembly this afternoon. I had a good meeting with him this morning. We talked about a number of issues, including free trade and about the trade relations that Saskatchewan has with Belgium. It was a very good discussion and we look forward to an opportunity to welcome him here once again to our province in the near future.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to stand today to present a petition on cell service. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Undertake, as soon as possible, to ensure SaskTel delivers cell service to the Canoe Lake First Nations, along with the adjoining communities of Cole Bay and Jans Bay; Buffalo River First Nations, also known as Dillon, and the neighbouring communities of Michel Village and St.

George's Hill; English River First Nations, also known as Patuanak, and the hamlet of Patuanak; and Birch Narrows First Nations along with the community of Turnor Lake, including all the neighbouring communities in each of these areas.

And, Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed the petition are all from throughout the Northwest and many other areas, and the people who have signed the petition today are primarily from Turnor Lake. And I so present.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise to present petitions from people from across our province as it relates to our provincial finances. And the prayer reads as follows:

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

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

These petitions today are signed by concerned residents from Estevan, Swift Current, and Regina. I so submit.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Improving the Lives of Working People

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to remind the legislature and all of Saskatchewan about our shared history, when Saskatchewan led the nation through such events as the Estevan strike of 1931, the Regina riot, *The Trade Union Act* of 1944, the creation of leading health and safety regulations in the '70s. And it goes back even further than that: one of the earliest collective actions in Saskatchewan was the Cumberland House strike in 1777.

What's awe-inspiring about each of these is that by working together we've continuously led the nation in improving the lives of everyday working people. Working people in Saskatchewan had the vision to imagine and the will to fight for a world where they could be safe, be home to spend time with their families, and live on a fair wage where they could give their kids what they didn't have. They didn't think this vision was important just for themselves, but also for their co-workers and their neighbours. Some people died in fact because of their stand against exploitation. The irony here, Mr. Speaker, is that we're seeing it slowly erased, little by little, which leaves me

wondering why we have to once again fight battles already won years ago.

Why is this government choosing to leave our children a Saskatchewan that will offer fewer rights than we've had? That's not the Saskatchewan our children deserve. One day, Mr. Speaker, this government will be remembered for the deliberate erosion of rights that were recognized by previous governments who care about middle-class people. Clearly this government doesn't care about the middle-class people. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood.

Mission Canada Observer Team

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a group of 422 Canadian volunteers made up Mission Canada, which was the Canadian election observer team during the Ukraine's recent general election. Mission Canada was funded by the federal government, organized by the volunteer organization CANDEM [Canada experts mobilized], and was led by Saskatchewan Senator Raynell Andreychuk.

Thirteen Saskatchewan citizens were part of Mission Canada, two of whom, Mr. Speaker, I introduced, Roland Lafrance and Lara Zaluski, and two other people that I know of, Mr. Speaker: one being Marcus Abrametz who happens to be the member from Saskatchewan Rivers' constituency assistant; and Pat Atkinson, a former member of this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. These people volunteered their time to help democracy develop in Ukraine. I think, Mr. Speaker, the work of Mission Canada can be best summed up in the words of a Ukrainian citizen who had an opportunity to observe their work, and I will quote, Mr. Speaker, recognizing that her English was not her first language. And the quote goes:

The observers of the mission are not interested in the win of any parties or candidates, but they are interested in the win of democracy, election transparency, and the freedom of expression of Ukrainians.

Mr. Speaker, I believe nothing more needs to be said, except thank you for a job well done. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mispon Aboriginal Film Festival

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Mispon Aboriginal Film Festival began in 2006. It is all about traditional values and storytelling while using contemporary forms of storytelling. It also focuses on outreach programs to teach First Nations students from communities in northern Saskatchewan about filmmaking.

This year's festival will be showing films throughout the month of December at the Royal Saskatchewan Museum. The festival features many different films, including the first episode of the new season of *Untamed Gourmet* which will be airing in the new year on the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, or

APTN.

Festival organizers particularly wanted to highlight this show because it was produced by the Gemini award-winning 291 Film Company, which has trained many First Nations people. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the 291 Film Company has joined the long list of companies and individuals who have been forced to leave their province after this government's short-sighted decision to eliminate the film employment tax credit. This former Saskatchewan company has recently moved to Victoria.

The Sask Party government may have done its best to kill the Saskatchewan film industry, but Saskatchewan First Nations people will always fight to preserve art, history, and culture in this province. Thank you to festival director, Trudy Stewart, and the board president, Janine Windolph, for organizing this year's Mispon Film Festival and for keeping storytelling alive in Saskatchewan.

[13:45]

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

Diamond Jubilee Medal Recipients

Ms. Jurgens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise in this House to bring recognition to 10 special individuals in the Prince Albert area. Just recently on November 24th, the Mahon Auditorium in the J.M. Cuelenaere Library was packed. People gathered to participate as Member of Parliament Randy Hoback handed out Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Medals.

Mr. Speaker these medals are given to those who are active in their communities and are involved by volunteering for different community services. These are the people who never really get acknowledged yet never seek any recognition. This medal is a thank you to all of them for the hard work that they have done in their respective communities.

Mr. Speaker, the 10 recipients from Prince Albert are Larry Brewster, Sergeant Rhonda Meakin, Warrant Officer Ross Dean Alexson, Reverend Dr. Sandy Scott, Bishop Albert Thevenot, Floyd LaVallee, Frederick Payton, Clara Kutnikoff, Clara Wiberg, and Les Karpluk.

These selfless individuals are always giving their time and are very active in our community, yet never ask anything in return. Their hard work and dedication has made our province a better place. Mr. Speaker, I would like this Assembly to join me in recognizing these 10 outstanding community leaders. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for The Battlefords.

Saskatchewan Veterinarian of the Year

Mr. Cox: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm honoured today to rise and congratulate a good friend of mine, Dr. Shawn Haas, Doctor of Veterinary Medicine. Dr. Haas has just been named the Saskatchewan Veterinarian of the Year by his peers at the Saskatchewan Association of Veterinary

Technologists.

Dr. Haas graduated from the Western College of Veterinary Medicine in 1993 and completed his master's in herd medicine from '93 to '95, and later completed his reproductive specialty exams. In 1995 he moved to North Battleford and worked for the Lakeland veterinary clinic, which he later purchased in 2003.

Shawn is also very involved in the community and is currently president of our local humane society. As well he is a member of the discipline committee for the Saskatchewan Veterinary Medical Association and a past member of the animal welfare committee for that body.

Mr. Speaker, for many years, Shawn has been our farm's veterinarian, and I have very much appreciated his excellent service and his caring manner. He truly has a tremendous rapport with both his human clients and his animal patients. Shawn is an absolutely wonderful friend and an excellent veterinarian, and I would certainly ask all members of this Assembly to join with me in congratulating him on receiving the honour of being named Saskatchewan Veterinarian of the Year for 2012. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

20th Anniversary of *A Prairie Alphabet*

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to recognize the work of Weyburn author Jo-Anne Cugnet. As many will know, Jo-Anne is the author of numerous works, including the award-winning bestseller children's book, *A Prairie Alphabet*.

Recently anniversary celebrations were held at the Allie Griffin Art Gallery in Weyburn to mark the 20th anniversary of this book's publication. Illustrated by Yvette Moore of Moose Jaw, *A Prairie Alphabet* was written by Jo-Anne because she wanted to write a book for her children that reflected their rural life. Upon publication of the book, invitations came to the author from all over the world, including a request to travel to do a book reading in Kiev, Ukraine.

A Prairie Alphabet was the first book that was allowed a booth at Agribition, and the following year a larger booth was offered to allow Yvette Moore to display the paintings that went along with the book. *A Prairie Alphabet's* most recent accomplishment was being selected for inclusion in the Saskatchewan legislature's 100-year time capsule alongside many commemorative articles, letters, and photos, as well as memorabilia marking our time in history.

Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all members to join with me in congratulating Jo-Anne and Yvette on 20 years of *A Prairie Alphabet*. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Carrot River Valley.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Mr. Bradshaw: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It looks like the

NDP [New Democratic Party] are having trouble with the concept of fiction versus fact. Yesterday the member from Saskatoon Nutana had a little difficulty understanding the difference, Mr. Speaker. The member from Saskatoon Nutana yesterday in *Hansard* stated, "... emissions continue to grow. Fact." That's fiction, Mr. Speaker.

Under the Saskatchewan Party government, greenhouse gas emissions had been decreasing. Since 2008 total greenhouse gas emissions have decreased by 1.6 per cent. That's a fact. While under the NDP, emissions rose by 70 per cent, Mr. Speaker. That's also a fact.

The member from Saskatoon Nutana also stated that the Saskatchewan Party is "... excluding two-thirds of the province's emissions from its own regulations. Fact." Mr. Speaker, this is once again fiction. All emitters over 50 000 tonnes are included in legislation, while all emitters between 25 000 and 50 000 tonnes will be included in regulations, Mr. Speaker. That's a fact.

Mr. Speaker, it seems that the NDP are having a difficult time separating fact from fiction, so much so that they are now trying to blame the Environment minister for freezing rain in December. Freezing rain in December isn't climate change, Mr. Speaker, it's December in Saskatchewan. Thank you.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Changes to Labour Legislation

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Finally after a wait of over six months, the Sask Party trotted out a massive overhaul of workplace laws that nobody voted for, and today we will see the Sask Party's legislation. In the spring, the Premier launched this labour review that contained not a single public consultation meeting and the little discussion booklet that had outlandish and fearmongering questions.

Mr. Speaker, no one in this province voted for upsetting the balance of our province's labour laws. Will the minister today table legislation that keeps Saskatchewan fair and balanced when it comes to labour legislation?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Advanced Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Yes.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, on the second last day of the 2007 fall session, the Sask Party introduced its unconstitutional essential services bill. Yes, it's unconstitutional, and that is a fact. The court threw it out, and five years and two Labour ministers later, the people of Saskatchewan still don't know what will happen.

Mr. Speaker, now the province is sitting again with two days left of the session, and the public still has no answers about what will happen about essential services. The Premier was

asked about the legislation in the spring, and acknowledged that he had led a government that didn't take consultation seriously. Mr. Speaker, to the minister: will today's labour legislation solve the essential services fiasco this Sask Party created five years ago? Yes or no?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Advanced Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, the goal of this legislation is to modernize our labour legislation and to bring it so that it is consistent with what takes place in a variety of other jurisdictions across Canada. Some of the Acts have not been substantively reviewed for almost 20 years. Others have not been reviewed for more than two generations.

Mr. Speaker, during the process we received over 3,800 responses. I would like to thank everybody that participated by submitting a response and, Mr. Speaker, to the members opposite, they will see the bill very shortly, and they will have the opportunity to see what is included in the bill and be able to make comments on it at that point in time.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, workers in Saskatchewan have progressively better legislation protecting the workplace for over 100 years. People have made great strides to win the right to an eight-hour workday. It's rooted in the 19th century fight for a middle class for workers. It comes from a commitment across Canada for eight hours for work, eight hours for leisure, and eight hours for rest. But the minister leaked details at his paid luncheon speech that he'd like to do away with the fairness of an eight-hour workday.

Mr. Speaker, it's common sense that across the province that an eight-hour workday is the appropriate balance for working families. To the minister: will today's legislation do away with the eight-hour workday and what other important labour standards that we've come to appreciate?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Advanced Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've indicated to people before that our province has got a permitting system that allows people to deviate from the eight-hour day. Nurses do it with regard to a 12-hour days. Firefighters have got longer hours. British Columbia allows up to 12 hours in a day. We've talked about the possibility of having four 10's or five 8's. That would make us consistent with what takes place in other jurisdictions and, Mr. Speaker, some workers wish to do that. What is absolutely sacred, Mr. Speaker, is when you work in excess of 40 hours in a week, that you should be entitled to time and a half.

Mr. Speaker, workers and employers wish to have some degree of flexibility to plan things so the people can spend more time with their families to adjust for changes in workload. We want to ensure that workers are protected. We value and respect the contributions of the working women and men in our province and want to ensure that their rights are adequately protected on an ongoing basis.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate the minister's raised the idea of overtime. You know, the principle of overtime means that if workers are asked to stay longer than a regular workday and a work week, they're paid extra for that time. To do away with overtime would be an abuse of workers, Mr. Speaker. Right now all workers, especially those who are not in the union, receive overtime for those hours above and beyond 40 hours every week.

Now, Mr. Speaker, overtime exists because if workers are not guaranteed that extra pay, employers could force a 60-hour work week on people, returning us to the dark ages of labour relations. To the minister: will today's legislation do away with overtime to allow any other system of paying out overtime hours?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Advanced Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, we have a long-settled practice in our province which is enshrined in legislation, that you are required to work up to 40 hours at a regular rate. Beyond that, you are entitled to time and a half. The employer can require up to 44 hours. That's well settled, Mr. Speaker.

We value the work that people do in our province. We want to make sure that they are adequately and appropriately compensated. We want to make sure that they have a safe environment to carry out their employment duties. Mr. Speaker, we work hard to ensure that that happens through our occupational health and safety workers, and those are things that will continue.

We also, Mr. Speaker, want to ensure that we have people that are paid adequately. Earlier this year we raised the minimum wage to \$10 per hour and increased the amount of payment for a call-out time. Mr. Speaker, those are the type of things that this government does for the working women and men in our province.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, this whole sham process has been ridiculous from the start because the Sask Party refused to hold a single public meeting to show that they take consultation seriously.

Now not only did the Sask Party surprise the people of Saskatchewan with this overhaul; they promised the whole process wouldn't cost the public a dime. The minister committed to that in committee. But now the taxpayers are being asked for more than a half a million dollars extra. And there has been a clear indication from the minister the process isn't finished. In fact he said more work needs to be done at further cost to the taxpayer. To the minister: how has the Sask Party spent over a half a million dollars on a process without a single public meeting?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Advanced Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, last week when the member opposite was not quoting himself, he was in fact quoting me. And I appreciate him quoting me, and would like to urge him to quote me correctly and accurately when he does so, and would like to urge him to finish the quotes. Right after the comment that I made, I went on to say, “As the matter . . . progresses further, there will be other costs that we will either absorb or else we will cross as they come.”

So, Mr. Speaker, we indicated earlier that there would be some additional costs. I can advise the member opposite the money was used to hire three temporary policy analysts, to hire a contract lawyer to assist with the development of the legislation, and a temporary director of strategic communications; publish advertisements and public awareness, and expenses that were incurred for the advisory committee. People travelled from across the province and participated. And, Mr. Speaker, we thank them for their contributions.

[14:00]

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

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, I find that a very interesting answer, that somehow half a million dollars seems to be spare change to this minister. When we were asking in committee he said, and I will quote him, this is, “We will add, during the process, four temporary persons that will be, the cost of which will be absorbed with the existing budget.” Now he says it sounds like a half a million dollars is a bit of a rounding error. What else could he do? Well, Mr. Speaker, to the minister I have this question: why weren’t the costs absorbed in his budget? Weren’t they planned for? And why is he expecting the taxpayers of this province to pick up the tab for his costly massive overhaul of our labour legislation?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Advanced Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite can’t have it both ways. He sat in his chair for most of this session criticizing us for not doing more to communicate with people, not doing enough to have the information out there. When we do spend the time and the money to do this — and I’m not minimizing the cost of it, Mr. Speaker; there is a cost and it’s a significant cost and it’s money well spent — but, Mr. Speaker, this is something he shouldn’t be able to criticize us for and then say you should absorb it at the end of the day.

Mr. Speaker, we want to have a common sense approach to this. Mr. Speaker, October of 2012 the member opposite said, “In May when we saw this coming forward there didn’t seem to be a reason why this was coming forward. That was the big gap in this. There was no common sense reason for it.” But in the NDP submission which was July of this year, it said, “Governments should be always ready to improve labour legislation. That readiness is an important part of a common sense commitment to a better future for the province.” Mr. Speaker, we’re going with the NDP submission.

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

Reporting of Provincial Finances

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, today the non-partisan, independent Provincial Auditor of Saskatchewan released her volume 2 report. She says the government books are “wrong” — wrong, Mr. Speaker. She also says the books also “contain significant errors and are materially wrong.” Why would that minister report and stand behind books that he knows contain errors and that are wrong?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, I’ll do a quick review of what the Government of Saskatchewan does, which is the exact same type of budgets that the New Democratic government did over its years, Mr. Speaker. The summary financial statements, which is the issue that the auditor has with the province, her understanding is that we should focus more on the summary financial statements. Mr. Speaker, we produced the summary financial statements, and in fact in the auditor’s report, the auditor clearly states that the summary financial statements of the Government of Saskatchewan are reliable.

Mr. Speaker, the summary financial statements are produced according to the generally accepted accounting principles, the GAAP principles, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the summaries are produced for everyone in the province of Saskatchewan to be able to see the entire picture. And, Mr. Speaker, we also do a General Revenue Fund budget which is an accounting budget as well.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, it’s clear that that minister can not only spin the budget; he can also spin the auditor’s report, Mr. Speaker — the non-partisan, independent Provincial Auditor of Saskatchewan, I’ll remind the minister.

Giving a private sector example, the auditor compares this to a company that hides its losses from its shareholders. That practice is illegal, Mr. Speaker. The auditor calls the Sask Party’s reporting “creative accounting.” Companies don’t get to choose their accounting rules, and the auditor says, neither should that government. Why does the minister and the government think it can play by its own set of rules?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the position of Saskatchewan has not changed since 2004-2005 when the NDP were the government, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the NDP government introduced summary financial statements, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday and the day before, I had the honour of being in Toronto to meet with financial institutions who were looking at the Saskatchewan financial picture. And I’ll tell you, Mr. Speaker, there is a degree of such confidence in Saskatchewan that I was extremely . . . [inaudible] . . . Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the summary financial statements are reliable. The

auditor said so. The summaries are all of government, Mr. Speaker. There is nothing that is left out of the summaries. And, Mr. Speaker, we continued to do that after being elected in 2007 and we will continue, continue to produce both an operating budget GRF [General Revenue Fund] and the summaries.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, it's 2012. That government's been in power for five years and while every other, every other province in Canada has brought themselves into compliance with public sector accounting standards, that government has stuck their head in the sand, Mr. Speaker.

The auditor says this government is using creative accounting to pretend there is a surplus when it's actually a deficit. In fact, the last three budgets were all summary deficits. The auditor says that if last week's mid-year report used proper accounting, the Sask Party would have been forced to report a GRF deficit of more than \$528 million instead of their claim of a GRF surplus. How does that minister, that Premier, and that government get off treating the truth and the people of this province with such blatant disregard?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, as I indicated to the member, prior to 2004-2005, summary financial statements did not exist in the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, in 2004-2005, in this very budget, they were introduced.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting to note in the 2003 budget . . . I'm going to quote from an article of the *Leader-Post* dated March 29th, 2003. And this is the quote, Mr. Speaker:

. . . Melenchuk announced Friday that his government will move to what are called summary financial statements for the 2004-2005 budget — a complete spending plan . . . advocated by [the] Saskatchewan Party and the provincial auditor.

. . . "What you will get is a complete picture, as in all . . . financial plans, a complete picture of all activities of government [Mr. Speaker]."

So, Mr. Speaker, we've moved forward. We actually contributed to the fact that the NDP opened up their eyes and realized that the GRF was not the only way to show the people of Saskatchewan the true financial picture. And now we have the true financial picture, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, a very clear example of the misleading approach is the broken promise to school boards. Mr. Speaker, the government guaranteed school boards that they'd cover their borrowing. Now they're breaking that promise. The auditor's report says the government "has revoked its promise to fund their new debt." The report says they haven't . . . [inaudible] . . . school boards yet, Mr. Speaker. And

it goes on to say the intent of this broken promise is to "avoid having new debt recorded." The auditor is saying they're hiding at least \$31 million and that it could be as large as \$74 million, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this broken promise is nothing more than creative accounting and manipulation. Why is that minister so intent on misleading games?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, absolutely there is no intent to mislead the people of the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, for the benefit of the member opposite I'm going to try to simplify this to relate it to something that he could understand. Mr. Speaker, I'll try to simplify it for what would be referred to as an operating budget of a household. Mr. Speaker, never has the Saskatchewan Party said that the General Revenue Fund budgeting is a replacement for the summary financial statements.

Mr. Speaker, the General Revenue Fund is an operating budget. It's the revenue and the expenditures, and when revenue exceeds expenditures, Mr. Speaker, it is a balanced budget. It's a balanced budget. The member opposite has a little difficulty understanding the concept of a balanced budget, Mr. Speaker, even in his own election campaign.

But, Mr. Speaker, it is very clear that the General Revenue Fund is simply a subset of the entire summary financials. We don't include the Crown corporations. We don't include the crop insurance in the General Revenue Fund because, Mr. Speaker, it is just a portion of all of the summaries that we continue to produce on a balanced basis.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, I guess you can see from those sorts of answers why the minister is calling the financial management of that government "misleading." The auditor's report refers to that government's accounting as "both poor practice and misleading to the public."

The report condemns that government for pretending to have a GRF balance when in fact it has a GRF deficit. The report highlights this government's manipulation, stating that it uses two sets of books so that it can choose the outcome it wishes to communicate to the public instead of the true, full picture, Mr. Speaker. The auditor calls for one set of books only, focused on the summary financial basis. When will that minister stop misleading the public and report on one set of books?

The Speaker: — I would caution the member to choose his words much more carefully and not try to impugn the honour of any member of this Assembly. I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we appreciate the work of the Provincial Auditor and the entire staff within her office. Mr. Speaker, to produce, I believe, 36 chapters, Mr. Speaker, with 112 new recommendations — many of the recommendations that ministers have been working

on already for a number of years because they're ongoing, Mr. Speaker — is a document that we appreciate, Mr. Speaker. We take it seriously.

Accountability of government is very, very important and that is why we commended the NDP in 2004-05 when they finally moved from only doing a General Revenue Fund budget, which is just a portion of the summaries, and they moved to the full summary disclosure just like the Saskatchewan Party does each and every year, Mr. Speaker. We humbly disagree with the auditor in terms of only moving to one statement. We will continue to produce both statements for the benefit of the people of Saskatchewan.

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

Inspection of Slaughter Plants

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Provincial Auditor provided a lengthy chapter in her report detailing a number of deficiencies in how meat is inspected and regulated here in Saskatchewan. Of particular concern is her conclusion on page 286. It reads:

We concluded that the Ministry of Health did not have effective processes during September 1, 2011 to August 31, 2012 to regulate the production of meat that is safe for human consumption when it is handled by the 76 inspected slaughter plants within Saskatchewan. Health did not have sufficient information to know if regional health authorities effectively inspected slaughter plants and resolved identified problems to enforce *The Sanitation Regulations, 1964*.

To the minister: can he explain how his government has failed to ensure that meat from the 76 slaughter plants here in Saskatchewan is in fact safe?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Health accepts the Provincial Auditor's recommendations in this regards and we're currently determining how to best address them. Obviously, Mr. Speaker, food safety is very important to the people of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, I think it's important to note that health-licensed slaughter plants in this province are inspected to ensure that the facility is well maintained and that meat is being handled safely. Mr. Speaker, it's also important to note that the facilities that are mentioned in this report primarily serve local farmers who are looking to have their animal slaughtered, processed, and packaged for their own consumption.

Mr. Speaker, we do have a process in place that is able to track through the system whether or not there are any illnesses as a result but, Mr. Speaker, to date no reports of illnesses have been indicated because of these slaughter plants. But certainly we are following up on the auditor's recommendations and look forward to working our way through those.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, families and producers have the right to know, Mr. Speaker, if the meat that is being processed is in fact safe here in the province. The minister talked about different processes in place for tracking information. Well that's part of the problem, Mr. Speaker, because the ministry has not been tracking information properly.

Of particular concern are the plants where problems have been identified. The auditor's report states that 76 plants were inspected and nine plants were deemed to have high or medium risk. Of those nine that were at risk, were identified — problems were there, Mr. Speaker — six of the nine did not receive the necessary follow-up inspections within the one- to six-month time frame that is stipulated. My question to the minister: how is it that the ministry has not been doing the necessary follow-up on plants where it has been identified where there is a medium- to a high-risk concern?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, I think the member would know that it's the regional health authorities that conduct inspections under the regulations, and that's why the ministry is working with the regional health authorities as well as the Ministry of Agriculture in this regard.

We have already, Mr. Speaker, based on follow-up from the auditor's recommendations, we've requested additional information from the public health inspectors' survey, from their operators, Mr. Speaker, the health-licensed facilities that are licensed and inspected by the regional health authorities. So we've asked for more detailed information in this regard.

We are also consulting with our regional health authorities as well as the Ministry of Agriculture to develop a plan that will revisit the standards, that will improve tracking of inspections and surveillance, including those that need reinspections after there are concerns that have been noted. As well, Mr. Speaker, we are looking at, through with our partners, determining a mechanism that we would be able to publicly report inspections when it comes to these health-inspected facilities.

[14:15]

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, health regions are doing the inspections in these situations, but it is up to ministry to actually know what is going on and ensure that the correct processes are being followed. On page 291 it says, "Health was unaware that 6 of the 9 high and medium risk plants did not receive follow-up inspections within the required timeframe (i.e., within one to six months)."

Mr. Speaker, individuals in this province, families deserve to know if the food that is being processed, Mr. Speaker, the meat that is being processed is in fact safe. That is so important. We see many examples from other jurisdictions where, when it goes wrong, it goes wrong for so many people and it is a problem.

The actual inspection is important, Mr. Speaker, and through

this process there's annual inspections of the facilities. But the auditor also pointed out that the actual meat, Mr. Speaker, from the plant is not being inspected. From the report it says, "Most other provinces require that both the plant and the meat be inspected before the meat is sold." My question to the Health minister: is it his opinion that the meat should be inspected as well as the plants, Mr. Speaker?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I certainly know . . . Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for his question and certainly as it stands we will work with our regional health authorities and ensure that the proper surveillance is taking place in terms of what is required under a health-inspected licence, Mr. Speaker.

But I find it interesting. Is the member requesting that we go even further when it comes to these facilities? Because I will note from page 284 that under the former government that stakeholders were consulted in 2005 and 2006 about possible legislative changes. No changes resulted, Mr. Speaker. So at that time they had one opinion when it came to health-inspected slaughter facilities.

Is it now the position of the NDP and that member that this policy needs to be changed? Mr. Speaker, we are going to follow up and ensure that regional health authorities are doing the inspections that they need to be done, ensuring that that work continues to be done, Mr. Speaker.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 85 — *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Advanced Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 85, *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — The minister has moved first reading of Bill No. 85, *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*. 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. Morgan: — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 82 — *The Saskatchewan Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2012*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to move second reading of a bill to amend *The Saskatchewan Pension Plan Act*.

The Saskatchewan Pension Plan provides a unique retirement savings vehicle for individuals with little or no access to occupational pension plans or other retirement savings arrangements. It is the only plan of its kind in Canada operating at arm's-length from government and offering members professional investment management at institutional costs.

Since 1986 the Saskatchewan Pension Plan has grown to over 32,000 members and \$318 million under trusteeship. The plan is an integral part of the retirement savings plans of many Saskatchewan people. The Saskatchewan Pension Plan offers members important benefits such as affordability. You can be a member of the plan regardless of your earnings. This is especially attractive for people with irregular or seasonal earnings such as students, part-time workers, or people who are self-employed.

Simple. The Saskatchewan Pension Plan takes pride in making the plan easy to join and easy to understand. Paperwork is kept to a minimum. As well, administrators of the plan are always available and happy to answer any questions members may have. They are willing to assist with any aspect of the plan.

Consistent. The plan's philosophy is to invest cautiously over the long term. This is an attractive approach for many people but especially for those with little or no investment experience.

The plan is also voluntary. You are never obligated to contribute.

Flexible. You can make a contribution at any time during the plan year.

Portable. It is always your plan regardless of where you live or what you do.

Professionally managed investments are handled by a professional investment firm.

Mr. Speaker, amendments to the plan are necessary in order to keep the Saskatchewan Pension Plan current with modern times and to make the plan as sound as possible for all members. The amendments that are being made to survivor benefits are required to comply with *The Pension Benefits Act, 1992*. This will allow members to transfer funds from registered pension plans and locked-in retirement accounts into their Saskatchewan Pension Plan account. This will complete the process which started with the changes announced in December 2010.

At that time, the contribution limit was increased from \$600 to \$2,500. Members were allowed to transfer up to \$10,000 per

year from an RRSP [registered retirement savings plan] or unlocked registered pension plan. They will now be able to transfer from locked-in vehicles as well. Retirement options are being moved from the Act into regulations to allow the plan to be more responsive to the needs of members as the array of retirement products evolves.

Another amendment will allow funds payable to a member of the Saskatchewan Pension Plan to be transferred to the General Revenue Fund in the event that the member cannot be located. This would only be done after all other avenues had been exhausted, and the funds would continue to be held in the member's name. This protocol is similar to the process used by other financial institutions when clients cannot be located.

Finally, the language in some sections has been modernized.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of *An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Pension Plan Act*.

The Speaker: — The minister has moved second reading of Bill No. 82, *The Saskatchewan Plan Amendment Act, 2012*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly . . . I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to stand today on behalf of the official opposition and of course give our initial comments in relation to Bill 82. And obviously, Mr. Speaker, that bill is making reference to the Saskatchewan Pension Plan.

And there's no question from our perspective as opposition members that modernizing some of the pension plans that exist out there is really, really important. Having a continual view of how to make some of the pension plans stronger, better, and certainly more durable over time is something that I think the opposition certainly views as being practical and common sense. There's no question, Mr. Speaker.

On Bill 82 the minister spoke about \$318 million in collective assets — I think that's the figure that he used — the fact that there was 32,000 people that are involved with this particular pension plan. And he spoke about the plan being flexible and being affordable, Mr. Speaker, and also being managed professionally. There's no question in our minds that those are some of the attributes of some of the pension plans that are key to ensuring that people's savings and people's commitment to their pension plan is certainly is rock solid in terms of stability and growth for the future.

Mr. Speaker, some of the changes that he spoke about is the RRSP contributions and unlocking some of the investments that some of the pension plan holders might be able to take advantage of. The minister alluded to a \$10,000 figure. There's no question that there is an opportunity to strengthen the plan by adding some of the features of transferring up to \$10,000 from a locked-in contribution elsewhere, something that I think that would strengthen the plan overall. And I think it's important that we look at some of these options for people.

There's no question that the best and most valuable advice that one would get in relation to this particular bill and the Saskatchewan Pension Plan is to talk to the people that are

impacted — the pension holders themselves — to ask them if this Act goes far enough, to see if this is something that they'd like to do, and what they may perceive as a problems or if there's other areas that could really strengthen the plan. What would they think?

So one of the things that I want to point out: there's 32,000 people involved with the Saskatchewan Pension Plan; then there's 32,000 opinions. And obviously, Mr. Speaker, you can't access 32,000 opinions in a productive way over a short period of time. And that's one of the reasons why I think we have the processes identified through the Assembly, to encourage those that are involved with the pension plan to voice some of their concerns, some of the shortcomings that they perceive is in this particular bill. And of course the number one reason to get involved with the debate is to see how and if this plan is going to affect positively the pension plan, the people that are involved with this pension plan.

Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of questions that we have around survivor benefits. Is there any kind of new way that this particular pension plan is going to deal with that issue? Is it concurrent? Is it similar? And does it concur with other pension plans? And so it's important that some of these issues be addressed and that we look at some of these matters.

But again I go to my earlier comment about the actual pension plan holders. There are people right throughout Saskatchewan. I understand there may be farmers' wives or people that make small incomes, that they contributed to this particular pension plan. It's been around for a number of years, and I was quite surprised to see that there's \$300 million in this particular pension plan. And I was also very impressed with the amount of contribution and savings and of course the commitment that many of the people that have contributed to this plan have shown over the years. So I think it's really important that we look at the pension plan issue as being very important, that we continue modernizing any pension plan that is out there, to seek the advice of the people that are being impacted. And that obviously is an ongoing invitation that we would have on behalf of the official opposition.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we spoke a bit about the professional management perspective. The minister spoke about the need to continually push this particular ideal that any pension plan needs a professional planner, good management team, and so on and so forth. And these are some of the things that I think that we certainly concur with, but it'd be nice to know, like who is the actual pension plan management team? Where are they from? How is the pension plan managed?

I'm sure that the vast majority of the 32,000 pension contributors have all that information, but it'd be nice for us to really know exactly how it's managed so we can talk about the positive attributes of the Saskatchewan Pension Plan when people ask MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] advice on what pension plans work and which pension plans have good protection, who's managing what pension plan. All that information is very valuable to us because the public asks us many, many times for information on that note.

[14:30]

So, Mr. Speaker, I think again the language of being professionally managed, of being modernized, of being flexible, of being affordable, giving concessions here and there, changing the Act to make sure it truly reflects what the pension plan holders want, these are some of the issues that we'll take the time as an opposition to ascertain and to make sure that this is what exactly the pension plan holders have in mind.

So on that note, Mr. Speaker, we have several months to go. This is a relatively important bill in the sense of the \$300 million that is being held in trust. And we think that it is something that we have to pay very, very close attention to. And as the official opposition, we certainly will take the time to go through this bill.

So on that note, the open invitation to people out there that are part of this pension plan. We would offer the opportunity for you to come forward and really share with us your perspective. And again, the whole notion is to simply modernize, strengthen, and ensure that your pension plan is durable. And by all indications, Mr. Speaker, it is being professionally managed. And if there's ways that we can help to head down that road to make sure this pension plan is strengthened and longer lasting, then the opposition will certainly do their part and continue to support you on that front.

So on that note, Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn the debate on Bill No. 82.

The Speaker: — The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 82, *The Saskatchewan Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2012*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 83 — *The Foreign Worker Recruitment and Immigration Services Act*

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased today to move second reading of a bill, Bill No. 83, *The Foreign Worker Recruitment and Immigration Services Act*. This legislation, Mr. Speaker, as the title suggests, is being introduced to protect foreign workers and immigrants from exploitation by recruiters, immigration consultants, and employers while being recruited to Saskatchewan or are in the process of immigrating to our province. We are projecting in Saskatchewan that we will require as many as 75 to 90,000 skilled workers over the next five years.

Immigration is a key component and an important part of how we intend to fill our immediate and future demand for a highly skilled labour force. The benefit of this legislation is more people from around the world want to come to Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, to work and to live and to have a better life in a very prosperous province. The number of nominees under the Saskatchewan immigrant nominee program has grown from 200 nominations in 2005-06 to 4,000 annually now, and the

federal temporary foreign worker program has increased 250 per cent in the last six years.

That's why, Mr. Speaker, we need this legislation. It's about fairness for newcomers and ensuring Saskatchewan continues our strong reputation as a preferred destination for immigrants. The result of an increasing number of immigrants, Mr. Speaker, is an increased number of people who are vulnerable to mistreatment during the recruitment and immigration process, and that's what we plan to address through this legislation.

Some foreign nationals experience exploitation or mistreatment due to their limited ability to speak and understand English or because they lack a knowledge of Saskatchewan and Canadian laws and culture, and they aren't always sure what is considered fair here. These newcomers may be reluctant to raise issues for fear of losing their employment or status in Saskatchewan.

I would want to hasten to add, Mr. Speaker, that there have been not very many cases of this type, but we want to present this legislation to ensure that we don't run into a situation where we have a problem. So this is certainly a preventative measure to address the concerns in this area.

The bill balances the rights and obligations of recruiters, immigration consultants, and employers, and newcomers during the process of recruiting and immigrating to Saskatchewan. It will not affect rights within the workplace. That balance is achieved under five basic principles.

First of all, it will serve employers. The bill acknowledges that our employers need the services of recruiters and immigration consultants to help with foreign workers to allow them to immigrate to our province. Second, it will ensure employers pay for the costs of recruiting their foreign workers. Third, this legislation will make the recruiting and immigration consulting market transparent and open. Fourth, it will require recruiters, immigration consultants, and employers to act ethically. And finally, the bill will inform and enforce by educating stakeholders on their obligations under the proposed legislation, and if they fail to comply, by establishing enforcement measures.

We held two rounds of stakeholder consultations, Mr. Speaker: one in 2011 and one earlier this year. And stakeholder groups agreed that there is a need for legislation to protect foreign workers and immigrants. I believe, Mr. Speaker, we were able to strike a balance between the different viewpoints we heard in the consultations.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation will position Saskatchewan as having the most comprehensive protection for newcomers of any province in Canada. No other jurisdiction has protections for both recruitment and immigration consulting services that compare to these proposals. Mr. Speaker, I'm confident that this bill is good for Saskatchewan, good for foreign nationals coming to live and work in Saskatchewan, and good for Saskatchewan employers hiring foreign workers. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm also confident this legislation is good for recruiters and immigration consultants who are prepared to provide their services fairly and ethically.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to move second reading of Bill No.

83, *The Foreign Worker Recruitment and Immigration Services Act*.

The Speaker: — The minister has moved second reading of Bill No. 83, *The Foreign Worker Recruitment and Immigration Services Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly . . . I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again I'm very pleased on behalf of the official opposition to offer our initial comments on Bill 83. And there's no question in our minds, Mr. Speaker, that everything that Saskatchewan can possibly do to attract people and to retain people to come and make Saskatchewan their home and their lifelong home is something that we pay very, very close attention to, Mr. Speaker, and to be able to bring some foreign workers in and to ensure that these foreign workers are not only welcome in the province but that they also know that they are protected in many ways, shapes, and forms.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, by and large, I think a lot of the employers, the people that are trying to attract some of the highly skilled foreign workers to our province, I think they have an even greater role than government to make sure that they not only bring the folks that want to work here but to also protect them and to make them feel at home. And I think Saskatchewan being a province that has been shown and has been known over the years to have great compassion to many people that come to our province, I think that the employers out there in the province certainly have added to that and will continue adding to the notion that Saskatchewan is a place where you're going to welcome as many people from all throughout the world to come here and make their home, to live and to raise their family, and to do that with good, high-paying jobs and of course having safe and secure communities and having quality education, having good health care. These are all important aspects. I think that many people that when they look at Saskatchewan, they see all these attributes, and they certainly see all the value of moving to this province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the minister spoke about some of the needs that they may have for foreign workers, the notion of 75 to 90,000 more foreign workers are needed. And, Mr. Speaker, that's one of the points that I would raise is that as an opposition member, we want to know exactly where some of the target countries are. This is important to note, that when people are sitting down with MLAs or sitting with the opposition, we'd like to know which countries have an interest in moving to the province. And that's why this bill is so interesting for us because there has got to be a lot of information that the Assembly needs to have.

And the opposition has to certainly be privy to that information, and that information has to be forthcoming from the government as quickly as possible. And why, Mr. Speaker? Because it just shows the people of Saskatchewan which countries are sending people here. Is it Ireland or is it the Philippines? It's important for us from the economic perspective to determine which is the best way to establish relationships with what countries, to really build on that, Mr. Speaker. This is some of the information that is really, really valuable to us. And we would certainly want to see some of that information come forward.

As well, Mr. Speaker, what are some of the skill sets that the immigrant community is bringing to our province? That's another important lesson to know, Mr. Speaker. Like for example, I give you in health care I think it has been a number of years that Canada in general has been blessed with a great supply of South African doctors. I think now there's been changes within the country of South Africa, so the access and ease of getting South African doctors to Canada has been a challenging one over the last several years. And that's one of my points, Mr. Speaker. Although the bill talks about immigrant workers, the point I'm trying to make is that if you're getting a certain type of class or a certain set of skills from an immigrant wanting to move to Saskatchewan, we would like to know which country they're coming from and what skill set that they're bringing to the province. It's really, really important that we know.

The other issue, Mr. Speaker, is that the 75 to 90,000 immigrants that the Saskatchewan Party want to target as to hoping to have them move to Saskatchewan, of course the opposition wants to see continued growth, Mr. Speaker. That's really, really important. That is the notion I think is really something that we want to stress as an opposition: that the economy is something that is something that we can't take for granted and that we need to have continual effort to strengthen that economy overall. And a good, solid supply, a good, solid supply of a skilled workforce is really, really important, Mr. Speaker.

So when we have the minister mention numbers of 75 to 90,000 immigrants that may be coming to Saskatchewan under Bill 83, we need to have some of that information: what skill set, which country that they're coming from, and certainly, Mr. Speaker, which locations are they going to in the province. I think that's really, really important, and that information could help a lot of organizations and groups in their work, in their work and in their effort to try and make some of the immigrant families feel welcome to our province and our country.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think some of the notions under Bill 83, as the minister spoke about, he wanted to ensure that the process in the bill served the employers. And we don't have a fundamental problem with that because obviously the employers, as a second principle that the minister spoke about, is that they are going to be paying for all the immigrants coming to our community or coming to our province in general.

And that's something that is important, that if they're taking the effort, they're making all the contributions, they're doing all the hard work, then obviously then this program and this bill should be serving the employers, the people that are making this effort to bring some of the highly skilled immigrant community to our province. And no question about it, Mr. Speaker, because they are paying for those fees and those costs and all the bills attached to this effort, that certainly their interests ought to be, ought to be protected.

The other point, Mr. Speaker, that he mentioned very briefly as another initiative is to make sure that this process is transparent and that it's open, that there's no nefarious activity, and when you're looking at trying to attract an immigrant family here, that there isn't any kind of human trafficking, so to speak.

And I think that's only fair that the more transparency and the more light that we can shed on which groups of people are coming here and how they're getting here, which is really, really important, that is something that we would certainly applaud from the humanity perspective in the sense that if people are being trafficked in a bad way to meet some of the needs that we have as a province, then, Mr. Speaker, we have to make sure that that activity is not only exposed, but it is certainly penalized, and it's highly, highly discouraged in the future.

The other thing that the minister made reference to is that as people help Saskatchewan employers find some of the skilled labour force that they need from a number of companies, that these consultants or the people that actually recruit some of these immigrant workers, that they have a good ethical code of conduct. I think that really goes without saying because if you have people that are involved in this kind of activity, you want them to be of course highly skilled. You want these people that are involved with finding these immigrant workers to be very, very ethical and to be having humanity, basic respect for human life as a premise of their whole operation. I think that's really, really key that we point that out, and the minister certainly spoke about that as well.

[14:45]

So, Mr. Speaker, we want to be able to educate the stakeholders, whether it is the employers that are going to be attracting these workers or whether it's the recruiters that are involved or the consultants, as sometimes they're called, that are involved with this particular industry, that they're highly ethical in their conduct. We want to make sure that the church groups that might be involved with this that are trying to have some of the immigrant families move into their neighbourhood, to help them with housing, to help with a number of other matters, these are some of the things that the stakeholders would be involved with I'm assuming.

So as the minister spoke about, one of the other segments of this particular bill is educating stakeholders. I think that work needs to be continual. I certainly see it progressing to a point where it becomes highly professional and highly interactive amongst all the groups. So you're having all the stakeholders not having separate conversations but having them all talking together in a committee form to ensure that the education and some of their work and some of their contribution that they may have to this bill is heard and certainly, you know, that they're all involved with this whole industry, so to speak.

Mr. Speaker, that there is occasion, as the minister alluded to, that where some certain groups of people may try and take advantage of an immigrant community or a family wants to move here . . . And you have that, that opportunity. That opportunity may exist. And I was pleased to hear that the minister said that this is not a common practice, but it may occur from time to time. So it's important that we put some disincentives for that kind of activity.

And that's another point that the minister raised in Bill 83, in a sense that if there is some poor practices and that there is some disrespect or some very poor treatment of some of the immigrant workers or their families in getting here to

Saskatchewan, then I think the employers and the people of Saskatchewan have every right to know about that and that they ought to also know that if that activity is occurring, then there are penalties and that there is enforcement and that there is follow-up and follow through and to make sure that this doesn't occur ever again. And that of course is a work in progress, Mr. Speaker.

So some of the things that the minister has spoke about in the bill of serving employers and making sure that the employers are paying the cost, which is really important, to make sure that the system itself is open and transparent, to make sure that there's ethical conduct of the recruiters or the consultants, as they call them, as they try and get families here, and to make sure that they constantly and consistently educate stakeholders to make sure that there isn't any kind of bad practices out there. And that if there is bad practices, that there is some enforcement mechanisms in place.

Now, Mr. Speaker, certainly from our perspective, as the NDP talk about smart growth, we know that some of this effort has to be undertaken. We know that these are some of the ongoing work that has to happen and has to be on a continual basis. We can't just have one particular bill, Bill 83, and all of a sudden we figure our work is done.

Mr. Speaker, the devil's in the detail in the certain terms of trying to make sure that Bill 83 follows fully the intent that was described today and that there isn't a half measure here or a half measure there that takes away the integrity of the bill. And that's what's really important to us as an official opposition in the sense that if you're going to have a smart growth strategy that we speak about, then you have bills that involve attracting families here, the immigrant worker and their families here, then we better make sure we get it right, that we better make sure we do this properly and that we do it thoroughly. And that's what's a common theme that we certainly adopt here in the official opposition on this side of the Assembly, that if you're going to do something to strengthen Saskatchewan economy, you've got to do it right. And, Mr. Speaker, we take very seriously this particular bill and what the impact is and what the desired outcome is going to be.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we see there is going to be some difficulties for Saskatchewan over the next number of years even though the minister spoke about having 75 to 90,000 people coming through this particular program. We know that from our perspective, that as we see evidence that the economy is struggling — Saskatchewan's economy, whether it be the oil and gas sector which we've seen a drop in investment and a drop of activity overall, and what we've seen in the Potash Corporation itself as well, that there's been a lull in investment as well, Mr. Speaker — from the government's own books, we see half a billion dollars less in resource revenue income.

And that is certainly a problem, Mr. Speaker, because that doesn't bode well for the future. And then we see as well that there's \$1 billion dollars added more on to the debt. And we see some of the ongoing global issues that are going to impact Saskatchewan, whether it's the US [United States] finally mastering their own supply of oil and gas, which we hear by 2020, which is a short seven years away, that the US are going to be independent of their energy needs that they don't have to

go to any other country. And that certainly spells a challenge for not only Canada, Mr. Speaker, but for a number of other companies as well. And Saskatchewan being swept up in all the global activity, it's not going to bode well for our province.

So one of the things that I think is really important is that even though we have bills of this sort coming forward and we have the minister talking about 75 to 90,000 new workers, Mr. Speaker, I can tell the people of Saskatchewan that I doubt very much if we can get to the 90,000 person range, Mr. Speaker, because obviously our economy will begin to cool. And as the US begins to do their own work on oil and gas, there'll be less demand and less need for Saskatchewan's oil and gas. And that spells trouble for our province overall.

If we see evidence in Alberta, as has been noted in several newspapers, that they are having a difficult time continually to be able to supply the States with oil and gas, Mr. Speaker, then imagine what Saskatchewan's challenge will be in the future. It would be twice than if not three times the challenge that Alberta faces. And that's my point, Mr. Speaker, is that the economy itself, not only for the country but in particular for Saskatchewan, is going to face some obstacles and hurdles over the next couple of years. And that's one of the reasons why I think this particular bill, it needs to address that, Mr. Speaker. It needs to talk about some of the challenges that we face.

And as you look at some of the recent issues, Mr. Speaker, around, on every front — whether it's mining, whether it's oil and gas or whether it's tourism or whether it's, in this case, potash — all the indicators from all the different resource industries is that over the next three or four years Saskatchewan is going to face a daunting challenge. And we've seen evidence today of the financial state of Saskatchewan where the auditor has lambasted the Saskatchewan Party government for having two sets of books, one they show the public and one that really shows the incredible debt and deficit that we have as a province. That really spells trouble to our province overall.

And within the NDP circles, Mr. Speaker, as I spoke about our smart growth strategy, that's exactly my point, is that if you're going to have growth in the province it has to be very smart. It's got to be methodical and it's got to be thorough. So on one hand we have Bill 83 that talks about immigrant workers which we as a province agree and need to come and make Saskatchewan their home. They can contribute and offer so much.

But at the same time, we're not addressing some of the ongoing economic issues. And we're dipping into our rainy day fund. We're selling our Crown corporations. You begin to see the social fabric, what makes Saskatchewan so great — whether it's the Crown corporations or whether it's a strong economic agenda or whether it's respect for the working people or whether it's a good robust, vibrant economy — all these issues and all these assets, Mr. Speaker, are up in the air because of the SaskParty's bungling, and certainly their rhetoric as a right wing party. These are some of the things, Mr. Speaker, that have actually hurt our province.

Now us New Democrats say, hold it here. We have to provide leadership. And leadership's got to be solid in the sense that it's got to be multi-faceted. It also has to be consistent. It has to be

thorough. It has to be professional. It has to be well-thought-out. The sum of all the efforts out there have to come together and make Saskatchewan stronger. And that's what we certainly want to speak to people out in Saskatchewan about when we talk about the smart growth strategy, Mr. Speaker.

So again it's all about fairness, as the minister mentioned. And we don't have any disregard for a notion that as we invite immigrant communities, or immigrant families and immigrant workers to our community, then we have to be fair. We have to be respectful and we can't have them sent back like we sent back the Irish workers. Because obviously we've seen evidence of that. We've seen some students that are being held up and actually holed up in a church because they were going to school here. They took a small, part-time job. Now they're being evicted by the federal government.

And these kind of signals, that kind of message, and that kind of media attention, Mr. Speaker, does more harm, does more harm than good, and does more harm overnight than some of the other messages that we have as a province to try and attract people here to our province. So this is what exactly that the NDP mean when we talk about smart growth. We've got to be consistent. We've got to be fair. We've got to be dogged in terms of our determination to keep some of these families here and determined to make sure that they stay here for many, many years because they can contribute so much, Mr. Speaker.

The other thing that's really important in making sure that we welcome the immigrant community is to make sure all sectors of our country and all sectors of our provinces are equally engaged. And I want to bring in the Aboriginal file here, Mr. Speaker, if I can. Many people in the Aboriginal community also want to be part of the economy, and they're asking this particular government to do what they can as well to help the Aboriginal community. The First Nations, the Métis, you know, the people that live in some of the northern communities or some on the First Nations land, they want to be part of the economy as well.

So as you're doing the effort to attract immigrant families and immigrant workers, do the same with the Aboriginal community. Because it makes sense in many, many ways to have corresponding efforts in both regards, Mr. Speaker, because the Aboriginal people can add a great amount as well to easing some of the labour shortage in this province if they're actively engaged.

And again we've seen evidence of how they've dismantled the Aboriginal employment development program. The Sask Party has, they've dismantled the entire Aboriginal education branch, Mr. Speaker. The Sask Party has done that. And bit by bit, they have methodically taken away so much opportunity and so many measures to support the Aboriginal people. And now we see that overall from year to year there is an actual increase in the unemployment amongst the Aboriginal people. And they generally ask, like, to people like myself and the member from Cumberland, well why aren't they doing the same effort as they do on other fronts for the Aboriginal community?

So that message cannot be lost, Mr. Speaker, the message that the Aboriginal want to be part of this economy, want to be part

of the training opportunities, want to be part of the resource sector, want to be part of earning a living and being able to provide for their families. All these issues are really important to the Aboriginal communities as they're important to the immigrant community, Mr. Speaker.

So the question that people ask out here is, why can't we do both? And the absolute answer is, under the smart growth strategy for the NDP, we can and should do both, Mr. Speaker. And that's why some of these bills that come forward deal with one sector of the issue, not the other. Really it puts an unfair burden on the Aboriginal community as being ignored and the immigrant community themselves. If they started getting some uncertainty from some of the economic indicators for the province, they become uncertain about their future in Saskatchewan. And then you can see bit by bit, Mr. Speaker, the economy begins to suffer. It begins to falter, and we can certainly point to the Saskatchewan Party as being the architects of that failure and faltering economy in the province because they have not thought some of these things through to the extent they should have.

So, Mr. Speaker, this bill has a lot of issues that we need to speak about at great length. There are many complicating factors and matters that implicate this bill. We have a lot more people that want to speak about the issue, about the immigrant nominee program. And, Mr. Speaker, we've seen evidence that even the federal government has MPs [Member of Parliament] that put out pamphlets decrying the cost of having some of the immigrant community in our province. We've seen cancer treatment patients being denied basic services in health care by the federal government, and these are our immigrant community.

[15:00]

So on one hand we see conservatives really pushing the agenda to have this anti-immigrant position, and yet the Sask Party says nothing to their federal cousins. So they need to get on the horn and start a campaign to educate their federal counterparts. And since the minister has spoken about the opportunity to educate stakeholders, my advice to him is, start educating your federal cousins in Ottawa on how to properly treat people that try and make Canada and Saskatchewan their home in the future. And maybe that'd be a good first step when you talk about educating stakeholders.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot more we want to say on this. And our group and our caucus are committed to making sure that we say what the people out there want to see happen, and that what's really important, is that we take the time to talk to the stakeholders and have their voices heard through the opposition to make sure that the Saskatchewan Party get it right because so far, Mr. Speaker, on many, many files they have failed miserably.

So on that note, Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 83.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Athabasca has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 83, *The Foreign Worker Recruitment and Immigration Services Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 84 — *The Common Business Identifiers Act*

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of *The Common Business Identifiers Act*. Mr. Speaker, this government made a commitment to ensure that Saskatchewan has a business-friendly environment. Better integration and delivery of business services through more streamlined and efficient channels will enhance this environment in our province.

This bill facilitates the continued development of a future one-stop business service by establishing a secure database, or what is referred to as the hub for sharing business information. The hub allows information to be shared between Canada Revenue Agency and designated government programs to facilitate the use of the common business identifier known as the business number. The first step required to implement the hub were taken with the passage of amendments last spring to the Saskatchewan business statutes to allow the exchange of information between the Canada Revenue Agency and the corporate registry.

Mr. Speaker, this bill will allow interested government ministries, agencies, and municipalities to use the business number and the hub to share business information such as name, address, corporate directors with other participating agencies. Businesses will provide information and updates to one of the participating agencies and have that information shared with other participating agencies through the hub. Prior to the creation of the hub, businesses had to provide a separate update to each government agency.

Mr. Speaker, to be clear, the information shared through the hub will be general public information about the business such as name, address, and date of establishment. Information about the business's involvement in the specific government program or details of its interaction with a government agency will not be shared through the hub. Program-specific information will remain within the separate agencies.

In addition to establishing the hub and allowing information to be shared through the use of the business number, this bill contains extensive regulation-making powers to establish or adopt the business number system, identify the rules and processes for the operation of the hub, standardize procedures to file information under designated Acts that establish the participating government programs. These programs will use the business number and share information through the hub and prescribe the common business information that a business is required to provide to participating government programs. These programs will be maintained and updated through the hub.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is a significant step forward for the province toward its ultimate goal of providing a business-friendly environment and a one-stop business service.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of *The Common Business Identifiers Act*. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Minister of Justice has moved second reading on Bill No. 84, *The Common Business Identifiers Act*. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Once again I'm proud to rise today to give the initial comments on Bill 84. The whole notion, Mr. Speaker, behind *The Common Business Identifiers Act*, as the minister spoke about, is really trying to become a business-friendly province. And I will say, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's been known to be a business-friendly province for years and years and years, Mr. Speaker. And that's something that we're always proud of. And there's no question in our mind, Mr. Speaker, as I watch how the Saskatchewan Party has basically been caretakers for the economy that the NDP built, some of these small measures, Mr. Speaker, are in many ways indicative of their experience in how to build a solid economy.

Now, Mr. Speaker, a business-friendly environment, I want to ask the minister first of all that this business-friendly environment notion has been in existence since Saskatchewan was born I think in 1905. We will continue building the economy. And it's not going to be the Saskatchewan Party that's going to strengthen the economy, Mr. Speaker. It's going to be the people, the businesses, and a smart growth strategy that we speak about within the NDP circles.

Now, Mr. Speaker, a one-stop business support centre, I don't believe anybody out there would argue that this is something that is valuable. It's a valuable tool. There's no question that the hub, in exchanging information amongst the business community . . . And how they would do it obviously would be through the Internet. I'm assuming that there are ways and means in which you can strengthen that particular program if it is an Internet program. And there are many, many ways and means in which you can make the hub much more successful, much more dynamic, and much more integrated in the province. Now what I understand from the minister's tone is that basically that they're going to be there to share information such as names and addresses and what they do as a business and that they're going to identify with other business out there and they're going to be able to share some of their experience.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what we want to do in the NDP circles is that . . . And again we understand when the minister spoke about some information can be shared on the hub and some information cannot be shared on the hub. We understand that as well, Mr. Speaker. There is no question that that is something that we would certainly agree to as well. However on the whole notion of trying to make sure that Saskatchewan stays business-friendly, Mr. Speaker, that Saskatchewan stays focused on strengthening the economy, Mr. Speaker, is what we think is where the Saskatchewan Party needs a lot of work. And the hub is one small, tiny step in that direction, Mr. Speaker, because we don't think, we don't think — because we don't have the confidence, in the opposition, that the Saskatchewan Party can work their way through this — that the hub cannot just be a small, little piece, that you could actually expand on the value behind the concept of the hub and really make it a

solid, integral part of what we do in Saskatchewan, and almost to a point where you could make it into a Crown corporation, Mr. Speaker, make it that effective. But since they're selling Crown corporations that are effective and are profitable then, Mr. Speaker, this is what we see evidence of, is that the concept is there, the demand is there, but the Saskatchewan Party wants to take small baby steps because they have not yet matured enough to start taking care of the economy that they inherited from the NDP, Mr. Speaker.

One of the things that's really, really important on this particular notion is that the NDP understand that under our smart growth strategy, we've got to attract investment. Under the smart growth strategy, we've got to make sure that the business community out there, the international investment community knows that Saskatchewan is a province where you can have safe, secure investment and make some great gains on that investment. There's absolutely nothing wrong with that, Mr. Speaker. And under the smart growth strategy we know, we know that there are great opportunities to partner, Mr. Speaker. There's great opportunities to partner with the province and with the public sector of the province of Saskatchewan and with many other players in our province, Mr. Speaker. We understand that as well.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important that the concept behind Bill 84, to establish the hub, we have to get grander. We have to get much more professional, Mr. Speaker. And we also have to really reach beyond our borders to make sure that Saskatchewan can have a long-lasting economic opportunity which we see the Saskatchewan Party squandering right now, Mr. Speaker. And that's one of the most important messages that we have when they bring ideas of this sort behind Bill 84, that if you're going to do the economic building, you've got to do it properly. You've got to do it methodically. You've got to do it with some intelligence, Mr. Speaker. And you can't nickel and dime any effort that the province has or undertakes to build that economy.

So Bill 84, Mr. Speaker, the whole notion of being business-friendly, I would say to the people of Saskatchewan that the first opportunity the Sask Party had to really strengthen our financial position as a province with potash, they were a couple of billion dollars off the mark, Mr. Speaker, couple of billion dollars off their projections. Do you think that's business-friendly? Absolutely not, Mr. Speaker. And then you fast forward to this year. Now they're half a billion dollars off on their projected revenues from oil and gas and potash. Is that business-friendly, Mr. Speaker? I don't think so. And now we hear they're adding \$1 billion to the debt of the province. Is that business-friendly, Mr. Speaker? I don't think so. And now we're seeing from the Provincial Auditor a scathing damnation of how the books are being handled by the government, Mr. Speaker. Now is that business-friendly? Does that exude or show confidence from a government to a business community that's outside our borders or planning to look at investments in Saskatchewan? I don't think so, Mr. Speaker. I don't think so at all.

And that's exactly the contrast that I would like to use when we talk about bills of this sort called the hub. While the concept is miniature from the Saskatchewan perspective, in terms of the effort to try and make Saskatchewan much more

business-friendly, the NDP believe we should make the hub a grand opportunity, a global opportunity to showcase what Saskatchewan can do and the business people can do, and not simply a half-measure, half-hearted effort to explain what businesses out there are capable of doing and what their services or what services that they can provide.

So there's no question, Mr. Speaker, that while the effort, the trying and to do their very best given their limited experience, Mr. Speaker, I would say the Saskatchewan Party just simply doesn't get it, doesn't have the experience, doesn't have the view, the world view, of making sure our economy is continuing to stay strong and to stay vibrant.

Now, Mr. Speaker, look at some of these issues I spoke about earlier, under the smart growth strategy the NDP know full well, full well the value of having a solid labour force. We know that's important, Mr. Speaker. Now does the hub talk about some of the challenges to the labour sector that the Saskatchewan Party is currently undertaken or going to war with organized labour? Will the hub explain that, Mr. Speaker? No it won't, but the press will and the unions will, Mr. Speaker. When we talk about the environmental degradation under the Sask Party, will the hub speak about that? Well the hub won't speak about that, but guess what? The environmentalists will and the media will. Now will the financial, the precarious financial position that the Sask Party has put the people in Saskatchewan in, will the hub speak about that, Mr. Speaker? No they won't, but the media will and the banking industry will and many other people that understand financing will.

So my point is, how could you on one hand talk about the hub, Bill 84, and how is it the fact that you're going to be business-friendly when you have all this other commotion and all this other confusion swirling around the small little Act that talks about trying to be business-friendly? The people of Saskatchewan tell the Saskatchewan Party, give us a break. The spinning isn't going to work. If you're going to do something right, you do it proper. You do it methodically. You do it with a lot of intelligence. And you make sure that you're doing it on one front; it's followed through with some really good logical steps on the other.

And I go back to my earlier point. It's hard to sell the merits of the concept behind the hub when you're \$2 billion off your target income for potash one year and then you're half a billion off the next year and then you're adding \$1 billion more into your debt. You're getting scolded by the Provincial Auditor. Like that kind of activity, Mr. Speaker, is not conducive to attracting investment to the province.

Now I'm just a hockey player and I've got that figured out, Mr. Speaker. So what I can't understand, if a mere hockey player from Ile-a-la-Crosse that failed high school accounting can figure out the economic building blocks of the province then, Mr. Speaker, I'll tell the people of Saskatchewan that this caucus, this opposition NDP caucus, with our new leader, is going to be a promising opportunity for the province of Saskatchewan to come back to the NDP and start getting back to the real work of building and sustaining a great province, a great economy, an economy based on fairness for the worker, protection of the environment, and some, finally some intelligence on how to build an economic, make sure we build

an economic province that is sustainable and doable for years and years and years, Mr. Speaker.

[15:15]

So I'm sitting here and I listen to some of my colleagues talk about how to build an economy and I'm awestruck, Mr. Speaker. And that's why, that's why a hockey player that dabbles in politics is able to explain to people what the smart growth strategy is, what international investment's all about — with all the challenges with our economy, how we need to figure this all out, Mr. Speaker.

So I sit here and the Saskatchewan Party in their delight announces the hub. So I say, well what's that about? We're going to share information, what the businesses have. We're going to share information as to what we can do. And I'm saying, well I'm underimpressed. I'm underimpressed because you're creating all the trouble on one side and you're holding up Bill No. 84 and it's called a hub. So I would say to Mr. Speaker that, quite frankly, from the perspective of the importance of Bill 84, that we are totally unimpressed. Mr. Speaker, we're totally underimpressed, if I could use that phrase.

So I would really want to point out, Mr. Speaker, to the people of Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan Party have got a lot of work ahead of them. They've got a lot of problems over there. And we, on this side of the opposition, on this side of the House, the official opposition, we know that there's trouble in Saskatchewan Party land. We know that they're going to have some difficulty and that their little promising start, Mr. Speaker, is fizzling out. So they're going to throw a little efforts here, a little efforts there. And I notice, Mr. Speaker, that sometimes when there's some bad news coming, they'll put on some dog-and-pony show on to talk about some issue that they hope to divert the people's attention on.

And, Mr. Speaker, there's some very good ceremonies in the Assembly. But one of the dog-and-pony shows that I would tell you that they have done is Bill 84 called the hub, under the guise of trying to be business-friendly. My goodness, give me a break. You've got other major problems. The hub ain't going to solve Saskatchewan Party's problem, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the challenges to the economy, to the management of our financing, and to making sure that we're very thorough on how we talk about developing a sustainable Saskatchewan into the future.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot more comments I want to make on the hub. My colleagues are going to have a lot more comments. Some of the initial discussions I have is on this New West Partnership that the Premier has signed, whereas Alberta, Saskatchewan, and BC [British Columbia] have this agreement. Any work over a certain amount, whether you're a small community or a larger centre, has to be advertised to all three provinces. Now, Mr. Speaker, at the outset, that could be fine if Saskatchewan was in a very good position to dominate the other two provinces.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'm proud of Saskatchewan. I'm proud of Saskatchewan. The business community has really shown and risen to the occasion. But I think we're punching far above our

weight, Mr. Speaker. But the problem is, the problem is is that once you have the hub starting to advertise some of this work, what's the next step? That they're going to start making sure that every municipality or every business that has work has to go through the hub to advertise its particular work, and that they can't go through a local contractor. Well, Mr. Speaker, you've got to be careful on that front because does that complicate Saskatchewan's trade? Does that hurt Saskatchewan's interests?

Well we have to assess that. And I don't think that there's proper assessment done on that side because the New West Partnership may force them to advertise any kind of work by any company for any person, private or public, through this process. And guess what, Mr. Speaker? All of a sudden decisions are being made for Saskatchewan far away from our province with none of our interests being taken into account, Mr. Speaker. And that's why we tell people, be very careful of the Saskatchewan Party; they haven't got this thing figured out.

And one thing we've always asked them, time and time again — very, very, very, very clear — you inherited \$2.3 billion in the bank, a booming economy, a growing population, an optimistic province. There was bright lights and things were really happening. And all the NDP said, fine. After years of hard work, years of lifting the load, working closely to people of Saskatchewan, that the people of Saskatchewan gave the province, gave the NDP a break. And then we turned around and we told them — although we're weary — we turned around and told them, one simple task, one simple thing, Mr. Speaker: don't mess it up. That's all we asked them to do. Don't mess it up. And guess what? The right wing party that didn't create the economy is messing up the economy.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'll tell the people of Saskatchewan, the NDP have a strategy called smart growth. We're working on that strategy every single day to make sure the people of Saskatchewan know that when the NDP come back, Mr. Speaker — and we certainly will — that they can rest assured that there's going to be a lot of planning. There's going to be a lot of intelligence. There's going to be a grand plan to make Saskatchewan bigger, better, stronger, faster than Alberta and BC put together, Mr. Speaker. And they can only do that under the NDP, certainly not under the Sask Party.

So once again, Mr. Speaker, I'm underimpressed with this bill, Bill 84, the hub. If that's their flagship bill to determine and to show that they're business friendly, Mr. Speaker, then I think we're all in trouble. We're all in deep trouble.

So on that note, Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill 84.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Athabasca has moved to adjourn debate on Bill 84, *The Common Business Identifiers Act*.

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. 69

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. McMorris that **Bill No. 69** — *The Information Services Corporation Act* 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 rise to enter the debate on Bill No. 69, *An Act respecting Information Services Corporation*. What this Act basically is doing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is privatizing our Information Services Corporation.

So what is ISC [Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan], Mr. Deputy Speaker? Well ISC basically provides services to the people of Saskatchewan regarding information. It holds . . . You could say that your relationship with ISC is lifelong, whether it's your birth certificate, your mortgage, your land title, you name it. Everything basically is registered through ISC. Your personal property security. So if you purchased a truck and you have a loan on your truck, that will be registered with ISC. Land, Crown land, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which this government actually just a couple short years ago sold or put up for sale and removed from protection, some very valuable land, took out of protection.

So Crown land falls under ISC, vital statistics, corporations, legal surveys, so those are some of those things that fall under ISC. Oh, our historical documents, so valuable information about our past, maps and important places of Saskatchewan's heritage — these are all things that fall under the purview of the Information Services Corporation. So these are all, and quite frankly, these all belong to us collectively as the people of Saskatchewan and should remain in the hands of a Crown corporation or the public, Mr. Deputy Speaker, not in the hands of a private corporation.

So I want to talk a little bit with respect to Bill No. 69, *An Act Respecting Information Services Corporation*. One of the things that jumps out about this bill actually is the fact that selling our Crowns, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is a broken promise. It's a broken promise. The Sask Party has committed not to sell our Crowns, which interestingly enough they've done some of it by stealth, contracting out in little bits and pieces here and there. But this piece in particular is — and hoping the people would not notice that they are privatizing by stealth — but this one is not particularly stealthy. This one is right out there in the open that ISC is being privatized.

So let's talk a little bit about this broken promise. So let's go back to the 2007 election campaign. I'm just looking at that right now that where it says, page 29 of the Sask Party platform, publicly owned Crowns that work for Saskatchewan, "Keeping Saskatchewan's Crowns, Crown corporations public and working for Saskatchewan people is an important part of the Saskatchewan Party's plan for securing the future." That's

in 2007. Doesn't mention anything about privatization. It actually says quite the opposite, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Then we can actually go to 2008 and the Information Services Corporation annual report. So that when we talk about broken promises we . . . The Sask Party has reiterated on several occasions the fact that they were committed to not privatizing our Crowns. So the ISC annual report in 2008, what does it have to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker? You might be wondering. Well I will let you know. So quote, the then minister had this to say, so the minister of Crown corporations:

My priority for the future remains the same: to ensure that Saskatchewan's Crown corporations remain publicly owned and provide high quality services at a low cost. This is a promise that our government made to the people of Saskatchewan, and it is a promise we will keep.

So that's just from 2008, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So when we talk about this broken promise, so we've got 2007 where the government has firmly said that they aren't going to privatize Crowns. We've got 2008, the ISC annual report where they also say, we're not going to privatize the Crowns. And then we can go to just over a year ago, Mr. Deputy Speaker, just over to a year ago, and we have the Sask Party platform here. And page 44 actually — I know the minister mentioned this in his remarks — what does it say here?

Prior to forming government in 2007, the Saskatchewan Party fully supported the Crown Corporation Public Ownership Act. Support for public ownership of the Crowns has been reconfirmed over the last four years.

I know the minister got up and said, well you know, this is just the Crowns under *The Crown Corporation Public Ownership Act*. But the reality is I think that that . . . I'm trying to think of a parliamentary term that one could use properly, that one could use to best describe that, but I'm finding it hard to find a parliamentary term. But the reality is that — and I know you're eager to hear what I have to say about that — but the reality is, I think that this is . . . Truth is, the reality is when you . . . It's like the fine print, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We've said this, and this is the big, bold statement that people understand. But down below where there's a little asterisk, the little, little, little tiny asterisk, then that is where this Sask Party government is saying, you should have looked at the asterisk. This is really what we were talking about.

But that's I think . . . As I said, I'm struggling for a parliamentary term. But I think that that is not a good way to conduct yourself as a government, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Our citizens expect our governments to be straight with us and give us the straight goods and let us know what their plans are. And I think the minister, looking at page 44 and falling back on it and saying, well it was only the Crowns under *The Crown Corporations Act*, I think is not the way that a government should do business.

You can also I think talk a little bit about surprises the people of Saskatchewan didn't vote for just over a year ago, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So that wasn't mentioned. It was not mentioned in the platform. There's many opportunities that this government has had to let people know that in fact they were interested in

privatizing. They didn't say so in their platform last year. This government didn't say so in the Throne Speech last year. They didn't say so. So this is one of those surprises, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that citizens in Saskatchewan did not vote for.

So I think we could talk about some of the other surprises that people in Saskatchewan didn't know they were getting as well. So not only did we not know we were getting the privatization of our Crowns, but we didn't know that this government was going to go ahead and add three more MLAs. I know that has come as a surprise to many citizens here in Saskatchewan who have other priorities other than paying for the additional cost of three more politicians, which they would prefer to spend money on things like supporting seniors in purchasing drugs, in social housing, in keeping a film industry here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So another surprise actually.

Interestingly enough, had you read the platform actually, the Sask Party's platform, another one of those surprises — and I briefly touched on the film employment tax credit — but let's talk about page 35 of the Sask Party platform where this government actually . . . This is one of those surprises not unlike the privatization of ISC where this government actually boasts about “providing a 10 per cent increase in funding to SaskFilm in the last budget and increasing funding for the Film Employment Tax Credit.”

So this is one of those surprises, the cutting of the film employment tax credit just a few short months later after putting in a document that you were taking to the people of Saskatchewan saying, this was your vision for Saskatchewan. You're boasting actually about a program, and then just a few short months later you cut it. So this is not one of those . . . This is one of the surprises the people did not expect and did not vote for. I have not heard one person that I've spoken to say that that was a good idea except for the members on the other side of the House. And hard-pressed to find people . . . We've been hard-pressed to find people actually, Mr. Deputy Speaker, who think privatizing our Crowns are a good idea.

[15:30]

The reality too is ISC has been a highly profitable company for the people of Saskatchewan. So why do Crowns . . . What are some of the reasons that we incredibly common sense practical people in Saskatchewan believe . . . Why do we need Crowns? Well part of it is about making sure services are provided to people throughout the province in underserved areas where private businesses might not be able to or be inclined to offer those services. But it's also about providing good cost or good affordable services to people in Saskatchewan. And looking actually again at the ISC report in 2009, a message from the president actually, I'd like to read this. It says:

We began 2009 by reducing fees for Saskatchewan families in marriage, divorce and estate planning situations. It was the second phase of a strategy that began in August 2008. Together, these fee reductions saved Saskatchewan families \$6.1 million in 2009. It is what our customers told us they wanted to see. We listened and we delivered.

So that's one of the values of having a Crown corporation, Mr.

Deputy Speaker, is that it allows you the opportunity to provide affordable services to the people of Saskatchewan. Whereas when you privatize something, by virtue of privatizing, the reality is private entities exist for very different reasons than Crown corporations, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and can find it hard sometimes.

Obviously private organizations or businesses need to make a profit, and so it becomes more imperative to make a profit sometimes, whereas that is not always the case with Crowns. Crowns exist to be able to ensure . . . Some of the reasons they exist again to make sure underserved areas have the services that they need but to provide value for Saskatchewan citizens. And that I would say is a part, a huge part of the culture here in Saskatchewan. Recognizing that together or for the benefit of everybody, we do some of these things, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I know that one of the other issues . . . So ISC last year, \$17 million in profits, \$17 million in profits to the people of Saskatchewan. So what can that \$17 million do and assuming that that \$17.2 million grows? Well I know, again, for people in Saskatoon Riversdale and in communities in the North, for all across Saskatchewan, there are many things that that \$17.2 million can do. The social housing has not been something this government has concentrated on. This government has very much concentrated . . . When you look at the housing continuum, we've got on one end social housing; you've got in the middle affordable housing, and then you've got market-based housing, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

This government has concentrated on the affordable housing piece, but there's a huge piece that's missing, the social housing piece that this government has not, has chosen not to implement, a housing-first strategy that ensures the people who have some challenges, whether it's mental health issues, addictions, putting some money into a housing-first strategy to ensure that we have people . . . Excuse me, Deputy Speaker, there's a fair bit of noise going back and forth here, so it's hard to hear oneself think over all of this, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So housing first anyway, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Housing first, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is about making sure people who have mental health and addictions challenges and other challenges, homelessness challenges, have the opportunity to have a roof over their head and then have the opportunity to put the supports around them so they are surrounded, they have a good roof over their head, and then can deal with the other challenges in their lives.

So that 17.2 million? That is a program or something that ISC and the profits from ISC can go to support — affordable drugs for seniors. There was an increase in drug costs for seniors and young people in this last budget, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which I know it was . . . You have five or six more prescriptions, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I know many people, I know many people for whom those five or six prescriptions creates a huge financial burden. One hundred and twenty dollars might not sound like a lot to some people, but if you've got \$120 increase for six prescriptions, it's a lot of money out of some people's pockets.

The film employment tax credit — which I know, you know, that I like to talk a great deal about, Mr. Deputy Speaker — but the film employment tax credit, for the cost of the film

employment tax credit, we've lost an entire industry. There was a report by the chamber of commerce that saw that the return on investment was incredible, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The real cost of the film tax credit, they calculated to be about \$1.3 million, and the return on investment annually was more than \$44 million in spinoff.

So where could some of this ISC money, the money that comes into our coffers every year because ISC is a Crown corporation? We could have kept a film industry alive here, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The reality is we have chased hundreds of people, we have chased . . . This government's narrative has very much been about attracting and retaining young people, but we've seen those people flee Saskatchewan because they cannot make a living in the film industry now.

I mentioned today in a member's statement a company, actually a Gemini Award-winning company, who is now just actually as of a couple of weeks ago has moved to Victoria, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a company that prioritized training First Nations people in the film industry. So that would be something that perhaps we could have thought about supporting and continued to support. But instead this government has chosen to go about an ideological approach of privatization which makes absolutely no sense. The people of Saskatchewan trusted and believed that this government was not going to privatize our Crowns, and this is exactly what this government is doing.

I'd like to talk a little bit about the possible . . . There has been a report done that says that oh, we could get 90 to \$120 million if we sold ISC, one-time profit. So you sell it and the money's gone. And this government hasn't been stellar in that regard. When an asset is gone, what do we have in its place? You have some money temporarily in the coffers, but I can tell you there's many people who haven't felt the benefit of money coming into the coffers here in Saskatchewan. So I think it actually would . . . Part of the problem actually if this government goes ahead and passes this bill in the spring, the 90 to \$120 million, I think that they perhaps have a financial hole to fill. And unfortunately we heard today from the auditor some, I think, not great news, but it's exactly what the NDP has been saying. Our Finance critic has been saying this as long as I've been in this place, and I've been in this legislature for three years. So what is part of the problem here?

So I'd actually like to quote from the auditor's report here. This was this morning, Mr. Deputy Speaker:

“The ‘creative accounting rules’ that the Government uses for the GRF allows it to communicate to the people of Saskatchewan that the GRF budget is balanced and there is a surplus when in actual fact, there is not.” For the year ended March 31, 2012, the Government reported a surplus in the GRF of \$352.3 million. What it should have reported was a deficit in the GRF of \$46 million.

So the government has been running billboards that are boasting of a balanced budget, but this is a small . . . As the Finance minister got up and said, well the GRF is just one portion of the bigger picture. Well you know what, Mr. Deputy Speaker? This government is only communicating one portion of that financial picture, and a portion that does not give citizens the accurate view of what's going on, Mr. Deputy

Speaker. So they can spend thousands of dollars on billboards, but that doesn't mean it's true. You can say it as many times as you want, but that doesn't make it true, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this government is not running a balanced budget.

I think interesting as well is just last week we had a mid-term financial report. And I think even more concerning about the 46 million in this last fiscal year . . . So what's going on today? And this is why I'm talking about the hole, that this government needs to fill that hole as quickly as they can and find some money in short order by privatizing our Crowns, particularly ISC.

So I'd like to quote from the auditor's news release here too this morning. It says, the auditor, Ms. Lysyk, says this:

If the Government used proper accounting rules, the forecasted GRF surplus of \$56.2 million in last week's 2012-13 Mid-Year Report would have actually been a deficit of \$528.3 million.

Half a billion dollars, Mr. Deputy Speaker, half a billion dollars. That is a pretty large financial hole that needs to be filled. Unfortunately the sale of ISC garnering 90 to \$120 million would not even begin to fill that hole. So I don't know what else will be up on the block at some point in time, but I think we have some big concerns about that, on this side of the House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this is just the start.

And they've used some creative accounting and haven't been . . . The ads that this government has been running have not quite provided the full picture for people of Saskatchewan — well not even close, actually, not even close to the full picture. And we know it's because they have some accounting challenges, shall we say, that they could easily fix and have been encouraged to fix now for several years, not just by the NDP but by the opposition. And the reality is every other jurisdiction, most Canadian jurisdictions now are using summary accounting principles because it's important to give the citizens of your province one picture, and that's the accurate picture and the full picture.

So I know also with this bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the minister has gotten up and said that we're only going to sell, we're only going to sell a portion of ISC, so some of it will be retained in the people of Saskatchewan's hands. But there's problems with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the legislation that's before us, Bill No. 69, does actually not say that. That's not entrenched in legislation. That's the word of the minister, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which could change at the whim of this minister or any other minister. So the reality that Saskatchewan people would retain 40 per cent of ISC . . . First of all, we have a question with the government selling any of it. But the reality is the minister can get up and say that we'll retain 40 per cent of ISC, but that's actually not in the legislation, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So that is a problem.

There's many, many problems with this bill and with privatizing our Crowns, especially when you said you weren't going to do it. When you say that you're going to do something and you completely go back . . . And I said, I just read into the record three places — the 2007 platform; the 2008 ISC annual report with a note from the minister; and this current platform,

the 2011 platform, not current but the most recent platform — three occasions where this government has reaffirmed its support for our Crown corporations. And what does it do less than a year later? It privatizes ISC.

And ISC's absolutely vital to all of us. As I said in the beginning of my remarks, this is about our information as citizens. And this would make Canada or make Saskatchewan one of two jurisdictions in all of the country where it's not held in public trust basically. Ontario does something similar. It's in private hands as well, but I would not say that that's leading the way. I think that that's falling behind. This is our information. As I said, whether it's your birth certificate, your death certificate, your mortgage, you're registering your property, Crown land, this information belongs to us, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and should not be in the hands of a private corporation.

And with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know that I have colleagues who have much to say about ISC, and we will have many opportunities going forward to chat and discuss this more and point out where we think the government is going wrong in this regard. But with that, I would like to move to adjourn debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tochor): — The member from Saskatoon Riversdale has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 69, *The Information Services Corporation Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tochor): — Carried.

[15:45]

Bill No. 80

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Boyd that **Bill No. 80** — *The Power Corporation Amendment Act, 2012* be now read a second time.]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tochor): — I recognize Saskatoon Nutana.

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill No. 80, *An Act to amend The Power Corporation Act*. This is an Act that does a couple of interesting things and also deals with some housekeeping items, as the minister indicated in his comments. I believe yesterday it was introduced, second reading.

And just to start off with, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the minister made his comments indicating first of all that SaskPower needs more borrowing capacity. That's one of the changes I'll speak to in a minute. He's also talking about some of the infrastructure or changes that the corporation's planning and why they need this increase in their ability to borrow. And also the proposal for the borrowing limit, it's almost doubled, Mr. Speaker, so it's a significant amount of money. But I will be talking about that in a little while.

There's a couple of other things that the bill is doing. There's several housekeeping items, and some are just clarifying existing powers. And then finally, there's a new protection from nuisance claims, when we see the increase in claims for class action nuisance law suits. So this is a trend that we see happening both in the United States and in Canada. So the minister's indicated there's some changes there. So although there's not a huge number of changes, some of them are very significant, and I think what I propose to do at this point is just to go through these changes one by one.

So the first subsection that's being added is a new subsection 3(2.2) and 3(2.3), and these are the ones I was just mentioning that deal with class action lawsuits. And what's explained in the explanatory notes to the bill is that there's always difficulties with a defence of statutory authority in these types of lawsuits. And because nuisance lawsuits are often oriented towards the plaintiff, there's a focus towards a plaintiff in these lawsuits, that there's a chance that SaskPower could be found liable even where activities were reasonable within their statutory mandate. And that, according to the bill's notes, is not entirely within the public interest.

So what the proposed changes do is it removes personal liability for the minister, directors, officers, and employees of the corporation from damage claims as long as they are acting in good faith and under the authority of the Act. So this is a statutory defence or a statutory removal of liability for the people that are involved in the decision making in the authority. This is also, according to the notes, in accordance with other provincial legislation.

So it seems to be in order to ensure that the SaskPower has a defence, even when they're acting in good faith, to the types of class action nuisance lawsuits that have been brought against emitters. The explanatory notes do make the point that generally these lawsuits don't get very far, but the problem is the amount of the costs used to defend itself in these, even when there is no legitimate claim. And this is very expensive. So I think in terms of protecting the public and our Crown corporation here against these kinds of nuisance claims, it certainly seems to make sense that these kinds of protections are being afforded to the corporation and its directors.

The second change that we see is a change to clause 8 of the original Act. And the marginal note for clause 8, just to give it some context, is the purposes and powers of the corporation. So there's a change being made here, and it's based on the standards for electrical reliability set up by, it's called the North American Electric Reliability Corporation, which establishes reliability standards for bulk power.

And so now that SaskPower is in an agreement with NERC [North American Electric Reliability Corporation], N-E-R-C, they act as our independent auditor for SaskPower. And the change that's being made here is, I just want to find the clause. The words "standards for the design and operation of" are being removed and substituted with "design, operation or reliability standards . . ." So this just brings into sync the work that NERC does in terms of reliability standards. So SaskPower is working on developing the appropriate methods to ensure their compliance, but it was necessary to modify the subsection so that the scope of the standards being referenced include

reliability standards in addition to design and operating standards because reliability standards are distinct. So that seems to be an appropriate change, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The next change that's being made to the Act is section 8.3, and this is still under the purposes and powers of the Act. And it's 8.3 is the powers in relation to refusal or disconnect. And this is where the company can actually shut off people's power or refuse to give them power — an extraordinary power to cut off power. And the only thing that's being changed here, it's a very small change, and it's basically adding the word "or agent" after the word "employee", in both 8.3(1) and 8.3(2). So it's a minor change.

But in the explanatory notes, it recognizes that SaskPower may use contract auditors to assess compliance with standards. So they may not be hiring their own employees; they might be subcontracting out. And this is certainly something we see as a pattern with this government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the contracting out of services through our Crowns, which seems to become more and more frequent. And therefore although the Acts were originally intended for these types of activities to take place within the house of the corporation, of the Crown corporation, we now see contracting out. And so this is another example of where legislative change is required in order to accommodate this government's trend or habit to contract out work from Crown corporations into the private hands.

Just like I got my fibre optic cable the other day, and when the people showed up at the door, although SaskTel phoned and is arranging for fibre optic, it was certainly not a SaskTel employee that's doing the work. They're being contracted out. So it's this kind of change that is requiring legislative change, a change in process.

Sections 8.3, there's two new sections being added to that — 8.3(2.1) and (2.2). And I think the numbering here is getting a bit confusing and the legislators may want to reconsider how they've done the numbering here because it's becoming quite complicated. But at any rate, these are new sections, and they're just saying that it's some additional powers of the corporation to enter on land and carry out inspections, and they can't do that without the consent of an occupier of the land. And it's just saying that these are necessary so that they can monitor compliance.

And the same with changes to 8.3(4) where the sections are being modified to ensure that the reliability standards can be followed again. So it's just making sure that these reliability standards, that SaskPower's able to ensure that it's in compliance. So it gives powers to enter and take action that they feel necessary in the event that there's something wrong.

The next section that's being added is 8.4. It's a new section, 8.4. And this is a bit of an interesting change, and again I think it sort of signifies the changes in business at SaskPower. And what this is doing is clarifying SaskPower's capacity to contract. And because it's a statutory corporation, it doesn't have the same sort of legal powers of a natural person, of an ordinary business corporation. What this section's trying to do is to clarify that any subsidiaries, basically, of SaskPower also have the capacity to contract.

And there's a new definition of a designated corporation, and this is described as a corporate body, even other than a Crown corporation, in which SaskPower holds securities — either directly or indirectly, other than by security only — to which are attached votes that may be cast to elect a director, and of course Crown corporations designated by Lieutenant Governor in Council.

So the explanation in the notes is that it ensures that there is clarity there so that market activities can occur independently outside of SaskPower's objects and purposes by creating a stand-alone market activities power. And this just allows them to take into account some other kinds of transactions other than its original purpose to provide, generate electrical energy. Sometimes SaskPower's purchasing natural gas to do that, so they're entering into contracts with other providers that are outside of the actual process of creating power and providing power to people.

Another change, the next change I'll talk to is the change to section, subsection 10(3). And in that case, this was a recommendation coming from 2005 where the board of the Crown Investments Corporation had suggested, the next time this legislation was coming up for amendment, that this item be changed. And what it used to say is that whenever real property or corporations buying or selling real property that's worth more than 150,000, it requires Lieutenant Governor in Council approval. And the section's being amended to say no longer is the limit of 150,000 there, but the limit shall be fixed by Lieutenant Governor in Council. So . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh, I'm being corrected. I'm saying it wrong, and I apologize, Mr. Speaker. This is Lieutenant Governor in Council, although I think it would be spelled the same way in *Hansard*. So I'm glad the members opposite are listening. That's good news.

At any rate, the Lieutenant Governor in Council will now have the authority to establish the base limit for these types of sales. This always brings concern to me as a member of the opposition because when these changes are made by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, there's no scrutiny by the opposition nor is there an opportunity for public comment. These are actions of the executive arm of government, and I'm on the record before saying this is concerning.

I can understand why, and I know how difficult it is for our public servants to prepare documents that go to Lieutenant Governor in Council. And certainly \$150,000 in terms of real property is not a large number these days, so it makes sense that the amount be higher. I think it's preferable to actually have the amount in the legislation so that we understand and it's brought to the attention of the public what the actual limit is where they have the authority to sell or buy. I agree 150,000 is not very high, but certainly giving the discretion to the Lieutenant Governor in Council without review by the official opposition or the public is of concern. And I'm just taking note of that.

Section 14 is also being changed somewhat, and this is the expropriation powers. Basically what this is doing is clarifying. There's two types of expropriation in the SaskPower Act. There's one in part 2 and there's one in part 3. And the part 3 process is quite straightforward, and all that SaskPower needs to do there is give notice to the register of land titles. But then

in part 2 it's more of a complicated process, and it requires an application to a judge for an order which would then vest the property to be expropriated.

And I think the history of expropriation law is significant here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because this is a very extraordinary power that governments have, and it's not one that's taken lightly. And when Crown corporations are given that extraordinary power to actually take people's land without their consent, that's something that needs to be, I think, guarded very carefully, and the public interest needs to be protected here as best as possible. You can see where it's necessary for this type of thing when SaskPower's installing a major line, or any of the Crown utilities. But when it involves taking people's land without their consent, that is a very extraordinary power that the government has and in this case has passed on to a Crown corporation.

So I think the attempts being made here are just basically to modernize the language and also make it clear that for these types of takings, where it's just for a power line, with or without substations; or a pipeline, with or without pumping stations; or protection cable, control cable, and communication cable to be used underground, that in that case, we don't need authorization of the Lieutenant Governor in Council. The only time the Lieutenant Governor in Council needs to authorize the expropriation is where they're taking land, taking and expropriating land or buildings for the corporation's purposes.

So there's different layers of takings. And what this is attempting to do is say that Lieutenant Governor in Council approval is still required for the major takings, but that it's no longer required for the minor takings. And that was also in the original section 14 but the language has been clarified. And I think the interpretation, the legal advice that the corporation got in this case, or the Crown Investments Corporation, is that there was some confusion about the interplay between part II and part III of this Act in the expropriation, and then the application of *The Expropriation Procedure Act*.

[16:00]

So it's being amended to clarify, but what they've also done is taken an opportunity to reformat the section just to reflect modern legislative drafting preferences. So more subheadings and less long paragraphs, so that's the modern style.

Section 15 of the existing Act is also being amended, and it's just furthering the process about expropriation. So it was recommended that section 15 also be amended to reflect modern drafting style and introduce gender-neutral terms.

So now we see in section 15(4) we've got gender-neutral terms like the chairperson and vice-chairperson of the corporation, rather than the chairman or vice-chairman. It's interesting that the gender neutrality is being used here but of this board, a public board, there are 13 members on the board and the Chair and Vice-Chair are men. They continue to be men, and only two of those members of the board are women. So again we see a real gender inequity on this particular public board that has appointees being put in place by this government.

So I just thought I'd take an opportunity to comment that while

it's fine to make the language gender-neutral, we expect more. We expect this government to actually make those positions equal in terms of the gender representation on that particular board and all Crown boards, which we've discussed in previous times here in the legislature.

Section 23(1) is being amended with some language to actually make the two words "pipe lines" into one word, and that's happening as well in section 24. Section 29 is being amended just to change pipelines to poles, structures, wires, conduits, or pipelines. So in section 29, it's just to clarify that SaskPower's existing powers apply to all necessary equipment and materials, including the newer technologies. So it's modernizing some of the language that we see in the existing Act.

Sections 30.1 and 30.2(1) are being repealed, and those just deal with some changes when *The Land Titles Act* was changed in 2000. These were transitional provisions and they're just simply no longer required. The same goes with the amendment to subsection 31(1) and 31(2), 32(2). Those are just amendments to fix old language.

We see some significant changes though to section 33, and this is regarding lands next to power lines. And right now the corporation can enter on lands next to power lines to do things like trimming trees or removing them or taking care of obstructions to make sure that there's nothing in the way of the cross arms or the wires or any attachments to the power poles. So this is something that already happens. What the proposed changes do is clarify the two words of transmission and distribution lines to include all the modern language-related structures — wires, conduits, communications equipment, cables, or pipes. And there's a new definition section in this section, right at the beginning of it, that defines pipeline, that defines power line, and defines right-of-way as well. So this is just again some modernization of the language that's there.

One of the things I find interesting is the new section 33.1. And this is an interesting, I think, invasion on property rights of individuals because here we see that . . . I'll read you the section. It says:

Every person who purchases or otherwise acquires any lands that are subject to any of the corporation's rights set out in section 31 to 33 acquires those lands subject to the corporation's rights".

So what you see here, there's a statutory right in SaskPower on all sort of rights-of-way like roads, where they can, there is an authority for SaskPower to put lines in those areas, roads, streets, lanes, or other public places. Now in the event where a road allowance is being closed and sold to a private individual because a road allowance is no longer required, this section allows the statutory authority of SaskPower to continue even though it's now private lands. And that's a bit of an extraordinary invasion into private rights that I can see from the Crown corporation's perspective why it's something they desire. But it certainly isn't something that's desirable from the point of view of a private landowner. So if you're getting a road closure, there's an extra 6 acres that are being added to your quarter section because the road's never being used. It may not, the landowner may not even be aware that they're purchasing it subject to a statutory right that this new clause in the Act is

affording.

I think I'm going to move on now to probably the most interesting section of this bill, and it's the amendments to section 43(1). And simply the amendment there is the limit on the borrowing power of the corporation. Currently the limit is \$5 billion and the government is raising its authority to \$8 billion. The explanation here is that SaskPower is going through a period of high capital expenditures. There's aging infrastructure and there's major reinvestment required. And also as we know, there's increasing needs for electricity in the province, so SaskPower's going to need infrastructure expansion.

Now this is concerning, I think, in some ways. First of all, it's almost doubling the borrowing capacity of the corporation. And the other indication that we have is that in SaskPower's 2012 business plan, they're saying that their total debt obligations will increase from 3.7 billion to 11 billion by the end of 2021. So its debt obligations are increasing threefold within a nine-year period basically. So that's doubling almost every three years.

And what we see happening here is that this government, rather than using the profits from SaskPower to help deal with those infrastructure needs, they're actually taking the dividends and using it to balance their budget rather than reinvesting those profits in the corporation. So we see a corporation desperately needing to almost double its borrowing capacity. And then we see a government taking those profits that the corporation makes, raising the rates of pay, and then siphoning off all those profits. And now we see that SaskPower needs to borrow . . .

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tochor): — Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Requesting leave to introduce a guest.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tochor): — The member from Regina Rosemont has asked for leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tochor): — I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Wotherspoon: — To you and through you, Mr. Speaker, seated in your gallery, I see a bright young man that's entered this Assembly here this afternoon and is observing proceedings. This young man, his name is Jeremy Campbell and he's a student at the University of Regina. He is studying, I believe he's in his second year of sciences. And I know he's a strong student. He works incredibly hard. I believe he works in a marketing capacity with an important company in this province as well. Jeremy is observing proceedings this afternoon.

I know Jeremy as well, I got to know him for a short period of time, Mr. Speaker, a few years back when I served as his Social Studies teacher and I believe, IT [information technology] teacher as well over at Sheldon-Williams. And I recall actually,

Mr. Speaker, he took on a project, and it was a broad-based study, independent project of their choice. And at that point Jeremy Campbell in grade 9 studied the New Democratic Party, Mr. Speaker, and I didn't let him know he was sort of after my own heart at that point in time, but he's gone on from good studies there and continues to care about his community, to further his studies, and to focus on improving his province as well.

So I ask all members of this Assembly to join with me in welcoming a young student leader here today, Mr. Jeremy Campbell. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tochor): — I recognize Saskatoon Nutana.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 80 — *The Power Corporation Amendment Act* (continued)

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That was certainly way more interesting than the comments I've been making, so I appreciate the efforts of my colleagues to introduce.

But I'm getting close to the end, and I just wanted to make a comment on a couple of the final changes to the SaskPower corporation Act, and that's in relations to section 59. These are the relocation easements and . . . Well the first one is the relocation easement clause, 59.01 and it's just basically making a couple of changes to further the authority of the corporation. It clarifies SaskPower's ability to administer the power system and grid for the benefit of the entire province in the event of the triggering event of a power emergency.

So in this case, this allows the corporation to ration power or redirect it if necessary, and prioritize allocation of supply of power. So the changes that are being made are basically . . . Oh, I'm sorry; that's 59.02. 59.01 changes are just about consent agreements required by landowners. So in the event of an emergency, it provides more clarity on when SaskPower can get access to land.

It's 59.02 which is a new clause which gives SaskPower clear statutory rights to curtail, ration, or prioritize the allocation and supply of power in the event of a power emergency, which is defined. So this is also to bring it consistent with provisions in other comparable utility legislations and in particular *The Manitoba Hydro Act*. So that's basically the changes that we find in here. As I said, I find it's unfortunate that SaskPower's required to increase its borrowing capacity almost to double, when we see its debt load is going to triple in the next nine years and yet we see a government that, rather than reinvest in the corporation, is using its profits to help them balance their budget or alleged balance the budget, and also that we don't see the strengthening of our Crowns through this process. So that's the big change, I think. And all the other changes are seemingly acceptable clarity changes that seem to work. But I think we need to take a close look at the dangerous debt load that these corporations are being forced to take on.

So that's the extent of my comments. I'm sure other of my colleagues will want to comment on this well, so at this point I would like to move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 80, *An Act to amend The Power Corporation Act*.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tochor): — The member from Saskatoon Nutana has moved to adjourn the Bill No. 81, *The Power Corporation Amendment Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tochor): — Carried.

Bill No. 81

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Boyd that **Bill No. 81 — *The Global Transportation Hub Authority Act*** be now read a second time.]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tochor): — I recognize Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair of Committees. A pleasure to rise in debate today and glad to rise particularly on this subject, Mr. Chair of Committees, or Mr. Speaker. We'll just leave it at that — Mr. Speaker.

Anyway the project itself, the Global Transportation Hub, is of some age, Mr. Speaker, and certainly the former government, we were quite happy to play a partnership role in this project getting going, Mr. Speaker, and we followed with great interest the progress and the difference or evolution of the file since, Mr. Speaker.

You know, again it's in that sort of vein that we're very interested to see *The Global Transportation Hub Authority Act* come forward today for the legislature's consideration. The GTH [Global Transportation Hub] of course, Mr. Speaker, I've had the privilege of being out through that neck of the woods. The 2,000-acre development, you know, it's not just a significant development in and of itself, but the attendant changes that have been required in terms of supporting infrastructure, Mr. Speaker, the partnership with the city of Regina . . . Interestingly enough, Mr. Speaker, the way that a corporation like Canadian Logistics, not just employing people from Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, or throughout Canada, but I know for a fact there's a strong Bangladeshi contingent at work out in CLS [Canadian Logistics Services], and again what that means for not just those families and that corporation getting the good workers but the way that that makes for a more diverse and vibrant Saskatchewan and Regina region, Mr. Speaker.

We're very interested to see this legislation come forward in terms of the sort of organizational evolution of the GTH, Mr. Speaker. Because again if the bringing the governance structure, the governance framework more in line with the activity being undertaken, and if this is indeed a normal step forward in terms of evaluating where the entity is at and then bringing the governance framework more in line with the opportunity, then good on that, Mr. Speaker. And we're glad to see that happen because again Global Transportation Hub is a

tremendous opportunity not just for Regina and region, Mr. Speaker, but indeed for the province. So that the government should be vigilant in terms of making sure the governance structure is appropriate to the task at hand is as it should be.

[16:15]

Again, having first been established as a statutory appropriation, as an agency of the Crown, then evolving into a Treasury Board Crown in June 2009 and now, Mr. Speaker, the evolution further into an authority on a par with what is anticipated, for example, under the various port authority legislations throughout the country, Mr. Speaker, but also the airport authority legislation or even where we are here today, Mr. Speaker, in the beautiful Wascana Centre. The Wascana Centre Authority structure is referenced in the minister's second reading speech as well.

But those are the things we'll be looking to see, you know, where the similarities are, how appropriate those developments are, and whether or not they do indeed see this very valuable project, not just for Regina and region, but for the province, Mr. Speaker, indeed for Western Canada to make sure that that tremendous opportunity that is there in economic terms, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that that is indeed realized.

Again if you can align these factors correctly, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is well situated west of Regina and is well situated in terms of not just rail connection but also adjacent to the airport, adjacent to the Highways No. 1 and 11, and the way that that can serve for the transfer of goods through the GTH. You know, again it was a fairly sound idea and we were thankful for the, or appreciative of the successes that have been made. But we also watch with concern, Mr. Speaker, when there are things that we have a question about or would seem to indicate a bit of a sidetrack from the great success that this vicinity should be.

We're also concerned, Mr. Speaker, when it seems to in some places where opportunities aren't realized in terms of potential businesses locating to the GTH, but also in some cases losing that competition to other jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker. Again if it's on sort of straight opportunity and the advantage of the transportation location and maybe other jurisdictions are providing different inducements, that's one thing, Mr. Speaker. But if it's because the authority itself is not being properly managed or the business community and these opportunities not being properly engaged with, that's another, Mr. Speaker. And in terms of making sure that the government is doing that job in terms of keeping the GTH competitive and to make sure that opportunities are being realized and not squandered, Mr. Speaker, that's something that we watch very closely.

In terms of what happens now as well, Mr. Speaker, we know that there are some conflicts that have arisen throughout the fairly brief history of the GTH overall. And one thing we'll be interested in, Mr. Speaker, is how those conflicts are, how they continue to relate to the GTH with this change in legislation. We'll be interested to see if there's different sort of resolution mechanisms that are possibly brought to bear, or if in fact questions of liability are being dealt with through legislation as opposed to properly addressing them, Mr. Speaker.

We'll be interested to see how the grants in lieu negotiations work with the city of Regina, again in terms of providing that supporting infrastructure and those supportive services that make a 2,000-acre development like the GTH go. We'll be interested to see how those negotiations go, and in relative fairness to both sides of that equation, Mr. Speaker. Again people are often fond of saying that there's one taxpayer. And certainly as a taxpayer in the city of Regina and as a taxpayer in the province of Saskatchewan, I know that various fellow taxpayers are going to be interested to see what kind of a fair deal is arrived at, or the relative fairness of that deal, Mr. Speaker.

We'll be interested to see how the new authority fleshes out the actual board for the new authority, how that impacts on senior management, how that impacts on the accountability provisions that are there for an organization like this. Previously, Mr. Speaker, the kind of accountability that you'd have through the legislature or through the work of the Provincial Auditor, we'd be interested to see how that persists with this change in organizational structure.

And we're going to be interested to see how again the city of Regina, obviously a very valuable partner, is involved in the go forward. And how the senior management of the corporation of which there seems to have been some turmoil, some turnover, Mr. Speaker, again to see change in the position of the CEO [chief executive officer], and again it's, you know . . . What the grounds were for that, we're interested in knowing, Mr. Speaker. But we're also interested of course in who's brought in to make the project to put it on a better footing, lead that team forward, and realize the opportunities inherent in the GTH.

And again, Mr. Speaker, there are different sort of professional capacities on the CV [curriculum vitae] of the individual currently heading up that team, that one of the latest endeavours of that individual was Enterprise Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And Enterprise Saskatchewan, of course such a roaring success that the government wrapped it up in last year's budget. We'll be watching to see how that leadership complement works out in terms of making sure that this opportunity is realized through the GTH, and how this project goes forward.

Again, Mr. Speaker, oftentimes you know people by their records. You know them by their history, and again it's for the opposition, I think, cause for some concern and is something that has definitely caught our interest. Because again at base, Mr. Speaker, this is a project that we, as the previous government at the time, were quite happy to be associated with and to provide some of those initial sort of pushes for the project to move forward.

This is a very valuable opportunity for not just, as I've said, Mr. Speaker, not just for Regina and region but indeed for the province. And again if we're going to realize this opportunity, it takes not just proper management but proper resourcing and proper support.

Again in the minister's second reading speech there was a fair reference made to the kind of work that's been undertaken for the serviced land and the additional highway infrastructure that need to be brought to bear. Again, Mr. Speaker, those

expenditures are as they should be. But any time there's public money involved, Mr. Speaker, we want to be certain that that return to the taxpayer is worth the money being put forward in the first place.

As well, Mr. Speaker, what sort of broader planning work is enabled by this piece of legislation or broader sort of work within the community in terms of making sure that the consequences in terms of traffic on the west side of Regina . . . to make sure that again this doesn't become a hardship for people that didn't realize they'd be, you know, living on a trucking route and the fairly significant transportation units that are flowing down places like west Dewdney, Mr. Speaker. These are all things that we'll be watching to see how this, whether or not this legislation helps the situation or whether or not problems will persist and grow larger.

I know that there are a great many of my colleagues that are very interested in this piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker. I know that we've got some broader work to do in terms of consulting, not just in Regina and region, but also to do some comparative work around the appropriateness of the legal vehicle being put forward here today for the future for success with the GTH.

And also, Mr. Speaker, the kind of experience of other jurisdictions in terms of transportation hubs and making sure that if there are lessons to be learned from other jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker, we want to make sure that those are being learned and that they're turned into a competitive advantage for, again, what can be a very valuable opportunity for the province of Saskatchewan and the Global Transportation Hub. So in order to facilitate that work, Mr. Speaker, and in order to make sure that we're able to do that work with due diligence, I would move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 81, *The Global Transportation Hub Authority Act*.

The Speaker: — The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 81, *The Global Transportation Hub Authority Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 45

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. McMorris that **Bill No. 45 — *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Saskatchewan Telecommunications) Amendment Act, 2012*** be now read a second time.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to join in on the debate on Bill 45, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Saskatchewan Telecommunications) Amendment Act, 2012*, make some comments. And I know that the minister has made opening comments when he did his second reading to the bill and kind of give us an explanation of areas where they're going. And it's about long-term debt and the borrowing of SaskTel, a communications corporation.

And I want to start out with saying about SaskTel, the good work that SaskTel employees do. The company itself truly as our Crown corporation, and my colleagues today were talking about, you know, ISC, a Crown corporation and one that's being sold off. And I want to talk about that because it's interesting to look at some of the stuff that's being proposed and the concern that, I guess, my colleagues have raised, I have raised, and a number of, I guess, media individuals have raised about some of the bills and our Crowns. Our Crowns, and we hear that should be protected, government's commitment, and we've heard that. And I think, you know, my . . . the colleague here on our side of the House with the official opposition, I'm proud that she raised a lot of concerns today and debated the bill on Bill 69. And I want to refer that because that's a Crown corporation, which SaskTel is. And you want to protect the Crowns.

And government says one thing, and then she pointed out very clearly, whether it was in their platforms in some of the reports from CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan] and CISC about the minister's commitment and continuing the government's commitment to protecting our Crowns. Well we know that that one generates a lot of wealth to the province, to the people of our province, just like SaskTel as well truly is a telecommunications . . . SaskTel is a leader out there, and we see that with the cellular service.

But I guess the minister talks about — and we'll get into it — he talks about some of the housekeeping items that he wants to clear up, but also about the purchasing, the way cabinet is given powers, or the way it's handled, whether it's 100,000, 200,000, depending on whether they're buying property or selling. But we're going to get time to go into it and have some of those discussions. And it's going to warrant further discussion, and I realize that.

But, Mr. Speaker, I want to be clear where I'm coming from. And I want to commend, again I go back to this, because I don't think sometimes our Crown corporations get the information that they need to get and, I guess, the compliments that they do, whether it's the workers that are out there, front-line workers installing the lines so that people can have telecommunications, can have home service, whether it's TV . . . That is a great part of what SaskTel does. And I know the government's going to be asking for increasing that.

But we see what the front-line workers do, the ones that work in our stores that provide the service, whether it's the service calls that have to go out, whether it's the operators, a number of different areas. And we've seen where some of the good things that SaskTel has been doing has been sold off by stealth, quietly — 411, a number of different areas, you know, that we could look at.

[16:30]

But I mention that only because when we were talking about Bill 69 and we were, you know, really concerned. And I think the public in general didn't ask for that and are clear that they want our Crowns protected.

And I'll go back to Bill 45 and I will talk about it. But I want to show, Mr. Speaker, some of the relationships to our Crown

corporations. And when a government decides that they want to try to sell them off, or anytime the government makes a move on the Crown corporations, you want to make sure that we're debating the bill. We want to make sure that we're understanding it. We want to make sure that we're talking to individuals, organizations, the good people that are working for SaskTel. We want to make sure that they have an understanding and if there's any . . . I guess, can they clarify some of the information we're getting?

And sometimes, you know, they're housekeeping items. And I know they may be simple and, you know, it's just bringing it forward here and trying to . . . But we have to make sure because we've got a number of areas where their minister and cabinet's going to have some powers and a different way of doing things. So we want to watch that. And I know they're saying, well that's clear because it's buying property to put up cell towers. And that's one area they looked at, referring to the cost. And it's holding up SaskTel from providing cellular service to communities, and nobody wants to see that happening.

But we want to be cautious. Sometimes when you, I guess, open it up or you allow certain provisions in there, what impact will that have in the rest of the province in where the government . . . And how will they use that legislation? Because once it goes through the process . . . And we know, we'll do our part as the official opposition. We talk to individuals that will be impacted, whether it's employees but also in committee, you know, when it does move to committee.

But here's a venue and an opportunity in the legislature to ask some of those questions and kind of be free of really pushing the issues and trying to find out and digging at stuff. And committee is a process and it is a different process. So this is an area where, Mr. Speaker, we can go. And right now we're clearly trying to find out, like, where do we want to go and what's the intention of the government?

So when I say that . . . And I want to get into some of the communities and I know that are out there trying to get cellular service, and some of the communities that recently have received cellular service, and probably where some of the communities that maybe the government had issue with purchasing property to put up their cell towers. So I want to be clear that we know that maybe there's been some challenges for SaskTel. And we don't want to limit when SaskTel's ready to put up cellular service to a community. We don't want to limit it.

But that brings me to another matter, and I know my colleague, the member from Athabasca, has been raising petitions pretty well every day in this House that he's here. And my colleagues have raised a few of them for him about cellular service in some of the communities in the west side of our province, in the North. And those have been challenges that the communities are facing. And all they're asking for is a fair opportunity to have cellular service for safety, but for communications. And that's an interesting area to go on.

And I just, you know, Mr. Speaker, want to kind of refer to some of the communities. I know it was, that he talked about, was Dillon. He's talked about . . . Well quite a few of them, you

know, that he's talked about. And I just want to make sure I have that. I know it's here somewhere. But anyway, having said that, there are communities that are wanting to have, you know, access to cellular service. And whether it's Dillon, Patuanak, he's mentioned a number . . . Turnor Lake. He's mentioned a number of them in the petition and, you know, I know the list goes on. And he refers to the members and individuals that have signed that petition asking for cellular service.

So this might give, you know, the minister and cabinet and SaskTel the opportunity to purchase some of the property. Now I'm not saying that the property that they're going to be purchasing in these northern communities are going to be over 100,000. Could be 200,000, 300,000. I'm not sure. We have to see. But if they're not, then the provisions would be clear. And maybe we would encourage them to put in some of the service to some of those communities. So it's interesting, you know, to see the amount of signatures that, you know, the member from Athabasca has raised, and the awareness. The people are saying it's time to make sure that communities have access to cellular service.

And that brings me back to this. It's about safety. It's about doing business. And there's a lot of business going on in northern Saskatchewan. And some of these communities are some of the areas where business people want to have access to, you know, telecommunications. But cellular service gives them that added I guess sense of security when they're calling for, whether it's safety issues, people travelling. So we're trying to encourage that. I know some of the communities, and some of these are smaller communities, but they would like to have cellular service and should get that. And I think the community members, the leadership, people signing that petition have made it clear that they would like to see that.

But having said that, I know the minister has mentioned again that some of these items are housekeeping. Some of them will give, you know, I guess the cabinet the ability to, and the minister the ability to allow SaskTel to do the good work it's doing. And you know, at the end of the day it's nice to talk about it and go through some of the bill, like Bill 45, to look at some of the items that they're going to be increasing and where they're going. And I know that some of the challenges that SaskTel . . . We don't want to create challenges for SaskTel because it does an excellent job.

So sometimes you look at some of these items and like I said earlier, Mr. Speaker, are housekeeping items, and we can clear them up simply by having some dialogue and going through the debate in committee. But sometimes where truly there are other challenges that we are faced with, and we want to ensure that the plan that's unveiled here, the government's bringing forward when it's making amendments, it's legislation that's going to benefit SaskTel. It's going to benefit the people of our province. Because our Crown corporations are truly, you know, truly something that all people in the province are proud of, want protected, and want to make sure that they have access to the resources they need.

And you know, we're looking in here and SaskTel of borrowing, and there's a provision in Bill 45 that allows SaskTel . . . And there's going to be a provision . . . [inaudible] . . . where the government talks about bonds, and if that's the

case, investing, SaskTel investing and borrowing on some items that could be more than 30 years. So the minister has some areas there where he's doing some housekeeping items that wants to clear up. And I know that we'll have to go through the debate and we'll have to go through and ask some questions. And we'll have that venue to do that in committee. I know our critic will go through in committee. And we have individuals that are on the committee. We'll go through and ask some of the questions that need to be cleared up to make sure that we've done our work.

And I know that individuals will go home. And we'll check with SaskTel, with the employees to see are these provisions needed, and talk to senior staff within SaskTel to find out, are some of the proposed housekeeping items that we're, the minister's asking and has presented in Bill 45, are they simple? What impacts will be on Saskatchewan people? So there are many challenges that we see could be there. They may not, but again we want to make sure.

But at this time I know there's more comments that could be made and will be made on this item, Bill 45. I just wanted to share my views of what I see. And again I'm prepared to adjourn debate at this time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 45, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Saskatchewan Telecommunications) Amendment Act, 2012*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 79

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 79** — *The Representation Act, 2012* be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to stand and enter into the debate on No. 79, *An Act respecting Representation in the Legislative Assembly*. And of course we've talked at length about this.

This has been a major issue in the past session and of course we're here tonight talking about the next step — the actual boundaries, the constituencies that we have — and it's an important one. It really is a short Act, but it really means a big fundamental shift in what we've done as a legislature.

And of course this is a bill that we have severe concerns about. Not so much about the work that has been done . . . And I do want to say that we do appreciate the good work that has been done by the committee in the circumstances that they were given. Clearly we want to acknowledge that. And I think in Saskatchewan we have a unique approach to making sure that there is fairness. And I think that we can see that the work that was done by the three folks who made up the committee clearly represented the best interests and struggle to make sure that the interests of the people of Saskatchewan were represented,

considering the circumstances that they found themselves in. And so I do also want to, along with the minister, acknowledge the leadership of the Honourable Mr. Justice Neil Gabrielson who served his people in the province exceedingly well. I agree with that and of course, the representatives from both sides of the House to make sure the job is done as well as it can be, considering that we have some difficult choices to make.

So having said that, we are here now with seeing three more MLAs, and we find this an ironic situation because clearly in this government's move to be accountable to every election promise they make, this was not an election promise that they made. In fact there was not a word about it, and it is truly ironic because, you know, we all share in the pride of the growing population of Saskatchewan. That is a good thing, and we think that's an important part of our economy. But it's also important that people see and feel that we do good work in the Chamber and that we're effective and that we're efficient and that when we're scrutinizing the budget that we're, in fact, not taking advantage of it ourselves.

And this really flies in the face of it where you have now a swelling of from 58 to 61 MLAs — no campaign, no work on the election trail on that — and I'm not sure if these folks . . . And we've said it before and we'll say it again and frankly we will keep saying it, and this'll be a major issue when we go forward in the years and months ahead that we'll be talking about, how do you have a government on one hand talk about lean efficiency government but yet they are wanting three more MLAs?

And when you take a look at where we stand among other provinces — and we've reflected on this and, you know, if I have the time today maybe we'll talk more about this — when you compare Ontario that has nearly 100,000 people per riding and here we are with much fewer. And so we have some real problems with this.

I have to disagree with the minister when he spoke about noting "that there was absolutely no direction provided in the legislation as to where these three new constituencies were to be situated." So it may be splitting hairs that it was not in the legislation but clearly we heard a lot of talk through media and other ways where the Premier had seen where these three new MLAs would go because of the population. So it wasn't quite as independent as it's made out to be because there was some direction, perhaps not in the legislation but in other ways that clearly the message was loud and clear as to how this should be done, you know.

And as well I have to take exception to the minister's comments, "It's the voters who elect the members of the Legislative Assembly, and in our view it is the voters who should . . . be the focus of the constituency boundaries process." And what he's referring to in that, now he doesn't say it but the implied reference is to the fact that for the first time in many years those young people, those younger than 18, are now left out of the equation, left out of the formula.

And I think everyone in this province, it's their business who is representing them in their riding. I serve everyone in my riding. I just don't say, are you a voter? I serve absolutely everyone. And so I think that's a key element. And we've had this

discussion. We've gone around, and we will continue to raise this as unfair, especially for young people, because we want to make sure and we want to send a clear message to young people that their presence counts, you know. And I've said this. We have them come to the House and we introduce them and we say, welcome to your legislature. But by this bill we're exactly doing the opposite. And the minister was very clear. He says we're here really to focus on, and he says that should be the focus in terms of voters. And we think that's fundamentally wrong. We represent everyone. Everyone. And that's why we think they should have been included in the formula.

[16:45]

So, Mr. Speaker, I think there is some real questions about this, and we have some real concerns about what this means and what kind of message this sends at the primary level of not campaigning. Everybody knew that the province was growing. The population just didn't happen in the last little while since the election. It's been growing for several years now. And so it was no surprise, no surprise at all, that we have more people in the province. And why they didn't raise this during the campaign, we have some questions. And I think that clearly that we need to address that because people expect more. They expect more from their elected officials, of which I am one, and we think this is inappropriate.

We could do the work with 58. Clearly that means more people in each riding but that's okay. I think we have the technology to resolve that issue. And if we don't think that is, then we should have campaigned on that. And I just want to make sure that that goes on the record, that still we have a problem with unannounced, with unannouncing or making sure we don't talk about those kind of changes. You know, we've seen what other areas do, what . . . They have task forces or public hearings. And of course when we get into consultations, we know this government has some real issues about that. But we should address the public concerns about that.

But I know that there's many other issues that people want to speak to, and I will wrap up my comments. But I do want to once again acknowledge the good work by Honourable Mr. Justice Neil Gabrielson serving as chairperson, and with the two commission members, Stuart Pollon and Mr. Harry Van Mulligen serving as members. They've done a great job, as I said, within the circumstances that they found themselves in and that is what we find ourselves in. But we will not forget, we will not forget how this all came about because we do think this a problem, and we should have done better. We could have done better.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I want to now adjourn the second readings on Bill No. 79, *An Act respecting Representation in the Legislative Assembly*. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: — The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 79, *The Representation Act, 2012*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In order to facilitate the work of committees this evening, I move that this House do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. This House stands adjourned to 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

[The Assembly adjourned at 16:49.]

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