



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

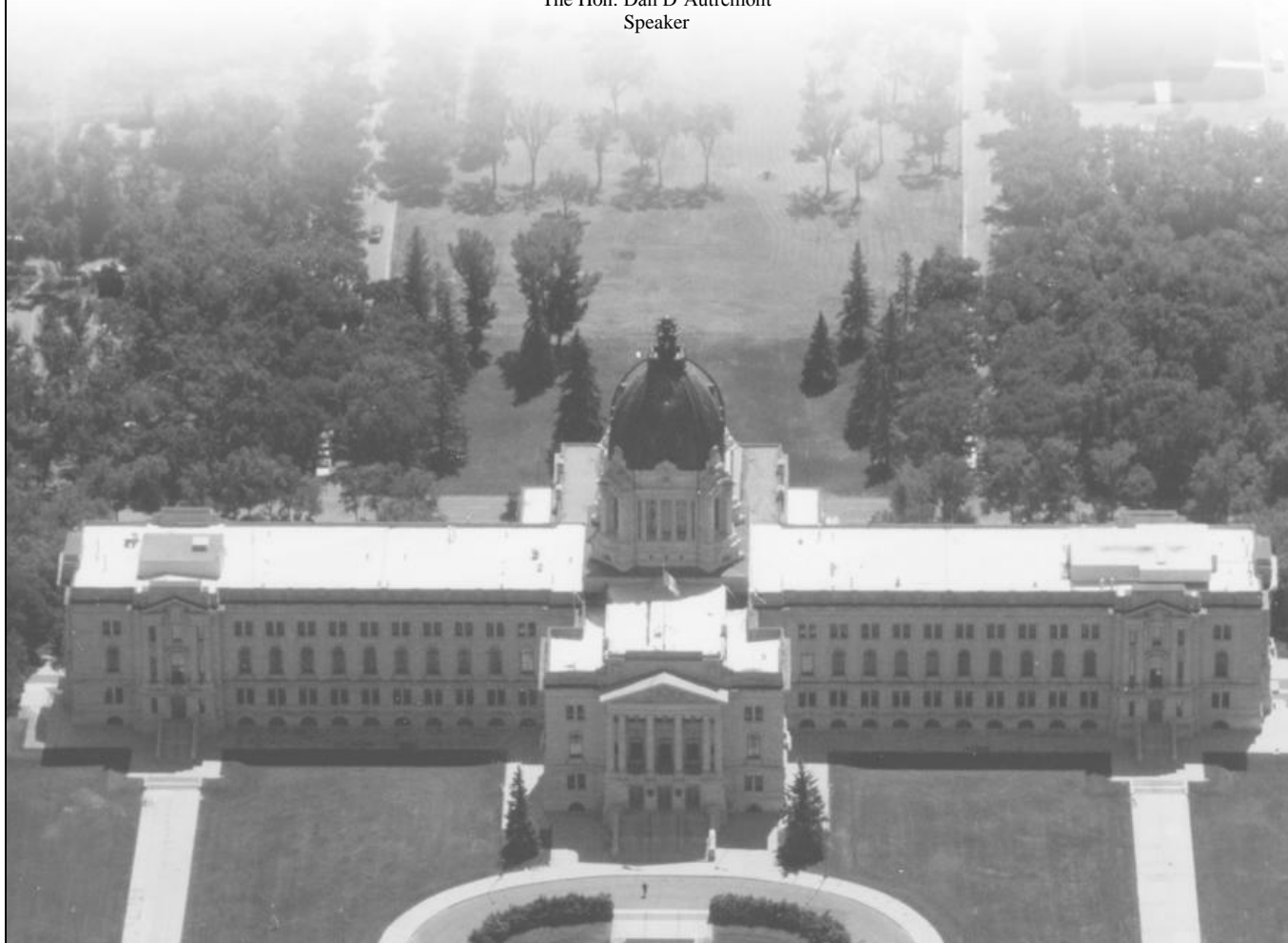
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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)

Published under the  
authority of  
The Hon. Dan D'Autremont  
Speaker



## MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Speaker — Hon. Dan D'Autremont  
 Premier — Hon. Brad Wall  
 Leader of the Opposition — John Nilson

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

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the Assembly, it's a pleasure to introduce some special guests that have joined us in your gallery. Tillie Aessie, president of the Saskatchewan Council of the Catholic Women's League of Canada, has joined us, and she is accompanied by Margaret Schwab who's on the provincial council of the CWLC [Catholic Women's League of Canada]. I have a chance to meet with them a little bit later on this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, the Catholic Women's League have been very much involved in the issue of affordable housing in the province of Saskatchewan, strong boosters of Habitat for Humanity, and I know we'll be discussing those and other issues. Also later this year they will host the annual convention here in Regina, I believe in August. We want to wish them well in that endeavour and welcome them both to their Legislative Assembly today.

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

**Hon. Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Speaker, I am requesting leave for an extended introduction.

**The Speaker:** — The Minister of Social Services has asked for a leave for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Hon. Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the Assembly, I have the honour of introducing some very important guests today who are working hard on an important issue in our province, violence against women. Joining us today from the File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council, Qu'Appelle Haven Safe Shelter, along with tribal council partners and community change makers, are Lois Isnana, Miranda Kahnpace, Sarah Abbott — and she is the recipient of the 2012 Saskatchewan Lieutenant Governor's Arts Award for her documentary on *This Time Last Winter*. And Dory Ochoo, who was the first man to complete the I Am a Kind Man program. And with them is the executive director, Pat Faulconbridge who is with the Status of Women.

Mr. Speaker, these committed community members are here today for us to officially recognize their success in reducing violence against women through the engagement of men and boys in community violence prevention strategies. Through the use of the violence prevention model called I Am a Kind Man, shelter staff are engaging with men and boys in community

action initiatives through the File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council First Nation communities. The I Am a Kind Man model is based on cultural values and principles and encourages Aboriginal youth and men to speak out against violence towards women.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased that my ministry has provided funding to support the Qu'Appelle Haven Shelter for National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, the event to be held in Fort Qu'Appelle tomorrow. This event is in the honour and memory of all women who have lost their lives to violence. The board of directors and the staff of the Qu'Appelle Haven Safe Shelter will be commemorating that day with a prayer, with a ceremony, and a feast.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in welcoming these outstanding citizens to their Assembly today.

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

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the minister on behalf of the official opposition to welcome these very important guests to their legislature. Certainly the work that's being done with the File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council through the Qu'Appelle Haven House, and certainly the work that is joined by the very powerful filmmaking, story telling of Sarah Abbott — it's good to see you here — and it's very important work. But I want to say a special word of encouragement to Mr. Ochoo, again in terms of being that kind man. When we're fighting that violence against women, when we're taking that stand in terms of violence against women, obviously we men have a huge responsibility in that. So it's good to see somebody that's taking that responsibility, working with women to put an end to this very terrible problem that we face as a province. So I just want to say congratulations, keep up that good work, keep showing us that good way forward, both to Mr. Ochoo and to the women that are here today. Èkosi.

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

**Mr. Docherty:** — Request leave for an extended introduction.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Mr. Docherty:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to the rest of the Assembly, it's my pleasure to introduce a group of friends and musicians sitting in your gallery. To begin with, I'd like to introduce a good friend of mine, Bob Vancise. And Bob and I, we go back an awful long way. We worked together at Paul Dojack Youth Centre and we were partners together at the Venue nightclub, one of the first live music clubs in the city. Bob's presently teaching at Winston Knoll Collegiate. And with them today are the other five boys up there, a Regina band called Fly Points. And this

band also includes two of Bob's sons, Billy Vancise — can you give a wave, Billy? — and Robby Vancise. Billy plays lead guitar. Robby plays drums.

The band is truly a family affair as Bob is their manager and the wife, Pam, is the photographer and web designer. They're joined by three other members of the band: Danny Goertz, lead vocals and guitar; Julien Johnson, keyboards; and Graeme Watson on bass.

The band has had several sold-out shows in Regina and earning accolades from the music community, musicians, and supporters alike. They have been working in the studio with well-known Regina producer, singer/songwriter Jason Plumb. And with help of SaskMusic, the band plans to attend several music conferences to promote the new album that will be released in March. And we're all looking forward to it. A further note. Billy Vancise and Julien Johnson just accepted positions as junior engineers with the Ministry of the Economy.

We're eagerly looking forward to hearing more from Fly Points. I'd like all members to please join me in welcoming Bob and Fly Points to their legislature. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to join with the member opposite and welcome friend and former colleague Bob Vancise to the Assembly today, along with up-and-coming band Fly Points. I had the chance to meet with these young musicians briefly, enjoyed hearing about their experiences and exploits in music, and certainly know that they're gaining many accolades. I look forward to tracking them into the future. I also enjoyed hearing about their careers in engineering and in business, and wish them well on all fronts. So it's a pleasure to welcome Bob Vancise and Fly Points to their Assembly here today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members, I'd like to introduce two individuals who are not strangers to this Assembly. That's Donna Ziegler who is the director of cancer control and Donna Pasiechnik who is the manager of tobacco control, media and government relations, both of course with the Saskatchewan division of the Canadian Cancer Society. We know the important work that the society does in advocacy and raising awareness and cancer prevention, and I'm very pleased that these individuals have joined us in the Assembly today. I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming Donna and Donna to the Assembly. Thank you.

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to join with the member opposite in welcoming our two guests from the Canadian Cancer Society, Donna Ziegler and Donna Pasiechnik. I had the opportunity to meet with them several months ago when I first became Minister of Health, and I look forward to building on that working relationship for however long I have the privilege of

being the Health minister. And so I ask all members to join with me in welcoming them to their Assembly.

**The Speaker:** — I would like to take this opportunity to introduce to you, seated in the Speaker's gallery, Dr. Wendy Shaw. She just completed her Ph.D. [Doctor of Philosophy]. Dr. Shaw is the wife of our Sergeant-at-Arms, Scooter Shaw, and with his peg leg it's good to have a doctor in the House.

## PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to present a petition today on cellphone coverage for the Northwest. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

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

Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed the petition are all from throughout the Northwest. And in this petition in particular have people signing in from Cole Bay.

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 on behalf of concerned residents from across Saskatchewan 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 of Canora, Carnduff, Wakaw, Vanscoy, Swift Current, and Maple Creek.

I so submit.

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

### Rural Physician Recognized

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to congratulate a Saskatchewan physician, Dr. Werner Oberholzer, on receiving the 2011-12 Canadian Certified Physician Executive Certificate.

The CCPE [Canadian Certified Physician Executive] is the first Canadian certification program to recognize physicians for their exemplary performance as leaders. Physicians awarded the CCPE have demonstrated that they have the leadership capabilities, knowledge, and skills needed for successful performance and, more important, to direct, influence, and orchestrate change in Canada's complex health care system.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Oberholzer started practising in 1999 in Radville, after emigrating from South Africa with his wife, Dr. Nelleke Helms, who is also a family physician. They have been serving the Radville area for the past 13 years providing 24-7 care with their family practice, nursing home, hospital care, and emergency room services.

Dr. Oberholzer realized that sustainable health care would need a team-based care and infrastructure base. So based on this understanding, he and his wife designed the Rural-West Primary Care Team. Working out of three centres, Radville, Bengough, and Pangman, he and his team provide care to nearly 7,000 patients.

Dr. Oberholzer was also named Physician of the Year by the Saskatchewan Medical Association in 2009, and recently received the Saskatchewan Health Care Excellence Award.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in thanking Dr. Oberholzer and his wife, Dr. Nelleke Helms, for all their outstanding work. Thank you.

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

### Athletes Against Bullying Alliance

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While sports can provide a lot of learning, it's fair to say that bullying often occurs. Athletes themselves have influence in our communities and ideally sports can have positive and powerful impacts on youth and our communities.

One organization here in Regina is focusing on athletics as a way to eliminate bullying in sports and our communities. Local leaders Amanda Flahr, John Tokar, and Brandon Brooks have joined together to create the Athletes Against Bullying Alliance, a network of current and former athletes that are working towards the elimination of bullying by using athletes as influential role models and mentors. Their hope is to instill a zero-tolerance culture towards bullying to ensure youth are safe and protected on our sports fields, in our locker rooms, as well as in our schools and communities.

The beauty of this program, Mr. Speaker, is that it supports all

ages through mentorship. The idea is building role models and mentors for each age group, building positive relationships between students and athletes from elementary school, high school, university, college, junior sport, and professional sport to build safe communities for all.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the Athletes Against Bullying Alliance for their work and leadership, building healthier, safer, stronger communities for all in Saskatchewan and drawing upon what is best in sport. Please join me in thanking these individuals and this organization. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Saskatoon Girls' Soccer Team Wins National Championship

**Mr. Norris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this season the U-18 [under 18] Eastside Vortex girls' soccer team did a lot of things no previous Saskatchewan soccer team has done. Their national championship, earned earlier this fall in Nova Scotia, is a Saskatchewan first. This Saskatoon team also went undefeated in the tournament. Coach Blair Hindmarsh admitted before the tournament that this was the best all-around team he has coached in his 17-year history, and now Coach Hindmarsh can proudly say he leads the best team in the country.

The Vortex started out with a 2-2 draw against BC [British Columbia]. Then they put to rest ghosts of past nationals by handily defeating Quebec in a match. After that, the biggest obstacles being out of the way, they took care of business, rattling off wins against Manitoba and PEI [Prince Edward Island].

This tight-knit group grew in confidence and played better as the week went on. Through a torrential downpour, it was the golden right foot of Erica Hindmarsh, a constituent of Saskatoon Greystone, in the 16th minute of the final against Alberta that sealed the national championship. Mr. Speaker, that pivotal goal was her seventh of the tournament and also gave her a third Golden Boot Award as top scorer.

It takes a team to accomplish something like this. I'll ask all members of the Assembly to join me in recognizing this special group of young women and their coaches, managers, and families, for their hard-earned gold medal and title — Canadian champions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[13:45]

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

### Prairie Women on Snowmobiles Support Breast Cancer Awareness

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Prairie Women on Snowmobiles is a non-profit organization that combines their focus on breast cancer awareness with their love of snowmobiling. They use snowmobiling as a way to fundraise money for breast cancer research. Each year they have an annual mission that consists of a group of 10 volunteer

snowmobilers that'll travel 1800 kilometres across Saskatchewan in eight days. One such volunteer is Diana Desjarlais of Buffalo Narrows.

What's wonderful about this organization, Mr. Speaker, is that these women, along with Diana, are seeking new ways to gain support for breast cancer, and have a lot of success in doing this. This organization donates 100 per cent of all they raise to the Breast Cancer Foundation. Last year alone, Mr. Speaker, they raised over \$180,000, bringing their total amount of money raised to \$1.8 million. Breast cancer is something that affects each of us — a sister, wife, daughter, friend, niece, or having the illness yourself. It robs us of so many important women in our lives, and there's still no cure.

The Prairie Women on Snowmobiles and Dee Dee are asking for any kind of support people can donate to the 2013 mission which will take place on February 1st to the 8th. All donations are appreciated. And if you'd like to go for a ride with the women in the places they go, to show solidarity, all efforts would be appreciated.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud of Dee Dee and her commitment to do her part. And I ask all members of the Assembly to applaud this organization and Dee Dee Desjarlais of Buffalo Narrows as well. Thank you very much.

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

#### **Nipawin Volleyball Team Wins Provincial Championship**

**Mr. Bradshaw:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. L.P. Miller high school in Nipawin was host to a 4A provincial boys' volleyball playoffs the weekend of the 24th and the 25th. The top 10 4A teams from around the province came out to compete against each other for top spot.

The first game saw Nipawin taking on defending provincial champions, Oxbow. Nipawin came out on the losing side of this game as well as their next game against Shaunavon. The Nipawin Bears rallied and came back to earn a spot in the final gold medal game, once again coming up against Oxbow. Nipawin won the first set, lost the second, regrouped and came back to win the third set and the gold medal.

A volleyball gold medal has not been won by the Nipawin Bears since 1976. Nipawin Bears coach Dave Christiansen was part of that 1976 team as well as his 2012 team. Dave began coaching this group of boys when they were in grade 7 and 8, and they have developed into a championship team. With most of the team returning next year, they have a great chance at defending their title and once again bringing gold home in 2013.

Mr. Speaker, I would like this Assembly to join me in recognizing these special young men. They have proved what all members in this Assembly know to be true: the best athletes in Saskatchewan hail from Carrot River Valley. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Safe Shelter Works to End Violence Against Women**

**Mr. Lawrence:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to recognize the efforts of an outstanding group of people in our province who are working hard to end violence against women. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is the International Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, and events will be held across the world, including at the Treaty Four Governance Tipi in Fort Qu'Appelle. That event is organized by the File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council's Qu'Appelle Haven Safe Shelter and will focus on engaging men and boys in community violence prevention strategies and programs.

Representatives from the safe shelter were introduced to this Assembly a few moments ago, and we certainly thank them for their valuable work in this very important area.

Mr. Speaker, men and boys have an important role to play in this area. The I Am a Kind Man program, based on cultural values and principles, encourages Aboriginal men and youth to speak out against violence against women. The staff at the safe shelter are trained as trainers for this program and are using this model to engage with men and boys who in turn have become change makers in this community.

I encourage all members of this House to show their appreciation of the efforts of the File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council and the staff at the Qu'Appelle Haven Safe Shelter. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Melville-Saltcoats.

#### **Increasing Market Access for Agri-food Products**

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan farmers and ranchers produce some of the best agri-food products in the world. Our government is committed to increasing market access for these products. Earlier today, the Minister of Agriculture announced nearly \$84,000 in provincial funding to the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership to increase market access for ag products.

STEP [Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership] used this funding to bring in 40 international buyers earlier this summer to meet with Saskatchewan businesses and exporters. Funding of this program was provided through the Ministry of Agriculture's international market development program.

Canadian Western Agribition also recently received nearly \$56,000 in funding under this program to create an incoming buyers program, and from all reports it was a resounding success at this year's show. The international market development program has also helped other groups and businesses access new international market opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, in the Saskatchewan plan for growth, our government set a goal of increasing our international agri-food exports from a record high of \$10 billion in 2011 to \$15 billion by 2020. Through partnering with organizations like STEP and Agribition, our government is confident that we will be able to meet this goal. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

## QUESTION PERIOD

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

## Asbestos in Public Buildings

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's now been over one month since I introduced an amendment to *The Public Health Act*: Bill 604, the asbestos right to know Act. This is a common piece sense of legislation, Mr. Speaker, that would create a mandatory registry of public buildings with asbestos owned by a ministry, Crown corporation, health authority, or school division.

As I've said before, Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the Sask Party government for taking steps in the direction of the bill, but before the fall sitting ends, they have a chance to do the right thing and pass this legislation.

To the minister: will his government create a mandatory and comprehensive registry of buildings with asbestos by passing Bill 604?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question and appreciate the opportunity to provide an update. Since the bill was introduced, Mr. Speaker, I can advise the House that we have voluntarily provided a website. We have provided a listing on that website of all government-owned buildings and listed whether there's asbestos on those. We have contacted a number of other entities who have added their information to it. We are working with other entities around the province to find out what information is available and what information will have to be compiled.

Mr. Speaker, we're not able to make a determination whether this would become a mandatory website or not, but we want to ensure that we capture all of the information that's available. We know that one of the health regions not only provided a list, but their list was in website format that had links to what was actually found in the individual buildings. And, Mr. Speaker, we will continue with that process.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, as I said before, I compliment the government on taking certain steps in the right direction on this piece of legislation, and the news from one health region is encouraging. I also spoke with a school division recently, Mr. Speaker, that hadn't been contacted about this piece of legislation.

The important component here is that it needs to be mandatory and it needs to be enshrined within legislation. Without that, Mr. Speaker, the website could come down at the whim of any minister in the future. It's important to have it in legislation. It's also important, Mr. Speaker, to have it comprehensive, and that's where the mandatory aspect would deliver that aspect.

Earlier this week, Mr. Speaker, the opposition co-operated on passing a piece of legislation in short order. It was the bill with respect to RESPs [registered education savings plan]. We did that because it was the right thing to do. I believe this legislation is also the right thing to do and, by mutual agreement, we could pass it in short order.

My question to the minister: why will the Sask Party government at this time not pass Bill 604?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, we had indicated earlier that we wanted to adopt and use best practices. We've asked the ministry officials to canvass other jurisdictions and that process is under way.

Since that time, I've met with the late Mr. Willems's family. I've met with his father. I've met with his sister. I've indicated to them, and I can certainly share with the members of the legislature, that we would like very much to do something in recognition of the contribution that Mr. Willems has made. This was an individual that was a tireless advocate and was a sincere believer in wanting to make our province safe. We want to do the best that we can by providing asbestos safety.

Mr. Speaker, some of the regulations that we have in place right now are, requirement to identify and label asbestos-containing materials, to maintain installed materials to prevent fibre release, to notify occupational health and safety of high-risk asbestos processes, and have an asbestos control plan to prevent worker contact with asbestos. Mr. Speaker, we will continue to do those things as we go forward.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased that the minister has met with members of Howard's family. And I want to say that Howard's family are 100 per cent determined and have the conviction that this change needs to be within legislation, Mr. Speaker. Anything less of that does not provide the mandatory and comprehensive requirement that people in Saskatchewan deserve.

Other groups are also very supportive of this legislation, Mr. Speaker. Today we're joined by representatives from the Canadian Cancer Society who are lending their support to this piece of legislation. So my question to the minister: will he listen to people in the community, people like the Canadian Cancer Society who recognize the good work that the Sask Party government has done on this, but realize and believe that they must go further and pass Bill 604 in order to ensure that there is a comprehensive and mandatory asbestos registry of public buildings here in Saskatchewan? Will he do that today?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We will work with the officials within the ministry to try and determine what best practices are and what the best way is of making the public

aware of where the risks are and are not.

We received information that was unexpectedly good from the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region. Maybe that's the type of information that we will want to have from other entities as well. I can advise the member opposite we have contacted all school divisions. Letters have gone to all school divisions. We'd like to give them a reasonable opportunity to ascertain what information they have and in what format that information can be provided. At that point in time, we will be able to look and determine what is best practice and what information can be properly put on websites and how the information is to be there.

I can advise, Mr. Speaker, that the best practices now are to make the assumption that asbestos exists when you undertake construction, especially in a building that was constructed prior to 1980. We urge people to take every step careful that they possibly can and, Mr. Speaker, also that they should be contacting OH & S [occupational health and safety] if they have any questions with regard to construction, demolition, or otherwise.

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

#### Changes to Labour Legislation

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party tabled their massive overhauling labour bill with only hours remaining of the fall session. People are concerned about upsetting the balance between workers and the employers, and on first glance there are many things that do upset that balance. Just as the minister leaked to his paid audience friends that the eight-hour workday is now over for some people. Now with only a week's notice, workers could lose the eight-hour workday and have to change their lives to work 10-hour shifts. This could have serious implications for those with child care needs or other family responsibilities.

Mr. Speaker, why has the Sask Party upset the work/life balance for potentially every worker in this province?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister for Advanced Education.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite will know full well from the information that was provided yesterday that, under our current legislation, you have the option of obtaining a permit to work either four 10's or five 8's. Mr. Speaker, that system has been in place in our province for many years. And, Mr. Speaker, it's not a difficult thing to understand: four 10's, five 8's.

Mr. Speaker, we have indicated as well that there are approximately, approximately 900 businesses that have obtained permits. In the history of the province, there has never been one of the permits that has been denied. So, Mr. Speaker, we are simply recognizing the reality of what is taking place under our current legislation and our current regulatory regime. There really is no change to it other than less paperwork, which is always a good thing. Mr. Speaker, we value and we respect the work that is done by our workers in our province.

[14:00]

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Protecting vulnerable workers and giving them the opportunity to share in the wealth of Saskatchewan's economy is an important role for government. And we were pleased yesterday to see that the government touted change for the minimum wage in their news release. But, Mr. Speaker, the change is not in the bill. The officials say it's in the regulations. When we first called for the indexation of the minimum wage back in 2007, we called for it be legislated.

The minister said he's open to amendments to the bill. Will the minister amend the legislation and put the indexation of minimum wage into the labour legislation itself?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, there is a long history in our existing legislation that the minimum wage is in fact in regulation. The reason it's in regulation is so that government can be responsible and nimble enough to change it as is required.

Mr. Speaker, we indicated yesterday that the minimum wage would be indexed. We indicated what it would be a combination of: the consumer price index and the average hourly wage. Mr. Speaker, we intend to include that as part of the regulations that are there. We intend to retain the flexibility that government has had in the past because in the past we have raised it over 26 per cent since we were in government, well in excess of what the consumer price index is. And we want to keep that flexibility in case we wish to raise it even more, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the change to the labour law to remove co-workers from their union wasn't asked for anybody who is in a union. At best it creates confusion and bureaucracy. At worst it creates divisions in the workplace. Mr. Speaker, no one voted for changing the structure of workplaces and making it more onerous for employees and employers. Why would the Sask Party introduce legislation that creates confusion, more bureaucracy, and divisions in our workplaces?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, we had two situations that arose during the last number of years. The first one was people that handled or had access to confidential information. These were people that were preparing mandate letters, developing budget documentation. These people were sometimes in scope. How unfair is it to that person to expect them to make a determination how they are to vote when they know the employer's bottom line and know how the budget process is, and how the mandate is to be there? It is incredibly awkward for that individual and even more awkward for that individual to discuss it with their co-workers.

We think the appropriate course of action is to have those



people removed from being in-scope, so they are not in an awkward position with their workers.

We also think, Mr. Speaker, that the other area is people that are in a supervisory position; if you were in the position of hiring, firing, doing performance evaluations, determining wage or salaries, disciplining somebody, that it is inappropriate for you to be in the same collective bargaining group as the people that you're disciplining. How do you go to a meeting with them? How do you vote? How do you determine who's going to be on the executive of the local? Mr. Speaker, it just makes sense.

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

### Conditions in Personal Care Homes

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Personal care homes in Saskatchewan provide a vital role in providing a home for some of our province's most vulnerable people, whether they be seniors or individuals living with a disability. Many of us can think of a loved one, a grandparent, an aunt and uncle, or a sibling who live in personal care homes. These residents deserve the best possible care, Mr. Speaker, and families deserve the peace of mind knowing that their loved ones are being well cared for.

Sadly the Provincial Auditor's report has some concerning findings about the absence of proper oversight by the Ministry of Health. On page 298, the auditor states: "During April 1, 2011 to August 31, 2012, the Ministry of Health did not have fully effective processes to regulate personal care homes in accordance with *The Personal Care Homes Act*."

To the minister: why has the Ministry of Health failed to provide proper oversight of personal care homes here in Saskatchewan.

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we certainly accept the recommendations of the Provincial Auditor to have more effective processes to regulate the personal care homes that we have in this province. And, Mr. Speaker, we are actively addressing them. We appreciate the work that the auditor has done in this regards, Mr. Speaker, and we are working on a plan that will improve tracking of deficiencies and inspections, improve risk assessment processes, and allow for public reporting of inspection results, Mr. Speaker. And so I can tell the House that we are working to address the concerns that were raised and the recommendations that were raised by the auditor in this regard.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Residents who live in care homes deserve the best possible care. In the situation of seniors, these are the individuals, Mr. Speaker, who have built our province. And I'm sure most care home operators do a good job, Mr. Speaker, but we did, in the auditor's report, see her write extensively about the issue of high-risk homes: situations, Mr. Speaker, where the seniors and people living with

disabilities aren't receiving the proper type of care.

She pointed out, Mr. Speaker, the auditor, that in many of these situations, there are not frequent enough inspections of facilities, especially after problems have been identified. Mr. Speaker, if I had a loved one living in a high-risk home, I would want relentless inspections, not inspections with large gaps in between.

To the minister: he mentioned briefly about some of the steps that the ministry will be taking. Will one of those steps, Mr. Speaker, be to have more frequent inspections, especially at the high-risk homes?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I want to thank the member for his question. And I hope perhaps in his follow-up question he'll be able to identify relentless for me because I'd certainly be interested in his position on that.

Mr. Speaker, in this regard though we certainly take the auditor's recommendations very seriously. We want to make sure that we are tracking deficiencies and inspections when they're not taking place, Mr. Speaker, improve our risk assessment process so that we are following up in a more timely fashion with those that have been identified as being high-risk.

Obviously, Mr. Speaker, we take the care of our seniors . . . whether they be in government-owned, long-term care facilities or in private personal care homes, Mr. Speaker. In fact that's why this government introduced measures to help with the costs of seniors who are in personal care homes with the seniors' personal care home benefit, Mr. Speaker. And we certainly will be following up with the auditor's recommendations in this regard.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The auditor pointed out in her report that in certain circumstances with certain care homes there have been instances where problems have been identified and there has not been corrective action. Some of these examples of unsafe or unhealthy practices, Mr. Speaker, include the absence of hand soap, water temperature being too hot, medications not being properly recorded, and fire exits being blocked.

It's unsettling, Mr. Speaker, to think that these problems would be identified and then not corrected. Part of the problem has to do with the absence or the poor frequency of follow-up visits once problems are identified. On page 302 the auditor states, "We saw only one instance where an unannounced inspection took place after problems were identified."

Mr. Speaker, if there are problems like blocked fire exits, if there are problems like having an absence of hand soap, Mr. Speaker, why is the ministry not performing more unexpected inspections in order to ensure that seniors and people with disabilities are living in the conditions that they deserve?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for his question. And certainly we want to make sure that when seniors are living in care, whether that be through a publicly owned and operated long-term care facility or, in these cases, personal care homes that are privately owned and operated, Mr. Speaker, we want to be able to reassure citizens, seniors in this province as well as their children and their families that they are living in safe living conditions, Mr. Speaker. And that's why we are, as I said in my first answer, Mr. Speaker, we're taking the recommendations of the auditor very seriously in this regard.

We are working on a plan to improve our tracking of deficiencies and inspections. And, Mr. Speaker, we will be identifying in terms of inspections how we'll move forward, whether or not we'll be moving towards a more spot inspection and deviating away from what is currently done through the annual inspection process.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the annual inspections are certainly important, as too are the spot inspections as the minister just suggested. And I'm pleased that the ministry is looking at this as one possible course of action. My question to the minister: on behalf of the families who have residents in care homes, when can they expect a decision with respect to when there may be unannounced inspections occurring so that they know that the ministry is taking the proper and the necessary steps with respect to having care homes properly inspected and regulated?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the member for his question, certainly because we have formally received tabling of the auditor's report just in the last day. We'll be taking more time than just 24 hours to make that determination. But I can tell the member that we're working, the ministry's working hard with, in conjunction with the auditor's office to address these, Mr. Speaker. And we will, we will be bringing forward our formal comments and changes that will be a result of the auditor's report in the appropriate time frame, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can think of a number of instances in my constituency office, Mr. Speaker, when I've been approached by people who are considering care options for their loved ones. And I'm sure most MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] in the Assembly can relate to that situation.

Family members want to know, Mr. Speaker, that when they are making a decision with their loved one that their loved one is going to a safe and healthy spot. And part of that, Mr. Speaker, is having information available to them with respect to the safety and the standards in facilities. One of the auditor's

suggestions, Mr. Speaker, is to provide an online report with respect to the inspections so that individuals who are concerned, Mr. Speaker, can get the information that they need.

Earlier in the remarks, Mr. Speaker, the minister said that he is considering the possibility of reporting this information out publicly. Apparently that's one decision that they were able to make within 24 hours, Mr. Speaker. My question to the minister: when can families expect to have online the reports from the inspections so they can have all the information available as they make the important decisions with their loved ones?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Mr. Speaker, well first of all I said that that was one of the recommendations that we are considering. We haven't made a decision on it. So for the member to now, I think, change the words that I've just said in the House, Mr. Speaker, I would thank him not to do that.

Mr. Speaker, but I will say this: that when it comes to seniors in this province, I think that it is fair to say that no government in the recent history of this province has done more to improve the conditions of seniors in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, the seniors' income plan, which was addressed once in 16 years and then never again by the previous government, Mr. Speaker, and we have tripled that benefit, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we have introduced the personal care home benefit for seniors, specifically that the member is addressing, for those that are living in privately owned and operated personal care homes, Mr. Speaker, giving them a benefit of up to \$4,400 per year, something that was never available under the NDP [New Democratic Party], Mr. Speaker.

And for those seniors in this province that rely on government long-term care facilities, Mr. Speaker, the record of the members opposite is shameful — 1,200 beds lost in long-term care over their government, Mr. Speaker. We're building 13 new ones in this province and moving forward on this important issue.

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

### Orphan Oil Wells

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, smart growth in our oil sector would ensure a balance between getting a return for the people of Saskatchewan for our resources but also making sure we have good protections for the environment. And that's what the auditor calls for in her report yesterday. But what she found was that this government isn't balanced.

The Ministry of Economy is just selling our oil. It also has to ensure oil wells, when finished production, are properly cleaned up. Mr. Speaker, the auditor found hundreds of orphaned oil wells with no one cleaning them up, leaving a huge environmental and financial liability for the province. Why has the Sask Party failed to balance the growth of the oil industry with proper environmental stewardship?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Energy and Resources.

**Hon. Mr. McMillan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a great opportunity to update the House on the progress on the orphaned well file, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite would well know that there were no orphan wells that were cleaned up under the former government.

Mr. Speaker, we have in Saskatchewan today, Mr. Speaker, 46 orphan wells. We know that number. Mr. Speaker, about a year ago, two years ago, Mr. Speaker, the first orphaned well was actually cleaned up in Saskatchewan. Since that time, 17 orphan wells have been cleaned up, Mr. Speaker. In this coming winter, Mr. Speaker, another 17 wells should be done by spring. And, Mr. Speaker, this is an ongoing process. It's something that we will continue to work towards, ensuring that we have the appropriate funds coming in from industry funding the program. And this program, Mr. Speaker, will continue to chip away at that 46. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, the auditor says that potentially more than 700 wells are orphaned in the province. In the last two years only 10 wells have been cleaned up. In the auditor's words, "The rate of this progress is inadequate and suggests the ministry has not assigned sufficient staff with the necessary skills to carry out its programs." That's because, Mr. Speaker, the auditor found this government assigned only one person to identify and verify orphaned wells. When I asked in committee this past spring about these wells, the minister said that his ministry has no time frame for their cleanup.

Mr. Speaker, if the Minister of Economy won't step up to do the work, will anyone on that side of the House ensure oil wells are cleaned up like the auditor recommends?

[14:15]

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Energy and Resources.

**Hon. Mr. McMillan:** — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite references the 700 number. That number, Mr. Speaker, is a number of potential wells. They aren't orphaned today but, Mr. Speaker, with a substantial number of reaches, presumptions, Mr. Speaker, conceivably in the future of Saskatchewan that could happen. But, Mr. Speaker, there are 46 wells today. In the past 70 years, Mr. Speaker, since oil was drilled in the '40s, gas in the '30s, there has accumulated a number of 46.

And, Mr. Speaker, we collect funds from the industry. Those funds are utilized to reclaim wells: 17 to this point; another 17, Mr. Speaker, before spring. This, Mr. Speaker, is a responsible program. The auditor has audited it. She says that the program is following legislation. It's being appropriately rolled out. And, Mr. Speaker, we will continue to ensure that we have the high standards in Saskatchewan that the people of Saskatchewan expect for their industry and certainly their oil industry.

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

Nutana.

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, the number of orphaned wells in the province continues to grow but the cleanup has not been a priority for the province. And that means the environmental and fiscal liability is growing. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the cleanup of these wells is financed from levies charged to licensees. The auditor says the levies are based on the amount of cleanup work planned, but because so little cleanup has been happening, the ministry has collected fewer levies. And this has led to another unfunded liability that this government is hiding from its books.

Mr. Speaker, now the cleanup is another future cost for our children because the Sask Party won't get the job done. It's clear that the Sask Party does not prioritize smart growth. To the minister: when will Saskatchewan see an increase in the number of cleanups that's greater than the increasing number of orphaned oil wells?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister for Energy and Resources.

**Hon. Mr. McMillan:** — Mr. Speaker, the member's question, I think she wasn't listening to my first two answers because it just isn't true. The number of orphan wells today are less than they were a year ago. And, Mr. Speaker, it started in 2008 that, Mr. Speaker, the first levies were collected from industry. The first wells were first . . . went from orphan to being cleaned up, Mr. Speaker, in 2010. Since that time, 17. And, Mr. Speaker, there is 17 wells less today than there were just two years ago, and certainly less than there was under the former NDP government, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we have a system where we collect levies off industry, Mr. Speaker, and those levies are utilized to clean up wells — another 17 by spring. And, Mr. Speaker, we also have a system, that when new wells are transferred from one company to another, if they do not have the appropriate resources to clean them up in some future time, there is money set aside, Mr. Speaker. That is the process so that those wells are not a liability.

And, Mr. Speaker, we have a responsible system. We recognize that the auditor has made some recommendations. We have responded to them and we expect . . .

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

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

### Crown Corporation Partnerships Facilitate Utility Installation

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you know one of the greatest challenges facing our province today is dealing with the pressing need for infrastructure. Our economy has challenged all levels of government and our Crown corporations to find ways to keep up with that demand.

SaskPower has made 37,800 new connections since 2007. SaskEnergy has made 30,000 new connections. SaskTel has made more than 32,000 new connections. This is roughly

equivalent to connecting an entire city the size of Moose Jaw, so the demand is huge.

Whether it's power production, natural gas distribution, or telephone service, our commercial Crowns are focused on a common goal. That is providing the best possible service where it's needed, in the shortest possible time.

I rise today to inform the House of a new and innovative approach to servicing new subdivisions that will result in a more timely and cost-effective service to customers. Until now each utility Crown has worked independently with land developers to install underground services for new houses.

As you can appreciate, having each company show up individually to install gas, electrical, and phone lines can be a cumbersome, time-consuming and costly process, particularly with the level of demands that we are now experiencing. So SaskPower, SaskTel, and SaskEnergy are trying something new and innovative. It's a coordinated approach that allows all the Crown utility services to be installed in a timely manner and in a single trench.

SaskPower, SaskTel, and SaskEnergy are working with two of the province's cable television providers and Shaw and Access Communications to develop an integrated approach to the design of utility services for new subdivisions. The new turnkey approach will result in a more effective process for the installation of all of these services. With this model, the design of utility services from the new subdivisions will become the responsibility of the developers. They will secure qualified contractors to install the services, and the Crowns both approve the projects and inspect the results to make sure that they meet the proper standards. Upon completion, the Crowns own, operate, and maintain the lines.

There have been two projects undertaken to prove the concept: one in Regina in The Creeks subdivision and one in Rosewood subdivision of Saskatoon. The results have been very, very promising, Mr. Speaker. Because of the success today, this option is being made available to all developers in the 2013 construction season. This is a winning combination for all concerned. The developers gain control over the timing and the coordination of the installation. Having all the shallow utility services in one trench saves space and allows for a more organized development. And the new process provides increased opportunity for the private sector to deliver engineering and constructive services.

This new turnkey process is just one more example of our Crowns adapting to growth. By responding to the challenges of growth with innovative ideas, our Crowns continue to move this province forward in a thriving economy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise to congratulate our Crown corporations on working together as they make sure that they provide the utilities for new subdivisions that work in Saskatchewan. And we know that there's been co-operation between the Crowns in many different ways, but clearly the minister's identifying today another new

way that they've worked together.

Unfortunately, one of the Crowns is not listed. We have SaskPower and SaskEnergy and SaskTel working together. But it's quite clear that the work that they're doing relies on the other Crown corporation ISC, which keeps track of all of this information. And so, Mr. Speaker, I would remind the government and the Minister of Crown Investments that all of the Crowns can work together to provide very good services. And don't forget the important Crown, ISC. Thank you.

#### PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the chairman for the Economy Committee.

##### Standing Committee on the Economy

**Mr. Toth:** — Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the Standing Committee on the Economy to report that it has considered certain supplementary estimates and to present its second report. I move:

That the second report of the Standing Committee on the Economy be now concurred in.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the chairman of the Economy Committee:

That the second report of the Standing Committee on the Economy be now concurred in.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried. I recognize the chairman of the Human Services Committee.

##### Standing Committee on Human Services

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the Standing Committee on Human Services to report that it has considered certain supplementary estimates and to present its second report. I move:

That the second report of the Standing Committee on Human Services now be concurred in.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the chairman of the Standing Committee on Human Services:

That the second report of the Standing Committee on Human Services be now concurred in.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried. I recognize the chairman of the Crown and Central Agencies Committee.

**Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies**

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report it has considered certain estimates and to present its second report. I move:

That the second report of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies be now concurred in.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the chairman of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies:

That the second report of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies be now concurred in.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried. I recognize the chairman of the Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice Committee.

**Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice**

**Mr. Michelson:** — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice to report that it has considered certain supplementary estimates and to present its third report. I move:

That the third report of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice be now concurred in.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the chairman of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice:

That the third report of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice be now concurred in.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**ORDERS OF THE DAY****WRITTEN QUESTIONS**

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

**Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answers to questions 115 to 182.

**The Speaker:** — The Government Whip has tabled answers to questions 115 to 182.

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

**Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel:** — Committee of

Finance.

**The Speaker:** — Committee of Finance. I do now leave the Chair.

**COMMITTEE OF FINANCE****Motions for Supply**

**The Chair:** — I call the committee to order, and I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair of Committees. Mr. Chair, I move no. 1:

Resolved that towards making good the supply granted to Her Majesty on account of certain charges and expenses of the public service for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2013, the sum of 108,744,000 be granted out of the General Revenue Fund.

**The Chair:** — The Minister of Finance has moved resolution no. 1:

Resolved that towards making good the supply granted to Her Majesty on the account of certain charges and the expenses of the public service for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2013, the sum of \$108,744,000 be granted to the General Revenue Fund.

Is that agreed?

[14:30]

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair of Committees. Mr. Chair, I move no. 2:

Resolved that towards making good the supply granted to Her Majesty on account of certain charges and expenses of the public service for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2013, which to the extent that they remain unexpended for the fiscal year are also granted for the fiscal year ending on March 31, 2014, the sum of \$50,000,000 be granted out of the General Revenue Fund.

**The Chair:** — The Minister of Finance has moved resolution no. 2:

Resolved that towards making good the supply granted to Her Majesty on account of certain charges and expenses of the public service for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2013, which to the extent that they remain unexpended for the fiscal year are also granted for the fiscal year ending on March 31, 2014, the sum of \$50,000,000 be granted out of the General Revenue Fund.

Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I move that the committee rise and that the Chair report that the committee has agreed to certain resolutions and ask for leave to sit again.

**The Chair:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that the committee rise and that the Chair report that the committee has agreed to certain resolutions and ask for leave to sit again. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — That's carried.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

### FIRST AND SECOND READING OF RESOLUTIONS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Chair of committees.

**Mr. Hart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Finance has agreed to certain resolutions, has instructed me to report the same, and ask for leave to sit again.

**The Speaker:** — When shall the resolutions be read a first and second time? I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that resolutions be now read the first and second time.

**The Speaker:** — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel:** — First and second reading of the resolutions.

**The Speaker:** — When shall the committee sit again?

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Later this day, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Later this day. I recognize the Minister of Finance.

### APPROPRIATION BILL

#### Bill No. 87 — *The Appropriation Act, 2012 (No. 2)*

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, by leave of the Assembly, I move that Bill No. 87, *The Appropriation Act, 2012 (No. 2)* be now introduced and read the first time.

**The Speaker:** — The Minister of Finance has moved that Bill No. 87, *The Appropriation Act, 2012 (No. 2)* be now introduced and read for the first time. Is leave of the Assembly granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried. 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? I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, by leave of the Assembly and under rule 72(2), I move that the bill be now read a second and third time.

**The Speaker:** — Is leave of the Assembly granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried. It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 87, *The Appropriation Act, 2012 (No. 2)* be now read a second and third time. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

**The Speaker:** — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel:** — Second and third reading of this bill.

**The Speaker:** — Her Honour is here for Royal Assent. Please all rise.

### ROYAL ASSENT

[At 14:40 Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor entered the Chamber, took her seat upon the throne, and gave Royal Assent to the following bills.]

**Her Honour:** — Pray be seated.

**The Speaker:** — May it please Your Honour, this Legislative Assembly at its present session has passed a bill which in the name of the Assembly I present to Your Honour and to which bill I respectfully request Your Honour's assent.

**Her Honour:** — In Her Majesty's name, I assent to this bill.

**Clerk:** — Your Honour, the name of the bill is as follows:

Bill No. 66 - *The Saskatchewan Advantage Grant for Education Savings (SAGES) Act*

**Her Honour:** — And now I assent to this bill, excuse me. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — May it please Your Honour, this Legislative Assembly has voted the supplies required to enable the government to defray the expenses of the public service.

In the name of the Assembly, I present to Your Honour:

Bill No. 87 - *The Appropriation Act, 2012 (No. 2)*

to which bill I respectfully request Your Honour's assent.

**Her Honour:** — In Her Majesty's name, I thank the Legislative Assembly, accept their benevolence, and assent to this bill.

[Her Honour retired from the Chamber at 14:42.]

## SECOND READINGS

### Bill No. 85 — *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to give second reading to Bill 85, *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*. As you know, on May 2nd, 2012, we issued a call for submissions in response to a consultation paper on renewal of labour legislation in the province. The Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety received over 3,800 submissions from stakeholders across the province. Consultations played an integral role in the development of the new legislation by giving stakeholders a voice in the process. And those consultations will continue. We will shortly be sending letters to stakeholders asking them to share their opinions and concerns about our legislation. Our goal is to determine if there are any unintended consequences. We also invite the public to contact us and provide us their comments on the bill.

I wish to thank each individual and organization in the province who took the time to provide feedback on this pivotal piece of legislation. Their voices were heard, and we will continue to listen. In particular I wish to commend each member of the minister's advisory committee for their commitment and dedication. The members of the committee are: Steve McLellan, Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce; Larry Hubich Saskatchewan Federation of Labour; His Worship Michael Fougere, Saskatchewan Construction Association, who's now since resigned; Tom Graham, Canadian Union of Public Employees; Lee Knafelc, Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan; Bob Bymoen, Saskatchewan Government Employees' Union; Bernie Young, Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations; Kelly Miner, Saskatchewan Union of Nurses; Gary Mearns, Federated Co-operatives Ltd.; Murray Wall, Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation; Ken Ricketts, Agricultural Manufacturers of Canada; Wendy Sol, Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union; Alan Thomarat, Canadian Home Builders' Association; Terry Parker, Saskatchewan Provincial Building and Construction Trades Council; Karen Low, Merit Contractors Association; Chuck Rudder, Saskatchewan Provincial Building & Construction Trades Council; Darren McKee, Saskatchewan School Boards Association; Hugh Wagner, Grain Services Union; and finally, Greg Trew, Claymore Consulting. These members and their

insight were invaluable in the creation of this legislation.

[14:45]

*The Saskatchewan Employment Act* provides greater clarity and consistency than the 12 pieces of legislation it is replacing. Reading any one of these Acts would invariably make reference to one if not several of the others. Consolidating them into one Act allows for greater ease of use and greater consistency.

The new consolidated Act will improve Saskatchewan's labour laws to better protect workers, make Saskatchewan a better place to live and raise a family, and to increase accountability. The new Act will provide greater protection for Saskatchewan's workers through changes such as the introduction of summary offence tickets which will allow occupational health officers the ability to issue financial penalties for non-compliance with health and safety laws. It also increases the fines for a violation up to \$500,000 for an individual and up to \$1.5 million for an organization.

There are provisions that deal with the designation of a prime contractor, which will ensure that on some construction sites with multiple contractors one contractor has overall responsibility for the entire construction site. We believe that these actions will help to bring our injury rate down and provide greater protection to the workers who drive our economy.

*The Saskatchewan Employment Act* will make Saskatchewan a better place to live and raise a family through changes such as the indexation of the minimum wage, which ensure that low-income earners get to share in the growth of our economy.

The creation of two additional unpaid leaves, one for organ donation and one for leave to attend a citizenship ceremony, reflect the changes occurring in Saskatchewan workplaces. Reducing the qualifying time for other leaves such as maternity leaves and adoption leaves from 20 weeks to 13 weeks also helps make Saskatchewan's labour legislation more family-friendly.

We are creating flexibility by allowing for the provision of four 10-hour shifts while maintaining the 40-hour work week. Both Alberta and British Columbia currently allow for 12-hour shifts.

The Act will also increase accountability, with unions being required to provide audited financial statements and the results of votes to their members. Union members deserve to see what their union dues are being used for.

We are clarifying who will be considered management to ensure that people who conduct supervisory duties are not included in the same bargaining unit as the people that they supervise.

We are also removing the legislative authority for unions to fine members, which is consistent with other Canadian jurisdictions.

*The Saskatchewan Employment Act* also contains . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — . . . Common sense changes such as

allowing for a decertification of a union that has been inactive for three years and removing from legislation the ability for the ministry to grant a special permit for people with disabilities to be paid a lower wage.

The Act also stipulates that no two people can be paid a different wage on any prohibited ground found in *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code*. There is a common sense approach to ensure that our legislation is always consistent and up to date with *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code*.

I should note that *The Public Service Essential Services Act* is not included in the new legislation. Our government remains committed to the principle of protecting essential public services, like health care and highway safety, in the event of a strike. We will await the direction of the court before deciding on our next steps in this regard. Once we have clear direction, we will proceed through an amendment to include essential services in *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*.

In summary the new *Saskatchewan Employment Act* clearly defines the rights and responsibilities of employees, employers, and unions. It improves Saskatchewan labour laws to better protect workers. It makes Saskatchewan a better place to live and raise a family, and it increases accountability. The new employment Act will help our province continue to grow and ensure that everyone benefits from that growth.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of Bill 85, *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — The Minister of Advanced Education has moved second reading of Bill No. 85, *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion? I recognize the member for Athabasca.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to stand to respond to the introduction of this particular bill, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the opposition. I think what's really important, Mr. Speaker, is that this bill certainly is a bill that is going to require a lot of study. It is going to require a lot of time to dissect and digest what the bill is all about.

People in Saskatchewan should know that this is a fairly hefty package in terms of information, and obviously one of the things that we want to do within the opposition is to really go out and consult with the different groups and talk to them about what part of the bill, what part of the Act that they have any concerns with or that they want to see some enhancements on, Mr. Speaker. That's the purpose of the consultation that we in the New Democratic caucus always speak about and always encourage the government to do.

Before I get into my brief comments about this particular bill, Mr. Speaker, I think what's really important is I want to commend one of my colleagues, a dear friend of mine, the member from Saskatoon Centre. It was absolutely amazing, Mr. Speaker, that when we did travel throughout Saskatchewan, on the few occasions that I went to some of the public hearings on this particular bill, on this matter, that it was absolutely phenomenal in terms of the many people and organizations that showed up. And one particular meeting that I did attend was in Saskatoon. And there was the member from Saskatoon Centre,

organized and sitting with a number of working people and really, really facilitating a great amount of discussion and valuing some of the opinions that people had in that audience.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I know that the member from Saskatoon Centre trotted throughout the entire province. I think Swift Current was one particular community, Yorkton, La Ronge. The list kind of went on and on as to the number of communities that he did attend. And it's absolutely amazing, Mr. Speaker, to see that kind of commitment. And the minister wouldn't do it. The minister wouldn't do the consultation that was necessary on this particular bill.

But certainly I want to point out that the NDP caucus did. Why is it important that he did reach out and consult with the different groups and allowed the people to come forward to express their opinion on this bill, Mr. Speaker? Because it's important for us to have labour peace. It's important for us to have labour involvement, and it's important for us, as an opposition to make sure that we have the due respect to at least consult with the impacted or affected groups on any legislation that they're involved with or may be part of.

So I think what's really important is the first step, Mr. Speaker, was to go out and consult with the groups that this bill impacts. That minister in that particular government didn't undertake any of those measures but the member from Saskatoon Centre, who I commend profoundly today for making that time and taking the effort or making the effort to leave the comforts of his home on a late evening to go travel somewhere to hear some of the concerns from not just the public, but certainly from some of the impacted groups associated with this bill. I think that as long as you continue to do that, to show people the due process and to afford them the respect to at least consult with them, I think that goes a long ways with many, many of the people out there that were worried about this particular bill and were concerned about what this government might do.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think what's really important as well is that we've seen a cross-section of people from Saskatchewan attend these public hearings. And these public hearings, as I mentioned, were very well run. There was a good sound system. There was a good process to Chair the meeting. And as I mentioned, there was a number of meetings and a number of Saskatchewan centres, and at every single meeting, the member from Saskatoon Centre was there to work with the people and to hear their concerns. And I think that is very, very indicative of his commitment to this file and certainly his role as critic to this government and this particular bill.

I think it's important that if you are going to speak to an impacted or affected group, at the very least have the courtesy to consult with them and consult with the Saskatchewan public to get this thing right. And, Mr. Speaker, the one point that I would want to raise on this file when it came to leadership, when it came to community consultation, when it came to taking the time and making the extra effort to go out and hear people and to consult with the people and learn from people as well and to also educate his own caucus, Mr. Speaker, there is nobody else in this Assembly that can give credit to that particular title as a champion of that process as my colleague and friend from Saskatoon Centre. Because, Mr. Speaker, this is a really, really important part of what the government is trying



to do, a really, really important part of what the opposition wants to do and to dissect this bill thoroughly.

And the first order of business that we always speak about is to ensure that the consultation happened. And no question from our perspective as the official opposition, the lead person in this file is the member from Saskatoon Centre. And he served his caucus and this cause very, very well. So, Mr. Speaker, I think we should afford our member a good round of applause for his great work because it's something that we always want to see happen and something that we want to encourage.

With that being said, Mr. Speaker, there's no question that we will seek his leadership as we go down the process of dealing with this particular bill. It's going to take some time to dissect all the information. It's a fairly hefty bill. And that's what we're worried about, as we've heard in some of these hearings that there's a lot of points that we want to look at. There's a lot of issues that we want to raise. I notice the minister today in QP, or question period, really was just trying to trivialize some of the concerns we had and to try and mock some of the issues of a work week.

What's happening, Mr. Speaker, is quite frankly this is a labour bill that has been developed over a number of years. It's over 100 years of development, and I think the Sask Party took something like 90 days. The Sask Party took something like 90 days to go through the process and try and find some advice from their own sources, Mr. Speaker. There was no public participation as I mentioned. And that is critically another flaw on how the Sask Party has dealt with the unions and the organized labour people in the province is that they have quite frankly not taken the effort and the time — 90 days to revisit and revise 100 years of labour development, Mr. Speaker. It's really a sham. And that whole process that the Saskatchewan Party undertook is quite frankly very disrespectful to the many, many people that have worked for many, many years in trying to strengthen the labour movement and make it an integral part of a successful economy.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we think that because it's something that people didn't vote for because nobody out there in the province told the Saskatchewan Party to go after the unions or told them to go after essential services, to do all these other things, and now we see this particular Act put in place. And again, it's not something that they put out there in their platform because, Mr. Speaker, people out there know that the Saskatchewan Party nowadays is full of surprises, you know. Now we're seeing a deficit, and now we're seeing debt being piled onto Saskatchewan people. We're seeing the economy start to falter, Mr. Speaker. And it's not something that the Saskatchewan New Democratic Party want, and we certainly don't want to see a war happen with our organized unions and working people and the middle class people that built this province and certainly continue building the economy and building their respective communities overall.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think the other issue I want to raise on this particular bill is because it's so big, because of the size of the bill, I think what they may have taken is taken a page from the Harper Conservatives out of Ottawa by making a bill so big and so complex that they're hoping to do some changes in some Act or some rule or regulation that would be counterproductive and

would not strike a proper balance between our economy and certainly our workers. And that's one of the reasons why we need to take the time. And I think the unions as well, Mr. Speaker, are going to take the time.

[15:00]

Here we are two or three weeks before Christmas and only a couple of days left in the Assembly, and the minister and the government unveil this at this time. And it's by design, Mr. Speaker. It is by design that the last two days of this fall sitting, where we have today and tomorrow left, that they unveil this massive bill that impacts and involves the organized labour of the province.

Now the organized labour folks are pretty sharp folks. They worked all these years, and they are very, very careful on how they approach this particular government. And one of the reasons I think why that the Saskatchewan Party's done this is they know that Saskatchewan people are busy shopping. It's the Christmas season. You know people are busy. They're not paying attention to what this government is doing. And as they unveil some of these bills and some of the rules and regulations that might be hiding in these bills, it is our job as an opposition to go through that and to find weaknesses and find problems that might be created by the Saskatchewan Party to upset that balance between building a solid economy and making sure we engage our organized people as much as we can and to the extent we can and should.

So on that point, Mr. Speaker, it's important that we point out to people, we know why this time frame and at this juncture of the legislative timetable that the Saskatchewan Party brought this forward with two sitting days left in the Assembly, Mr. Speaker. And we also know that the auditor came out several days ago, so it doesn't give the opposition a lot of time to go after the Saskatchewan Party because obviously the information is just flowing. And that's why it's important from our perspective, as described by our opposition critic, is that we must as an opposition caucus take the time to look through the bills, take the time to look through the procedures, take the time to look at the rules and regulation, consult with people on our own, sit down with the organized labour leaders and talking about a number of issues and anything that they see as red flags.

And that I think is a very important part of the leadership provided by the member from Saskatoon Centre to his own caucus. And his message has been very clear. His message has been very clear to all of us. Let us see what is in the bill to ensure that we know, we all know what it contains. And secondly is to take the time to consult with different groups of people that are impacted so we know how they feel about this particular bill, and keep a very, very close eye on the member or the Minister of Labour and the Saskatchewan Party government because the trust, as far as organized labour is concerned, is simply not there when it comes to this government's track record, Mr. Speaker. They have in a sense created much more hardship than people in Saskatchewan know towards organized labour, Mr. Speaker.

So I think it's important that we, as an opposition caucus, since we're ready to recognize the leadership of the member from Saskatoon Centre, that we also take the advice accordingly and

really watch carefully how the bill unfolds, to understand the bill thoroughly enough and to make sure there's nothing hidden in the rules or regulations and to be wary of his argument saying that the devil's in the details. Be careful how we proceed with this. We need to be very, very thorough in looking at this particular bill because if it turns out that it's hurting the middle class people, the middle class working people that could be hard hit by this particular bill, then we need to know that.

We need to absolutely be sure before the opposition goes gunning for the government on some of the potential changes that might hurt middle class working people, Mr. Speaker. Changing to four 10-hour shifts instead of five 8-hour shifts, what impact does that have on things like childcare? Looking at changing to an overtime bank instead of getting overtime pay, how is the response on that particular issue? These are some of the things that may not work for a lot of employees or workers.

And this is the important perspective that we take, Mr. Speaker, as the opposition, is that we ensure, we ensure that we consult with these groups to see if there is any glaring omissions or any burning problems that the bill may present to any particular part of our working economy or working people. And this is something that we ought to take the time to do, as the message was delivered by the opposition labour critic.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what you want to do in this? When we talk about the smart work that the NDP are trying to build, quite clearly I think we recognize the value of environmental protection. We recognize the value of the Crown protection. We recognize the importance of attracting investment, Mr. Speaker. We think that's something that's obviously got to be very, very integral to any successful economy. But we also know that organized labour and having a good labour force is also just as important as all the other aspects of our smart growth strategy under the NDP banner.

And that smart growth plan really looks and focuses on the middle class people to ensure that we don't put any impediments in front of them, and this labour bill may do so. We don't know. We're going to find that out as time goes on because quite frankly the amount of time that they have allowed us to look at this particular bill is very constrained. The last two days, the last two sitting days of a session. We get it today which leaves us with one more question period left.

And, Mr. Speaker, the 90 days that they took to go around and do some of their consultations that they speak about, Mr. Speaker, to deal with 100 years of labour legislation, all these issues, Mr. Speaker, just quite frankly point to us that there was no consultation. There was no respect. And simply the Saskatchewan Party is going to continue their particular attack on the working people's values.

And they may try and hide some of those attacks within this bill, and we're going to work very hard to uncover them. And when we uncover them, Mr. Speaker, this opposition, being led by this Labour critic from Saskatoon Centre, is going to be well prepared to be able to say, not only are we aware of these problems in the bill but we consulted, and here's what working people have to say on these changes. And then we're going to of course formulate a plan, strategy and certainly attack the government on some of the problems that they may be creating

with this particular bill.

Now, Mr. Speaker, some of the things that's important to note is that when you look at labour in general, the track record I spoke about earlier that the Sask Party has with the labour people is very, very poor, very poor. You look at the number of things that they've done: essential services which has now been struck down by the courts saying that this Saskatchewan Party had no right to do that. And now they're going to continue. Now they're going to fight the courts, the Saskatchewan Party is. And how much is that going to cost? How much is the cost going to be? And then you look at the other aspect, Mr. Speaker, the fact that they have decimated some of our civil servant numbers and that there's nobody speaking up for the people that have lost their jobs.

So, Mr. Speaker, you look at all these actions and activities by the Saskatchewan Party, and they're hoping, they're hoping that the bill itself may come across as being moderate, Mr. Speaker. We within the NDP simply don't trust the Sask Party. And that's why it's important, as our critic pointed out, and his direct instructions to his entire caucus is take the time to understand the bill, consult with some of the impacted and the changes that may have been negative or positive with different groups out there, and take the three or four months that it takes to really understand the bill. And I think all our members of the caucus have agreed to do that, which is something really, really important for the Saskatchewan Party caucus to follow the leadership of our particular critic because there's some very, very good advice on that front.

That being said, Mr. Speaker, we need to also point out that the organized labour groups, the people that have really helped over the years to not only control the deficit in the early years when we were paying something like \$900 million a year in interest alone, the organized labour groups, the people that had worked for the government, that provided services, they held the line many, many times on their own needs, whether it'll be a financial request or it may have been other requests. They simply understood that Saskatchewan was in dire straits financially and they had to show co-operation. They had to show co-operation, and they had to show sacrifice, Mr. Speaker, and they absolutely did.

Now what happens is after all those years, as things were getting better and the Sask Party took over, they turn around and they not only disregarded some of that commitment and dedication and sacrifice by our organized workers, Mr. Speaker. They turn around and fired a lot of those workers as a thanks back to them. And, Mr. Speaker, that's a crying shame.

And that's why people within the organized labour movement simply don't trust the Saskatchewan Party. It's not just about essential services that has been struck down by the court. It's about their brothers and sisters that have been fired by this government. It's about their brothers and sisters that have been totally disregarded. And now, Mr. Speaker, they have this bill that they've touted is going to be anti-union and yet we haven't even . . .

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

**Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to ask leave to introduce a guest.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tochor):** — The Leader of the Opposition has asked for leave to introduce guests. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tochor):** — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We're pleased this afternoon to have Mr. Gay Patrick join us. And Mr. Patrick is a long-time person with interest in the public affairs of this province, but especially in the development of mining policy and taxation policy over many decades. And we know that the advice that he provided as it relates to the potash industry has been part of the success of our province. So I would ask all members to greet Mr. Patrick and acknowledge his presence here today. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tochor):** — I recognize the Minister of the Economy.

**Hon. Mr. Boyd:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. With leave for the introduction of guests.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tochor):** — The Minister of the Economy has asked for leave for introduction of guests. Is it the pleasure of this Assembly?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Hon. Mr. Boyd:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I would like to join with the member, the Leader of the Opposition opposite, to as well welcome Gay Patrick to the Legislative Assembly. I've got to know Gay very well over the years. He ably and very capably represents the potash industry to the people of Saskatchewan, to the Government of Saskatchewan, and to everyone in the province. He has played an instrumental role in making sure that the interests of the potash industry are well known to the people of Saskatchewan. And we would want to, on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan, welcome him here to his Legislative Assembly.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tochor):** — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill No. 85 — *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* (continued)

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I think what's really important, as I was speaking about earlier, is the fact that the labour movement and the people that, the civil servants that worked for many, many years over that period that Saskatchewan was having great difficulty

financially, that we need to recognize their contribution. And we need to recognize the fact that they've held the line on many of the things that their membership base wanted.

And in the process of undertaking all that sacrifice and all that time, that sometimes membership can become impatient with the process. And, Mr. Speaker, what we've found, that there was great leadership provided at the membership level, but also the leaders that they selected. I think a lot of the leaders realized what was at stake when Saskatchewan was having such a financial difficulty. And they've certainly done their part.

So the point I want to make is that a lot of the working people in our province, the middle-class, working men and women that are part of a union, the organized labour folks, the people that provide services, whether it's SGEU [Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union], Mr. Speaker, or the Public Service Alliance of Canada, all these different organizations, Mr. Speaker, have people that have worked to provide services to the many, many people in our province and we should never, ever, ever forget their contribution, nor should we ever, ever forget their sacrifice, Mr. Speaker. At the time when Saskatchewan needed them, they certainly provided and proved their value and provided leadership.

And I think that's something that we want to add, Mr. Speaker, as a point that after the Saskatchewan Party came into power, they turned around and totally disregarded our organized labour folks simply for the fact that they thought it was politically expedient to do so. And in a heartbeat they threw many of our union brothers and sisters under the bus. And that's one of the reasons why they simply don't trust the Saskatchewan Party because of essential services law they put in place, the fact that they fired many of their brothers and sisters. And now this labour bill comes along, and, Mr. Speaker, we have to find out exactly what kind of detail that the Saskatchewan Party might try and hide in this particular bill. And the advice that we got from our critic was to go through it, be thorough, and make sure that you consult with people.

[15:15]

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to go back quickly to the word consult, because consult is really, really a word that a lot of organizations and people use in a negative way. And I noticed that the Government of Saskatchewan like to say consult. And, Mr. Speaker, consult does not necessarily mean that the people that you're consulting with agree to what you're doing. So that's the critical point that I would make, is that I could simply say to a number of my colleagues, I consulted with them on this issue, and not say anything. And the impression I would give people is that I consulted with them and they all are in agreement. There's a significant difference between what we call a consultation and the whole premise of agreeing to the recommendations behind that consultation. And on both fronts the Saskatchewan party has failed miserably.

Now, Mr. Speaker, some of the importance that the pillars, if you will, the pillars of our discussion with organized labour, when we condemn this government for their non-consultation, we turn around, we've done our own public consultation. And when you have those public consultations, there's a number of guiding principles that ought to be present in all the MLAs that

are attending these meetings when they sit down with folks. And again, as directed and instructed by our critic, the MLAs in the Saskatchewan New Democratic caucus really ensured that they were there with a number of principles in mind.

One such principle is the importance of public consultation. We fundamentally believe in that process, Mr. Speaker. The second one is ensuring a balanced working environment. The third one was the danger of losing strong workplace legislation. Fourth one was positive changes that'll work for working people. Fifth one was taking care of the most vulnerable workers. Number six was improving unions and collective bargaining rights. And finally, which is really important to all the people of Saskatchewan, is strengthening the economy to workplace safety and training.

Now, Mr. Speaker, those seven values or seven pillars or seven principles are really, really essential in anything that we had in our hearts and minds when we approached the organized labour groups and their leaders, Mr. Speaker. So again I take my hat off to the member from Saskatoon Centre. He's done a tremendous job on behalf of the opposition caucus and going out to nine communities, I believe, nine centres where they had over 700 people show up. And that's very, very impressive, Mr. Speaker. And I think his effort to consult with groups and people certainly were noticed. And from my perspective as the Deputy Leader of the current opposition caucus, NDP caucus, I was very, very proud of the member from Saskatoon Centre on his dedication, his commitment to making sure we got this right.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to commend him on that and to point out that there is some issues that we heard of and that we learned of during those very, very important public consultation discussions.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as I pointed out, when you see a government meddling in the middle-class sector, meddling in some of the organized labour groups, meddling in how the courts perceive as none of their particular business on some fronts like the essential services, then you begin to wonder, what is the agenda of the Saskatchewan Party? And that is, when it comes to our organized labour groups that's the big question mark. What is their agenda? So far they've struck out on the essential services bill. The court said, you guys don't have things figured out; we're striking that Act out completely. And now these guys want to go to the Supreme Court of Canada to fight against the working people. And that's a crying shame. And above all else it's a waste of public resources — taxpayers' dollars — simply to push their ideology that seems to trump common sense every time the Saskatchewan Party undertakes any initiative. And, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan are getting awfully tired, and tired fast of some of the antics of the Sask Party. So, Mr. Speaker, it is some of these things that are really, really important that I continue to point out.

And groups and organizations that are out there, whether it's Bill 5 or whether it's the malicious hiring, I mean firing, of many of these people that were hired for a very good purpose and for a very good cause and with great commitment to their job, these guys turn around and fired a whole whack of civil servants, Mr. Speaker. A whole whack of civil servants, and at a great cost to the province of Saskatchewan. And that was the

second strike, Mr. Speaker, the second strike against the working people.

And now they're here for the third fight, which is this particular bill. But as we've indicated, it's important that we take the time to understand the bill to see where the Saskatchewan Party's going and to point out to people, that is why organized labour and the working men and women, the middle-class men and women of this province, simply don't trust the Saskatchewan Party because they're meddling in some of their workplace issues. They're meddling in some of the other matters that would create some uncomfortableness by many of our working men and women.

And, Mr. Speaker, that's not the role of government. They didn't run on that particular aspect in the last election. They shouldn't be meddling in some of this particular business. They should be really pushing to ensure we have a balanced approach towards the economic building of our province to make sure we have social progress. As our former premier used to say, in order for us to justify the economic success to our people is to make sure that everybody shares in that benefit, shares in the economy, and shares in the wealth of our province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think you look at the whole . . . [inaudible] . . . of 90 days. Ninety days is what the Saskatchewan Party undertook to review, to review what the labour Act was all about. Ninety days to review the legislation that took over 100 years to develop. And that's exactly the style of the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker, is they take 90 days, 90 days to look at this labour legislation to see what they can do to try and meddle once again.

So what we had to do as opposition is to see how they may have strategically hidden a rule or regulation somewhere within this massive bill that really counters what the organized labour and the public service people would not want to see happen in a negative way. And that's why it's important, Mr. Speaker, that we follow up and follow through with some very good, very good consultation, but above all else take the time to understand this bill very, very clearly.

Now as I indicated, some of the other bills and some of the other discussion I had is that obviously you look at what's in the bill and what's not in the bill. That's really, really important. Like today, the minister talked about the choice people have is they can have a ten-hour, four-day week or a five-day, eight-hour week. Well it's not as simple as that, Mr. Speaker. He wants to talk about that particular issue. It's not as simple as that. There are other complicating issues, and these issues are being hidden in the rules and regulations of some of the Acts that are part of this bill.

So it's all in there, and it's all massive. And what we have to do is begin to take it apart, as I know that the organized labour leaders are doing now. They'll take this apart. They'll look for things, and I'm sure they'll find ways that the Saskatchewan Party's trying to fool organized labour and to try and sneak one in. And this is the important part and important advice that we got from our critic is to make sure we take the time to understand this bill.

So what's not in the bill, Mr. Speaker, is just as important as

what's in the bill. And that's why when we get up and speak at these bills after they've been introduced, we ask the public, we ask the public, please join us. And it's very easy to access the information on this bill through the website, very easy. You can contact your opposition MLA or you can contact the critic himself. It's very easy for many of the public members to go through the bill to see what the Saskatchewan Party is trying to do to really, really work at the expense of some of our working men and women, the people that serve our public. And that's something that I think everyone should actually assume some responsibility for, by at least understanding what the bill is all about.

So once you reach out and you encourage people to participate in dissecting the bill, obviously we want their information as well. As the case with every other bill, having information come to us as opposition is really, really important. And we will raise these concerns and we will fight and we will speak up for those people that have been downtrodden over time. And we'll speak for those folks that are afraid to speak back to this particular government. And we will speak up for those folks that have had a great injustice done to them, to ensure that Saskatchewan continues to remain a province where people can speak up and speak out against their government, in case their government does things that will hurt or harm them or their families.

And, Mr. Speaker, that's the role of the opposition. And we relish that role. We relish that role to be able to go after the Sask Party when they do things that hurt any specific sector of our province, or go after any group of our province, Mr. Speaker. That's not the role of government. They shouldn't be doing that. And we'll stand up for those organizations that might want to try and do that.

So, Mr. Speaker, again we would really encourage people to look at the bill. Look at the details, be very, very wary of what they might try and sneak through this particular omnibus bill. And there's 186 pages, as the critic said. And that's a lot of pages, so we have to go through this whole document page by page by page.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's important that we encourage people to do that. It's important we take our critic's advice. It's important we do, at first blush, what we think is problematic with the bill. And, Mr. Speaker, given the history of the Saskatchewan Party on essential services, on firing hundreds of civil servants, Mr. Speaker, and now this particular bill, is simply, the trust is not there whatsoever. The trust is not there in any way, shape, or form that the Saskatchewan Party would really protect the interests of the public service of this province. And, Mr. Speaker, it's something that they have learned from and something that they're going to continue fighting, fighting back with this particular government on. And, Mr. Speaker, they can certainly count on the opposition, the part of that team that fights against the Saskatchewan Party any day of the week.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think what's really important is that we have our entire caucus that is going to look at this bill. We have the entire caucus that are going to participate in this bill. We would encourage other groups and organizations that are out there, but the biggest and the greatest ally, Mr. Speaker, is the actual public service themselves.

We would encourage them to participate in our discussions and to give us some advice as well, and to not sit back and hope that the Sask Party does anything bad, but to really take a proactive position and to come to the Assembly, to take a proactive position to come and educate the MLAs, and to take a proactive position to making sure that the public understands what kind of hidden agenda that the Sask Party may have when it comes to this particular bill. Because rest assured, there are hidden things within rules and regulations that we will uncover, that people of Saskatchewan, I think, would be quite surprised that this has happened.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have a bit more time to look at the bill. The unfortunate part of how the Saskatchewan Party does business, Mr. Speaker — and we kind of laugh about this in opposition — a good example, one of the biggest bills that they want to put as their flagship bills, they introduced it a day before the session ends in the fall. One day we have to look at this bill.

So our critic, in his wise advice to us all, his very wise counsel saying, even though it's only a day before the session ends, we don't jump to conclusions. He simply said, let us look through the bill itself. Let's make sure we get this right. Be calm. Be steady. Be rational. Be patient. That's the advice of our critic, Mr. Speaker. But some of us in the caucus here just absolutely, we laugh at the way that the Saskatchewan Party does their business. One day left before the end of the session, and they bring out a big 186-page labour reform bill. And, Mr. Speaker, we sit here and say, isn't that interesting. What are they hiding?

So that's one of the things that we want to do, Mr. Speaker, is take the time, is take the time to go through that bill. And we will, we will take the time to go through that bill, Mr. Speaker, because their attack on the civil servants has been relentless. We've seen evidence of that over the last five years. And I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, if we don't believe. We don't believe for one second that the Saskatchewan Party has got the public service people's interests at heart, Mr. Speaker, not at all. So the trust isn't there and, Mr. Speaker, the confidence is not there from our opposition that the Saskatchewan Party knows what they're doing when they deal with our working men and women of our great province.

[15:30]

Now, Mr. Speaker, under the NDP smart growth plan, as I've indicated time and time again, there are three principles. To ensure that we protect the environment, and that's really, really important. To continue embracing the role of corporations, of companies, of businesses small and large who come and help us build the economy. That part goes without saying; that's always been part of the NDP plan and platform. And that's why we were successful in building the economy before we lost the election in 2007.

But the third component is to ensure that we have a highly organized, highly skilled, and highly paid civil service. That's what's really important — the workforce. Because if you don't do the three principles, or the three pillars, Mr. Speaker, then you're going to weaken the economy somehow.

And there's no question in our mind that if you look next door

to Alberta, that there are people still being called to Alberta to work at jobs where the money is good. And how is Saskatchewan going to compete, the Saskatchewan public service individual going to compete to stay here in Saskatchewan and to work here when they can get twice the pay in Alberta?

And that is a fundamental issue, I think is really important to the public out there, is that you've got to be careful. You've got to be careful how you respond and respect the public servants of Saskatchewan. Because if you continue going to war with them and isolate them, you're going to see less and less of their support and commitment and numbers in our province. And in the long run, nobody wants to see that and nobody wants to see that particular pain occur.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think one of the things that's important as well is that the ongoing process from here, the government talks about consultation. This is after the fact. They didn't consult before. And what really, really upset us here on this side, and I know that the critic from our caucus, the member from Saskatoon Centre, was very upset when he asked the minister during committee, what is the cost attached to some of this process that you have undertaken? And the minister said, it's not going to cost us anything. It's not going to cost us anything. Not a thing, was the word. And then here today, or a couple of days ago in the Assembly, he said, oh, it's going to cost us over a half a million.

Now where did that come from, Mr. Speaker? Where did half a million dollars come from? And why would he say in committee there was no cost at one time, then turn around and six months later there's a half a million dollar cost to that? Well you know what I think happened, Mr. Speaker, is that he was on a committee and he wanted to show the public of Saskatchewan that this wasn't going to cost no money. So he got credit from the Saskatchewan people on that front. And then he turns around six months later saying, well it's a half a million dollars.

And what I think the cost is intended to do is to be viewed by the Saskatchewan taxpayer as what the public service cost us to deal with their issue. Again it's another subtle attack on the public servants and, Mr. Speaker, that is absolutely not fair.

So one thing that's really important, Mr. Speaker, is that the minister, if he doesn't know what this process is going to cost, and then six months later he comes in at — what is it? — half a million more than he expected, then how could we have confidence that he knows what he's doing on this particular file? And how could we have confidence that he's not trying to sneak a few rules and regulations that will upset the balance between a good working and healthy environment for many of our men and women of our province and our young people, Mr. Speaker?

And that's one of the reasons why we simply don't trust the Saskatchewan Party to get this file right. And we never will trust the Saskatchewan Party to try and figure how you ensure labour peace and to ensure that the balance is maintained for the good of all Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker. These guys have failed miserably on it, and we'll never trust them. And, Mr. Speaker, a lot of other groups of people will never trust them as well.

So I think it's important that we continue to send that message to motivate the public servant people to ensure that they're part of the process and look through this bill diligently, to be very vigil in some of the work that they're doing and to share that information with the opposition. Share the information with us because there's so much information. It's a 186-page book. It's a huge bill. And, Mr. Speaker, we have to go through that bill with a fine-tooth comb.

And any bit of help, any bit of help from any of the groups out there that may have a song in their heart or may have a huge issue with this particular bill that they would be able come forward to us and share the information, and to a point where we'd even encourage them to come to the Assembly and visit us and share the information. And we would take the message to the people and to the press and to this particular government through question period and really hammer home some of the things that they are trying to do through some of their rules and regulations that would hurt people.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think northern Saskatchewan people in general, as you look at some of the communities that I represent, you know, there's many times in the morning when I wake up in Ile-a-la-Crosse. And I go and have coffee, get my granddaughter ready for school. I see the teachers drive by. And before that I see the Highways truck drive by as they're clearing the roads. And teachers often prepare for their daily classes with my grandchild, and you see the town maintenance crews clearing up the driveways as well, and you see the administrative team arriving at the town office.

Mr. Speaker, that's exactly my point. These are the men and women that make Saskatchewan so vibrant. These are the men and women that serve their public, that serve their people. And these are the men and women that really, really try to make a difference in all our communities. And, Mr. Speaker, I have a tremendous amount of respect because these guys are probably up at 5 in the morning, 6 in the morning, and they work very, very hard. I'm talking about people like the Highways workers.

And, Mr. Speaker, what the Saskatchewan Party done was they simply fired a whole bunch of civil servants, Mr. Speaker, and now they want to hire three more politicians. And wouldn't it be great, wouldn't it be great, Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . The Carrot River MLA is chirping from his seat again. This is the same guy that was bragging about the budget a couple of years being so great. It's probably the greatest budget in the universe. The only thing that's greater than the budget in the universe is the debt that that member and the rest of the members are going to leave the people of Saskatchewan, that it's almost embarrassing to say today that Saskatchewan's Sask Party's put Saskatchewan half a billion dollars in debt, according to the Provincial Auditor, this year alone. And they've added \$1 billion to the debt. So I don't know where the member from Carrot River's getting off chirping from his chair that this budget is balanced.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's important to note that I would highly recommend, I would highly recommend that the backbench get a backbone and start asking questions about this bill, that the backbench start getting involved with their government instead of being just patted on the forehead saying, just keep voting yay or nay. Don't ask any questions, and you'll be happy here for

the next four years. They got one year done, Mr. Speaker. You got three more years to sit there and get your head patted like good little MLAs. Don't ask any questions. Continue talking about a balanced budget, and don't go beyond that.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's a crying shame to see that kind of treatment to the backbench of the Saskatchewan Party because they've got three more years, three more years to sit there doing that. And three more years is . . . I don't know how many days that is. It's got to be at least 1,080 days, 1,080 days, they've got to sit there and they've got to be able to have their little head patted and to make sure they don't get upset, Mr. Speaker.

But I don't know about them, but when we were in government, the NDP backbenchers had a huge role. They spoke on every issue. They were well-informed. They were respected, Mr. Speaker. They were told exactly what was going to happen on the budget. And the caucus itself was given a total opportunity to argue with any budgets that we presented and to make sure that all their issues were heard.

Now all we see, Mr. Speaker, is a small cluster of conservatives in the front here that are basically running the show. The opposition backbench just continues to sit over there, and every now and then they have somebody chirp up, like the member from Carrot River saying, this is the best budget in the universe. And that's exactly, Mr. Speaker, the problem that they have over there is that their team is not strong because they have not advised nor involved nor respected their backbench. And you ask any of the backbenchers any details of this particular bill, I bet you 90 per cent of them wouldn't have a clue what's in this bill, Mr. Speaker, and how it's going to impact their constituents. And that's a crying shame, Mr. Speaker, because that's exactly what you should be doing here. You should be well-advised, well-informed instead of getting a song sheet and singing from that song sheet for the next four years.

Mr. Speaker, they've got to stand up because if you're going to do that for the next 1,080 days — go ahead and sit there — in the meantime, the people of Saskatchewan will suffer, and the people of your constituency will suffer. And working men and women in your constituency will continue to suffer — people that plow our roads, people that educate our kids, people that maintain our communities, people that provide health care coverage. The list grows and grows and grows as to how the public service people of Saskatchewan ought to be respected, Mr. Speaker. They ought to be consulted, and they ought to be an integral part of everyday thinking that this government does.

But, Mr. Speaker, instead they have gone to war with them. They've pushed through essential services ready to go all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada if they have to, according to the minister. And they have fired many people that have put years and years of service to this province, and they have sacrificed as I said at the outset. And these guys simply just fired them on the spot, Mr. Speaker.

So now they bring in this bill. Now they bring in this bill which half the backbench . . . And I'm sure the member from Carrot River hasn't even read the bill, you know, and then he chirps from his chair. And the problem is, Mr. Speaker, is that he will be given a note: these are the four or five lines you say on this bill.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would highly recommend that that member . . . the mistake that he made in saying this is the best budget in the universe. You know, amongst New Democratic circles here, Mr. Speaker, in this Assembly, we look at that statement, and we keep bringing it back up. Why, Mr. Speaker? Because he didn't know, he didn't know they were \$2 billion off their projection. He wasn't told. He wasn't told. So he got up and he said, this is the best budget in the universe. And then the people here and the media and people that knew what was going on said, hold it there, Mr. MLA from Carrot River. You guys are just a little off your mark on projection for potash, just a little on the outside, \$2 billion, you know.

And so my point is that I know the member from Carrot River is a pretty sharp guy. You know, he's . . . Well he's sharp, not pretty. But he's an intelligent guy, you know, and he knows whether he's right in his heart and mind or whether he's been not informed. And, Mr. Speaker, my point is he wasn't informed. So what he was told in a caucus meeting . . . Somebody probably came to the caucus meeting and said, all you guys here, all you backbench MLAs, here's the message, and you guys just keep saying that. You just cheerlead. Don't do anything else. And of course the member from Carrot River went along and said, this is the best budget in the universe, and a day later we find out they're \$2 billion, \$2 billion off their projected revenues from potash. Well how did he feel the next day, Mr. Speaker? I bet he was grumpy in his morning coffee. And yet we continue to hear him spout some odd number from somewhere, Mr. Speaker.

But you know, if I was an umpire and I'd seen this \$2 billion miss, I'd say, just a little outside. And then of course he'd say, well this is the best budget in the universe. If that's your best budget in the universe, my goodness, we're in for a tough three more years, Mr. Speaker.

Now they're getting better, Mr. Speaker. Now they're getting better. They're only half a billion dollars off this year. But hold it, hold it. They added \$1 billion in debt to the province, so it's one and a half billion. So it's not much of a difference from 2 billion to one and a half billion. So it's not a universal miss of projections; it's a stratosphere miss of a projection.

So I think what's really important for the member from Carrot River, the member from Carrot River, is you be very, very careful. Because don't come to Regina and don't sing from the song sheet because if that song sheet is wrong — which he has proven to be wrong at the time — then the member looks silly. And I know he's an intelligent guy. I know he's an intelligent guy. But don't come give any financial advice if you're not certain about that financial advice. Especially don't give it to the New Democrats because we know what the game plan is from his front bench. My advice to him: know the game plan, and in the future don't make bold predictions based on your enthusiasm. Get some facts, man. Get some facts. And the fact is your government was \$2 billion off its mark. This year they're one and a half billion dollars off their mark.

[15:45]

And, Mr. Speaker, what I think is really, really important is people out there don't have to take the NDP opposition's word for it. We've got a new bible, and it's called the Provincial

Auditor of Saskatchewan 2012 report. And this good book, this good book will certainly prove to the people of Carrot River and the MLA from Carrot River, the member from Carrot River exactly what they're doing wrong. Their projections, the magnitude of their miss on projections of two years ago and now this year is universal. Their budget is totally lost in space, Mr. Speaker. You know, it's lost in space. If I can do the analogy of, Mr. Speaker, of *Star Trek*, the debt that these guys have given our province is gone into warp drive, if the member from Carrot River can understand that. It's gone into warp drive. It's a new level now.

And I think they should've fired the minister from Kindersley, the member that talks about the economy. He's the one that was projecting \$2 billion in potash even though he was told no, Mr. Minister, it's not going to be this amount; it's going to be this amount. And I wonder how much he had to pay back the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan. Some of us say there was quite a bit of money, quite a bit of money.

So when we talk about economic building, we talk about financial competency. Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party is the last place we will get any advice from. And when it comes to labour development, respect for labour, labour peace, making sure that the economy has highly skilled workers that are paid fairly for their services, Mr. Speaker, the NDP will never take advice from the Saskatchewan Party, the right wing Saskatchewan Party because so far they have failed miserably, miserably on many, many fronts. And that's what's really important.

So I'd highly recommend to the member from Carrot River is please get your facts right because on this side of the House . . . Because you're, you know, you're not a bad guy. We'll give you a break on that front because you were given a song sheet to sing from. But in the future be very, very careful what kind of projections that you have.

So on that note, Mr. Speaker, on this particular bill, I think it's important that the advice that we afforded the member from Carrot River, we afford to ourselves as well: make sure of your facts. Make sure that you consult. Make sure that there isn't anything hidden in this particular bill. Make sure that you're not impacting the middle-class people. Make sure that this is good for the Saskatchewan economy. Make sure that you respect the working men and women that serve our community. Make sure that this is good overall for the finances of our province. Make sure that we understand the impact. Make sure that if there's an omission here, that we're aware of it. And make sure that you have a solid, well-informed opposition to keep that government's feet to the fire on any front they do, especially when it comes to the civil servants of our great province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. That is what's really, really important.

So I think it's important that we continue to encourage people to participate. Please advise us. The doors are open. The lines of communication are open. There's Internet. There's social media. There's telephone, and there's fax, if some people still use the fax machine. There's all kinds of avenues of communication. We would encourage you to use those avenues of communication and get us the information because, by golly, we're going to use that information to correct the

miscommunication coming out of the backbench of that particular government and the misinformation coming from the front bench.

So on that note, Mr. Speaker, we have a lot of information that we want to share. We want to go through all the documentation that was presented to us — 186 pages of information. We will go through it. And we'll continue seeking the advice and the leadership of my great and dear friend from Saskatoon Centre, the only guy, I might add, the only person I might add, that has done any credible work on this file, and that includes the Sask Party. And the NDP certainly will benefit from his leadership. So on that note, Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate on this particular bill.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Athabasca has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 85, *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — That's 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 Massey Place.

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure this afternoon after question period and some other adjourned debates and a few other things going on here in the House today — and a busy day in the legislature, Mr. Speaker, with the Christmas season here now that we're into December — having said all that, it's a pleasure this afternoon to enter into the discussion on Bill No. 69, *An Act respecting Information Services Corporation*.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when we look at different pieces of legislation that come before the House, there are a variety of types of bills that come forward. The range is fairly great, Mr. Speaker. In some circumstances, the types of bills that come forward are of a housekeeping nature. And these bills, Mr. Speaker, are part of the regular review that occurs within a ministry as officials within the ministry interact with the community, business, stakeholders, unions, a variety of groups, Mr. Speaker, receiving information and then doing regular reviews of the legislation to address things that have popped up through the normal course of action. Perhaps there's an aspect of a bill that is not as reflective as it needs to be to the current reality on a given topic. And in those situations, Mr. Speaker, it's appropriate that changes come forward so that we ensure that the bill — sometimes not always of a high-profile nature — but we need to ensure that the bills are contemporary, are



modern, and are appropriate for what Saskatchewan people need, whatever the case may be, whatever the ministry may be.

And we think, Mr. Speaker, when we look at these housekeeping types of bills, sometimes it is of a fairly minor nature and it's changing language so that there's consistency between the different Acts. Sometimes it's making it more gender neutral. As times have changed, so too has our approach to how we phrase legislation. And that is most certainly, Mr. Speaker, an appropriate change. Sometimes, Mr. Speaker, there's been a more significant change in one part of the laws of the land, which has a domino effect and therefore changes are needed in other pieces of legislation. So these types of bills, Mr. Speaker, sometimes are not that high profile, sometimes do not have a huge, huge bearing on the everyday lives of Saskatchewan people as they go about their business of working in businesses or working for an employer or raising a family and contributing to the community.

There are other types of bills, Mr. Speaker, which are more influential in the effect that they will have in people's lives. And sometimes the effect is immediate. It's a particular piece of legislation that affects the business of an individual. Perhaps it's really specific in a ministry and deserves great attention.

In other situations, Mr. Speaker, the changes that may be proposed in a piece of legislation might be more big picture and might affect the province on a big scale, which in turn over time or in a long period of time or short period of time will affect people's lives. And often this relates, Mr. Speaker, to the financial picture of the province, decisions that are made with respect to the role of the provincial government, decisions that are made with respect to the role of individuals, and decisions that are made with respect to, as we see in this instance with Bill No. 69, the privatization of Information Services Corporation.

So it's important, Mr. Speaker, that with whatever the type of legislation that we're looking at, whatever the type that is on the floor of the Legislative Assembly, it's important, Mr. Speaker, that we have a high level of scrutiny. It is important that we have a thorough debate. It's important that the committee process be as productive and as comprehensive as it needs to be so that the correct questions are asked. And it's important, Mr. Speaker, that we recognize that the decisions that we make through legislation do in fact have a bearing on the provincial books and have a bearing on the lives of people.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's with making those introductory comments, Mr. Speaker, that I want to talk about this particular piece of legislation, Bill No. 69, *The Information Services Corporation Act*, because I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that this is a very important piece of legislation. It's a piece of legislation that does have a bearing for the people in the province — first, Mr. Speaker, through the impact that it may have on the provincial books and how it ties into decisions that the government has been recently making, but also, Mr. Speaker, in how the piece of legislation could ultimately affect individuals as they go about their business of living here in the province, and whether that be from their own perspective of buying and purchasing homes, or whether that be as a business that may be operating, or whether it be a resource company doing work here in the province, Mr. Speaker.

It's important that we have an approach to the Information Services Corporation that does in fact speak to the best interests of the province, whether it's an individual living in any community or whether it's a business function in the community, whether it's a community organization or a group operating in the province. It's most certainly important that we get things right.

The issue, Mr. Speaker, of ISC [Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan] has been an interesting one based on the comments that the Sask Party has made, and in some circumstances, based on the comments that they haven't made, Mr. Speaker. This most certainly wasn't something that was talked about in the previous election, the privatization of Information Services Corporation. It wasn't something, Mr. Speaker, that the Sask Party discussed. It wasn't something that they campaigned on, the privatization of it. It wasn't something, Mr. Speaker, that was identified as a priority for the government. In fact, we've had some truly conflicting information come from members opposite with respect to their view on privatization, and with respect to their view on Crown corporations.

Now, Mr. Speaker, for many decades there has been a discussion that's occurred in the province, a discussion that's occurred in the broader community. It's occurred in businesses. It's occurred in coffee shops throughout the province, and it's occurred on the floor of this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, back when the carpet was red. And that has to do with, Mr. Speaker, with the role of Crown corporations within the province, and also when governments have decided to pursue a course of privatization. This is an issue that matters to Saskatchewan people in a very significant and real way.

And it comes down to, Mr. Speaker, a view of whether we view Crown corporations as having a productive and constructive role in the province and providing services to people in a way that is timely, a way that is effective, and a way that is affordable, there are some, Mr. Speaker, who believe that Crown corporations have an important role to play and that the role is one that provides benefits to a broad cross-section of the province. And it's through our work collectively as a province, through having strong corporations that exist within Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, that in many ways we're able to provide some good, tangible, real benefits to Saskatchewan people.

The other side of the coin, Mr. Speaker, are individuals who do not like Crown corporations, individuals who see them as an unnecessary intrusion into the lives of people and that in all circumstances — whether it makes good economic sense for people, whether there is a sound fiscal argument to be made — it's always an approach, Mr. Speaker, of privatization. It's always an approach, Mr. Speaker, of downplaying the role of Crown corporations, and what I would say in many circumstances, Mr. Speaker, is at the expense of Saskatchewan people who have been benefiting from Crown corporations in a real and tangible way.

We know, Mr. Speaker, there are a number of Crown corporations that exist within the province. And over the course of the province's history, over the past decades, Mr. Speaker, there have been many debates with respect to what is the

function of Crown corporations here in the province. And when the issue of privatization has come forward, it's been one that has been hotly debated because there are, as I outlined, there are differing views on the correct approach for Crowns within the provincial economy. So it's within that larger philosophical discussion, Mr. Speaker, that we find ourselves in situations about a specific Crown, about a specific issue in a particular legislative sitting of the history of this legislature. It's an important discussion.

I think earlier on I remarked, Mr. Speaker, about the necessity of the government to be clear in its intention with Crown corporations. And when government announced their desire to privatize ISC, at first it happened through a bit of a trial balloon that the minister responsible put up saying that well, you know, this could be something that we're maybe thinking about. We're looking at the options. We could do this and this; this and this would happen. There was no talk of that, Mr. Speaker, during the election. There was no talk of it whatsoever. In fact the Sask Party government was telling a very different story with respect to Crown corporations.

[16:00]

But once in a position that it was able to carry out its will with respect to the Crowns, we saw a different course of action. And at first it was as I described it as a trial balloon put up or perhaps a softening of the position that it had taken earlier, Mr. Speaker. From that point we get to the point where, well actually we're drafting some legislation. And oh, actually that legislation might be drafted and it might be coming very soon. So it hasn't, in my view, Mr. Speaker, been an approach that the government has taken in being clear and open and transparent with respect to its intentions surrounding the Crowns. I think that's an important point to make.

The decision to sell a Crown corporation comes from a few different approaches. And it's hard to exactly pinpoint and determine what are the exact motives with all members of the opposite side. Most certainly for a good number — I would probably say the majority of the members, Mr. Speaker — the motivation to privatize a Crown corporation would be more along the ideological debate that I talked about earlier on, the question of what is the role for Crowns in society.

And I think most individuals on the opposite side — whether or not it makes good economic sense, whether or not it is a good public policy, whether or not it would benefit or harm Saskatchewan residents — I think the majority view on the opposite side within the government's cabinet and caucus benches, backbenches, Mr. Speaker, would be one of, well privatize at all costs. That's our general orientation. That's where we want to go. And so I think in many instances that could be identified as a prime motive or driving force as to why we would want this type of legislation, why government would want this type of legislation.

There's another factor as well, Mr. Speaker, that I think plays into what could be some potential motivations as to why government wants to go down this path. So the one is to sort of, privatization regardless of the economic case or the current reality on the ground. Let's just do it, plow ahead.

There's also, Mr. Speaker, the context of the provincial finances. And it's timely that we're having this discussion because, as members know, through the previous two question periods we've had and through the news and announcement that was made yesterday by the Provincial Auditor, there is a financial reality within the government's books. I should say, there's a discrepancy in the financial reality between the messages the government is saying on the front bench and that of which the Provincial Auditor is saying — who is, as members know, an officer of the legislature. The Provincial Auditor does not report to any one political party, but reports to the entire legislature.

And it's important to state that off the top I believe because it speaks to the credibility that the Provincial Auditor has in providing an opinion that is trustworthy. And when the Provincial Auditor began her term, there of course was a very thorough vetting process that members from both sides participated in in order to ensure that the role of the Provincial Auditor is as respected as it is strong, and has as much rigour as we need — not just we as the Assembly, but we as the Saskatchewan public, the Saskatchewan people. We need to ensure that the Provincial Auditor is a top-notch individual with good credentials, whose word can be trusted, recognizing the fact that the auditor is not tied to any one political party, not working for government, not working for opposition, simply working for the people of Saskatchewan.

And the Provincial Auditor's not the only officer of the legislature. There are other officers, of course. There's the Provincial Ombudsman, the Children's Advocate, the Conflict of Interest Commissioner, and the privacy officer, Mr. Speaker. So it's these individuals who we often turn to when we want an opinion on something that is objective.

Because on the floor of the Assembly, I know both sides, members will strive to be objective, but we also realize that we work within the parliamentary system, a system that has political parties. So we have perspectives and we ought to have perspectives. That's the point of having a political system with parties, so that parties can take positions on things, can promote certain positions and have an effective debate. And it's through that debate that we have a stronger democracy.

But at the same time, Mr. Speaker, at the same time, Mr. Speaker, it's necessary that we really do respect and take heed of words that the Provincial Auditor makes. And when there's a discrepancy, Mr. Speaker, between what government members may be saying on an issue with what the Provincial Auditor is saying then, Mr. Speaker, I think we should take note of that. It should perk up our ears. We should pay closer attention to it and we should take this seriously. And thankfully, Mr. Speaker, that does occur in many situations.

We rely on these officers of the legislature to do that good and important work in the same way, Mr. Speaker, that when an individual has had problems with receiving a service from government, from a ministry, there's the Provincial Ombudsman, Mr. Speaker. And the Ombudsman is an individual where people have concerns about a situation, if they feel that they have not been treated well or properly by a government ministry, that they have not received due process, that their concerns have not been heard, that there has in fact

been an injustice that has occurred in some way, well the Ombudsman is there, Mr. Speaker, to provide that impartial opinion.

Right now, as one example, Mr. Speaker, the Ombudsman provincially is looking at the issue of the Saskatchewan immigrant nominee program and whether or not the conduct of the provincial government has in fact been fair. And whether or not the relationship between the province and the feds on the issue of the Saskatchewan immigrant nominee program, specifically as it relates to the family class, the Ombudsman is looking at whether or not the government has acted reasonably, responsibility, and whether or not they should be changing their course of action.

And I know the Ombudsman is doing his work, I'm told, on this issue, is doing the investigations, will talk to the necessary people, and based on his office's experience of familiarity with these issues and knowledge of the issue will provide a ruling, and I would hope perhaps provide recommendations. Because right now, Mr. Speaker, it's at a political stage where we in the opposition are saying one thing based on our understanding of what is fair and government is saying another. The Ombudsman will provide clarity from a position of non-partisanship with respect to how people have been treated fairly. It's in that same light and that same general vein of thought, Mr. Speaker, that I think it's appropriate to look at the words of the Provincial Auditor in a very serious manner.

And so let's take it back to ISC. We talked about why there may be some motives, what may be the motives on the opposite side as to why ISC would be privatized. And most certainly in my view, and with a majority of the government cabinet ministers and backbenchers, it is a general approach of privatization no matter what. That's the general orientation. That's the default position.

But there are other factors and concerns, and specifically with respect to the finances, Mr. Speaker, where we might be seeing another motivation and reason as to why the government may be choosing to privatize ISC. With the privatization of ISC, Mr. Speaker, of course there would be money made by the province for the selling of ISC. And that's a reality; some have estimated it as between 90 to 120 million. So I don't know exactly what it would be. I assume those are the government's estimates with respect to how much they think they could garner in selling ISC.

And the catch is, Mr. Speaker, I think, increasingly by members opposite, especially cabinet ministers, there's a desire to have access to that money to address and deal with some financial pressures that they may see. Now what they may see, Mr. Speaker, what they may know to be true and accurate around the confines of their cabinet table and through the briefings that they would get through the Ministry of Finance and other ministry officials, what they know to be the actual case, Mr. Speaker, I think is quite different than the lines and the opinions that we have received from government front bench members, especially the Finance minister. Some might even call it a stark contrast, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the difference of what they actually know to be the picture and then what they are saying.

And that's where, in my view, the presence and the role of the Provincial Auditor is important. Because it's through the Provincial Auditor, Mr. Speaker, where we can obtain an accurate picture of what is the financial picture with respect to the province. I think that's important. So while the official lines coming out of question period and the rotunda and government news releases that churns them out, Mr. Speaker, is one story, we're getting a very, very different story with respect to what the Provincial Auditor is saying, as released just yesterday through her report.

So at this point in my speech, Mr. Speaker, I would like to examine more closely what the Provincial Auditor is saying about the current financial situation. And having just made a speech about the non-partisan nature of the Provincial Auditor and the important role that she plays in ensuring that there is accurate and transparent reporting and a proper understanding of her provincial finances, Mr. Speaker, I will not take her words and spin them into something else.

What I will do, Mr. Speaker, I want to read the news release that was provided by the Provincial Auditor that was tabled in the Assembly by Mr. Speaker at the very beginning of yesterday's proceedings and provides, I think, some useful information and some insight as to why certain government members may be interested in finding an extra \$100 million. So it doesn't get into the question about whether or not the privatization is actually in the best interests of Saskatchewan people in the long term, whether or not services will be increased or improved, whether or not services will be more affordable or less affordable.

What I'm focusing in on, Mr. Speaker, is what may be the immediate and more pressing concerns that certain government members may have as to why they would want to privatize ISC, what could be the motives beyond a general disposition towards privatization. I think it's, Mr. Speaker, probably a confluence of the two motives.

So the Provincial Auditor said, "Government General Revenue Fund Financial Statements Wrong, Says Provincial Auditor." That is the title of the news release that was stapled to the inside of the very lengthy report, Mr. Speaker. It's a number of pages. It is actually over 400 pages, Mr. Speaker. So there's a lot of information and, well, it's double-sided, Mr. Speaker.

So the news release reads as follows, from Regina, Saskatchewan, of course where the auditor does the good work that the auditor does:

December 4, 2012 — The Saskatchewan Government uses "two sets of books" [that's a quote] to report its finances despite longstanding recommendations to stop this practice, says Provincial Auditor Bonnie Lysyk in Volume 2 of her 2012 Report, released today. In the Report, Lysyk states that the Government's General Revenue Fund (GRF) financial statements contain significant errors and are materially wrong.

Most provinces in Canada present their finances to the public using only one set of financial statements — Summary Financial Statements — which are prepared in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting

principles. In Saskatchewan, however, the Government uses two different sets of financial statements depending on the message it wants to send to the public regarding the state of its finances. When discussing debt or balancing the budget, it most frequently refers to the GRF statements — a custom that is both poor practice and misleading to the public, particularly when those statements contain significant errors.

For example, the GRF statements for March 31, 2012 excluded \$6.12 billion in pension liabilities and \$100 million of related pension expenses. “An omission of this magnitude is similar to a company not including in its financial statements all relevant information for its shareholders, such as the financial results of a mine it owns that is losing money,” says Lysyk. “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.

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.

[16:15]

Let me read that again part again, Mr. Speaker, as I deviate from the text of the news release. But what the news release says:

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.

Lysyk further cites an example of how a continued focus on the GRF can affect decision-making. In October this year, the Provincial Auditor found that the Government had issued letters to four school divisions promising to fund all of their principal and interest payments for new external capital loans totalling \$31 million until the loans are paid off. As such, the GRF financial statements for March 31, 2012 should have included an additional expense of \$31 million. The Ministry of Education recently advised the Provincial Auditor’s Office that it plans to notify the affected school divisions, in writing, that it has revoked its promise to fund their new debt. Instead, it will determine each year whether it will fund the annual payments due on these loans. However, this debt is still included in the Government’s Summary Financial Statements and must be paid each year. “The intent of the letters appears to be to avoid having this new debt recorded in the GRF financial statements,” Lysyk notes. “This is just another example of why the GRF statements do not provide the complete financial picture to the people of Saskatchewan. We continue to recommend that the Government record the \$31 million in the GRF.”

In early 2013, the Provincial Auditor will release a report focused on the importance of clear and transparent provincial financial statement budgeting and reporting. “The GRF issue can be complex and difficult to explain clearly, but my Office is committed to ensuring that the public fully understands why the Government should not be using the GRF statements to explain its finances,” says Lysyk. “It is time for the Government of Saskatchewan to focus its financial reporting on only the Summary Financial Statements.”

And then it goes on to say:

The full Provincial Auditor’s 2012 Report — Volume 2 is available online at [www.auditor.sk.ca](http://www.auditor.sk.ca).

An important note here, Mr. Speaker. At the bottom of the news release it says:

The Provincial Auditor is an Independent Officer of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan. The Office of the Provincial Auditor serves the Members of the Legislative Assembly and the people of Saskatchewan by providing independent assurance and advice on the management, governance, and effective use of public resources.

So that was a lengthy news release, Mr. Speaker, but it’s important to read into the public record. And I read it verbatim, for the most part, Mr. Speaker, because I wanted to make perfectly clear that the views that I was stating are not my own. I was simply reading what the Provincial Auditor, an independent officer of the legislature, is reporting.

What the auditor has stated, Mr. Speaker, what she has identified, in my view, is that the province is not, Mr. Speaker, in its reporting of the financial state of the province, the province is not providing the full picture and all the information that Saskatchewan people need in order to make informed decisions. And in fact, Mr. Speaker, as the minister, or as the auditor said, they should, what it should have reported was a deficit in the GRF of \$46 million.

The auditor specifically cited, Mr. Speaker, the issue of the government breaking its word with respect to funding some school capital projects and basically taking a new position that they are not committed to paying for the school capital projects over the long run, as opposed, it will be determined on a year-by-year basis. The hope, Mr. Speaker, that the government is making in breaking this promise is that if they say they’re not committed to providing the funding over the long run, over the long term, over the completion of the project, over the full amortization, what it does, Mr. Speaker, is it changes the debt commitments that the government has on a particular project, thereby painting a prettier picture than what may actually be the case when one wants the entire accurate view of what the provincial finances are. The auditor, Mr. Speaker, is talking about the public schools in this situation with the specific projects.

But a very, very similar situation is occurring on the campus of the University of Saskatchewan. And this, Mr. Speaker, is with respect to the completion of the Health Sciences Building, a very important project as we’ve discussed through multiple

question periods here in the Assembly. Prior to the election, Mr. Speaker, there was a commitment by the government in a news release around the same time that the Premier cut the ribbon on the cornerstone of the building; a commitment to fund the project, over \$400 million. It was the total tab as identified in the news release.

Fast-forward a few months, post-election, Mr. Speaker. And what we actually saw was very similar to the situation with the local school divisions, but we saw the provincial government walking away from that commitment to say that it's going to fund the project. And what they actually did, Mr. Speaker, was turned around to the board of governors at the university and said, no, we're not paying for this. You actually have to take this on as debt. You have to take this on within your financial picture and make do.

What this did, Mr. Speaker, according to the University's own books — financial reporting and annual reports available online, and as publicly stated by the university administration, Mr. Speaker — is that this maxed out the University of Saskatchewan's borrowing capacity. It put them in a place where they are at the top level with respect to how they compare to other universities within the same class with respect to the amount of debt per FTE [full-time equivalent] student. And that's a concern. It's maxed out their borrowing capacity, Mr. Speaker, and it was most certainly causing problems.

So now we're in a situation where there is continued work that needs to happen on the Health Sciences Building, the completion of the A and B wings which has to do a lot with the actual teaching space in the Health Sciences Building, and the board of governors, which needs to make a decision this month on how they will or can proceed on this project, is in a situation where they say, according to our financial guidelines, according to our parameters as to what is acceptable debt for us to have as an institution given our revenue potential, and given the commitments that we know we have from government on certain areas, this is as much debt as we can take on. They're in a position, Mr. Speaker, where they need a pledge from the provincial government that they will in fact provide the funding for the completion of the Health Sciences Building, the A and B wings.

The close to \$100 million, Mr. Speaker, of debt that was forced upon the university's books when the Sask Party government walked away from its pledge to provide the funding for the project, Mr. Speaker, is very similar to the situation that the auditor raises in this news release, a desire and attempt in my view, Mr. Speaker, to downplay the commitments that the province has made with respect to projects.

You know, in this situation that the auditor clearly states, Mr. Speaker, the desire here to not be on the hook for the full cost of school capital projects, in the same way, Mr. Speaker, when we look at the \$100 million of debt putting the additional resources that are needed to complete the A and B wings, Mr. Speaker, but looking at the issue of the \$100 million of debt, it's my understanding, Mr. Speaker, that there is no long-term commitment for the University of Saskatchewan to provide funding to pay that amount.

There was an agreement, a short term, perhaps one year,

perhaps a bit more. But there is not a long-term agreement, Mr. Speaker, in place for the ministry to provide the necessary funding after they turned around and said, oh I know we promised you the total amount for the completion of the Health Sciences Building, but actually we're no longer doing that, and please go to the bankers and see what you can do.

So in doing that, in my view, Mr. Speaker, it was motivated by the desire to improve the financial picture of the province's books because, Mr. Speaker, as reported by the auditor, there is a desire to paint a prettier picture than what may actually be the case. So that's the context, Mr. Speaker, which is very important. And I appreciate members' attentiveness and attention to the matter because that is the context which sheds light on to why government members may be interested in privatizing ISC, beyond their natural inclination to privatize because it's a personal belief that that's a better approach, regardless of what facts may say, Mr. Speaker.

It's because, Mr. Speaker, I think there is a desire to get one's hands on revenue that would be obtained through the privatization. I think that is important to state because it does indicate why in fact we may be seeing this migration, this not-so-subtle migration from a position where recently the Sask Party said they liked Crown corporations but actually, when push comes to shove, if they're given the opportunity to privatize, Mr. Speaker, they do so.

Because we most clearly know, as do many people in the province, that the natural inclination, the predisposition of members opposite is to privatize. And you know, we hear it in the heckles. We hear it in the speeches. That's their general orientation. And I would say, Mr. Speaker, we're best served, we're put in a position to do as well as we can, Mr. Speaker, when instead of simply relying on our natural desire to do something that may be privatization, that we actually look at the facts and see, what is the argument that can be made in this circumstance? Is this a good approach? Will this benefit Saskatchewan people? Not just in the short time frame of an election window, Mr. Speaker, or in the time frame of one term of government, but what is the best decision over the long term?

And, Mr. Speaker, I think if members opposite were willing to pause for a second and do some reflection — and maybe there are a few members that are willing to do this — if members opposite were willing to do that, I think they would see that the argument for privatizing ISC is not there.

We see that ISC, Mr. Speaker, has provided a profit to Saskatchewan people, that it continues to do so. And, Mr. Speaker, there's also, I think, with many Saskatchewan people, there is a belief and a feeling that when it comes to things like land titles, when it comes to the services that are provided by ISC, that those interests, Mr. Speaker, are in fact best placed and best served through a public Crown corporation, recognizing that there is a service to be provided most certainly that needs to be timely, that needs to be effective, that needs to be affordable. But there are also the necessary safeguards that need to be put in place, Mr. Speaker, that can be guaranteed through a Crown corporation.

So, Mr. Speaker, I've had a chance to talk about this piece of legislation now for a bit, and I have enjoyed the opportunity

because it talks about a number of issues. It talks about, or I think it illustrates clearly how, regardless of what has been said in an election campaign or in other venues, we definitely have seen a migration and a walking away from many commitments that the Sask Party government has made, whether it's the absence of discussion prior to the election that we heard about privatizing ISC, or whether it is the post-election broken promises that we've seen with respect to, as identified in the auditor's report, of not funding school projects in the post-secondary sector, and walking away from commitments that were made for the Health Sciences Building.

I think this piece of legislation is a good example of changes that we've seen in government members. Having seen those changes we have to ask ourselves, why are government members going down this path? I think the first aspect, Mr. Speaker — and I know other members in my caucus have spoken about this — there is a natural inclination that members opposite have to privatization whether or not the economic case justifies it or the best interests of Saskatchewan people are taken into consideration.

But, Mr. Speaker, very importantly, combined with the personal views that many people have, I think there are immediate pressures that would cause many members opposite to want to privatize ISC now in order to take the revenue in order to help the financial picture that the province finds itself in — not by my words, Mr. Speaker, not according to my viewpoint and what I have stated, but according to what the Provincial Auditor has clearly detailed in her report that was released yesterday.

You know, looking at her actual report . . . I won't go back into the news release, Mr. Speaker, but it's very clear, Mr. Speaker, that when looking at what the Provincial Auditor has said on page 35:

When calculated in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles . . . the GRF incurred a deficit of \$46 million instead of a surplus of \$352 million.

So the auditor has given us, has given Saskatchewan people that objective, arm's-length opinion with respect to the state of the finances. And I think, Mr. Speaker, that reality that members know but they're not willing to talk about, members opposite know but they're not willing to talk about, cabinet ministers know but they're not willing to talk about, even some of the backbenchers know but they're not willing to talk about, I think it's that awareness that members opposite actually have, based on what the Provincial Auditor has said — who is non-partisan — combined with a natural inclination that members opposite have to privatization just because which gets us to the point now where we have the privatization of ISC.

So, Mr. Speaker, I've appreciated the opportunity to provide comment on this piece of legislation. I look forward to other discussions that members of my caucus may have, not to mention the discussions that we'll have in committee. And with that, Mr. Speaker, I would move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 69. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Saskatoon Massey Place 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 Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

[16:30]

### Bill No. 82

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Krawetz that **Bill No. 82** — *The Saskatchewan Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2012* be now read a second time.]

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I'm very pleased to rise this afternoon to offer my comments on Bill No. 82, *The Saskatchewan Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2012*. And this is amendments to *The Saskatchewan Pension Plan Act* which was introduced in 1986, quite some time ago now. We're looking at 26 years ago. And I'm of that age where I actually remember when this bill was introduced and remember people talking about it.

And I remember the government ad campaign for this pension plan. I think I was a university student at the time and was thinking that might be something I wanted to invest in. As it turns out, I've been fortunate to be part of a pension plan through my employers since I started I guess what you would call responsible employment in my 30s. But we certainly didn't have a pension plan when we were tree planting, and maybe I should've benefited from this plan on those days. But I used my money for other things when I was younger.

But there's certainly a lot of people that are benefiting from the Saskatchewan Pension Plan. We see in the minister's comments when he introduced this bill that there are over 32,000 members — 32,000 people in Saskatchewan are taking advantage of the pension plan Act because they don't have that advantage if they're self-employed or working out of their home, self-employed, or just in those types of positions, working positions, working people who don't have access to a pension plan through their work. And certainly these types of programs help those people who aren't fortunate enough to be in a workplace with a pension plan. And this an important plan that is there for the people of Saskatchewan to use.

I think the attempt of the bill that's under debate right now is to clarify and modernize some of the language in this bill. There doesn't seem to be a lot of really substantive changes that are being proposed. And I guess through some work and the main work that's being done under this bill is to have it bring it in line with *The Pension Benefits Act, 1992*. And *The Pension Benefits Act* has, I guess . . . It's good to harmonize this bill with that type of bill so that there's parallels between those plans, and it's probably easier for the administrators of those plans to ensure that the bills are properly managed.

And I know my colleague who spoke first to this bill was indicating that's really important for people, is to know that

their pension plans are being managed properly. It's kind of like for us to know that the government is managing, let's say, our oil wells properly. That's something that we want to be sure that we're protected and that future generations don't have to deal with the lingering effects of unattended environmental issues as they relate to mining and extraction of natural resources in this province.

So certainly, you know, we want to see the management occur that's reasonable and balanced. And it's important for people to invest in their pension funds. It's important for us to develop our resources. But it's also important for us to manage those resources properly, either the pensions themselves or indeed the natural and non-renewable resources that this government has in plenty, or this province has in plenty. So we're certainly concerned, as my colleague had indicated prior to me, that we want to make sure these pension plans are properly being handled. We hear all kinds of stories about people losing their entire savings because the pension plan has not been properly managed or bad investments have been made.

The changes that are being proposed to this Act don't directly deal with the management of the fund. But I will speak to them now as they're presented in the bill itself. The first section that's changed is . . . Actually a new definition is being added. And that's the definition of spouse which apparently wasn't there before. And this is being added to the interpretation section, so it brings this plan into sync with *The Pension Benefits Act*. And indeed a number of the changes that are being proposed deal with spouses and how transfers can be made, and various things in *The Saskatchewan Pension Plan Act*. So that's the new clause, is clause 2(1) is being amended by adding clause (k.2) which is spouse. And that's just in the alphabetical order that the definitions are provided in section 2 of the existing Act.

The next change that we see is a new clause being added after, in section 5 of the Act. And this new clause is clause 5(2)(e.1), and it's a housekeeping item. And all it does is clarify the board's authority to provide pension benefits to retiring members. So it's just housekeeping and allows them to be proactive if and when new retirement products are available to the members by setting these options in the regulations rather than the Act.

So if you look at section 5 of the existing Act, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is the section that's headed up, duties of the board. So this sets out the board that's administering the plan and acting as trustees. There's a number of duties that they already have. The board can enter into contracts under 5(2)(a). They can also employ staff and acquire goods and services under 5(2)(b). They're allowed to invest their monies in the credit of the fund under 5(2)(c), and then dispose of securities under 5(2)(d). There's a number of other ones that are added: entering into agreements, charging fees, establishing policies, determining rates of interest to be allocated to the amounts standing to the credit of participants, determine rates of interest, and set out the terms for annuities.

So this additional clause is to prescribe . . . sorry, to provide prescribed pension benefits that may be purchased by participants with amounts standing to their credit in the fund. So it's a bit of clarity that's being added and allows them to

provide pension benefits to retiring members. So that seems to be a good change that is being proposed and allows more flexibility and also clarifies some of the board's authority.

The next change that we see is a change to clause 6 and this is pure housekeeping, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They're trying to, what they call, clean language or clear language and modernize the language of the section. So it's just regarding the decision of the board and I think there's no need to go into detail on that one.

Section 7(5) is the next change that we find in the Act. And what they're doing there . . . 7(5) is in the fund where, the section that establishes the Saskatchewan Pension Plan Fund, and it just talks, it talks extensively about that fund. What they've done in the fifth section is they can require participants to pay fees with respect to admin costs for any year that they're not living here. That's the way it used to read. But what this amendment is doing is removing the reference to residency because it's no longer required.

Now what the explanation notes say is that all members have access to plan services regardless of where they live and this will allow them to charge separate fees for services where appropriate. So this is just clearing it away, saying the board can require them to pay a fee whenever they choose to do so. So even if you are a resident in Saskatchewan, you may be charged a fee. It's a bit of a big change and it looks like it's allowing the board to charge fees across the board now, rather than just applying them to people that aren't resident in Saskatchewan. I'm not sure. The minister didn't indicate why that was felt to be necessary in his comments but I will just take one more look. He's indicating that it's just to keep it current with modern times but he didn't speak to that particular change. He did make reference to some housekeeping changes.

The next change is to section 12(1), and all they're doing there is correcting some references to other sections which was necessary because the big change is in section 13. 13 itself is being rewritten basically in clear language, and it's also . . . It talks about a new definition of the beneficiary and that's again bringing it in sync with *The Pension Benefits Act*. So we have section 13 is repealed in entirety and then there's a new clause about the beneficiaries. And these are the kinds of language that you find in these kinds of statutes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that show the density of the language that's required to set up pension funds. And I'm just going to share with you this particularly clause because it's particularly dense.

So good credit goes to those drafters over there in the Ministry of Justice. We know that they work hard and that they're public servants who deserve to be recognized for the hard work they do, particularly in a climate where there's been cuts to the public service up to 15 per cent, just as an arbitrary number that's been picked. And these people are left holding the bag when those kinds of cuts are imposed on the public service.

Anyways, the new section that they're talking about reads — and I'll quote it — it's section 13(3) and it says:

A participant who has a spouse is required to receive a life annuity or a prescribed pension benefit that provides for the benefit to be paid to the spouse after the

participant's death that is not less than 60% of the life annuity or prescribed pension benefit to which the participant would have been entitled, unless the spouse provides a written waiver of the annuity or benefit in a form acceptable to the board.

And what I'm going to do is I'm going to challenge my own colleagues to make sure that they understood this section. And I'm going to test them afterwards to make that they're paying attention. Because it's a very complicated clause and the . . . You may need to deal with this and ensure that your spouses are covered under the Saskatchewan Pension Plan benefit Act.

So to be sure, it's complex and dense language, but you can see that's the kind of language that's required when pensions plans are being discussed. And again I give credit, full credit to the good people over at the Ministry of Justice and the drafters who have to take these complex ideas, put them in legal language, and then present them so that they're there to protect the people of Saskatchewan, the 32,000 members of the Saskatchewan Pension Plan.

So right now again, you know, this is a pension plan with a lot of people in Saskatchewan contributing — people who work hard, but they don't have access to a pension plan through their workplace. And there's over \$318 million under trusteeship right now. So we certainly hope that the board and the managers of that fund are doing a better job than what we see this government doing with the books right now.

We understand from the Provincial Auditor that there really is two sets of books now for this government. And I'm hoping that's not happening with the board of directors of the Saskatchewan Pension Plan . . . [inaudible] . . . The good people over there, I'm sure, are managing those funds quite adequately and if we had comments from the auditor on the Saskatchewan Pension Plan, I trust that they would be very positive comments indeed.

You know, there's a good reason for the Saskatchewan Pension Plan. It's for families to make sure that they have access to funds, families that may not have pensions in their workplace. And it's always nice to see families come here to the legislature. And, Mr. Speaker, we have a lovely family sitting in the legislature right now with one of our legislative staff. And we certainly welcome families here any time. So welcome to your legislature, to Stacey Ursulescu's family.

Anyways carrying on here with the rather mundane features of the pension plan amendment Act, it is very, very interesting, you know, and again I give credit to the good people over at Justice for drafting these wonderful changes.

There's a couple more clauses that are being amended. And the next one that's being amended is section 16. The explanatory notes on this one says that it updates beneficiary requirements for members who have not yet retired and going forward members — so that must be a technical term in a pension language. We'll have to look into that — going forward members with a spouse must name them as a beneficiary unless the spouse signs a waiver.

So perhaps, you know, if my colleague from Regina Rosemont

was not working under a pension plan and he chose to enter into this and his wife didn't want to receive the funds that he has in the savings, she would have to sign a waiver before he could not provide them. So his wife would have to sign the waiver. And I think she's a wise woman, and she would probably want to keep her hands on that kind of fund. I think that Stephanie's a wise lady so she would probably want to make sure that she doesn't waive any funds that her husband has put away in a pension plan.

And again there's some changes to subsection 13 and they bring the plan into sync again with *The Pension Benefits Act*. The next changes we see are just some renumbering changes for clause 16(3)(a) and subclause 16(4)(a). So those are just housekeeping. And the next change is to section 19(1). And what they've done here is they've actually rewritten it so it's now in clearer language and again it's more consistent with other government pension plans.

And then finally there's a new provision 19.2, and if you want to take a look at this one, this is kind of interesting. And again it's bringing it in sync with what other pension plans do and other funds in the government. So if for whatever reason somebody disappears and they actually have funds available to them, the amounts are now payable . . . to people who can't be located, the money is taken out of the management of the pension plan and is just put in the General Revenue Fund. So it becomes property of the Crown and then if people want to make application for those payments, they have to go through the Minister of Finance rather than the board.

[16:45]

Of course, you don't want to just write all this money off if you get a return address unknown letter or something when you're trying to pay off a member. You would need to make reasonable attempts to locate that person. And so we see in (2) of the new clause that “. . . the board must take reasonable steps to locate the person to whom the amount is payable.”

And that, Mr. Speaker, is eminently reasonable and it makes a whole lot of sense to approach it that way. It could be significant amounts of money, and again, the person's gone missing. We don't know why they can't be located. They didn't send a forwarding envelope with their change of address. Perhaps they've disappeared and gone off to Mexico for a few years. Who knows? Maybe they were really worried about the financial situation in Saskatchewan and they thought, I better get out of here, Mr. Speaker. I read the auditor's report and I think I'm safer in Mexico or somewhere else that's warmer perhaps.

So if they can't be located, then we have an opportunity here for the good people that are managing the Saskatchewan Pension Plan to say, we tried. We tried to locate them. Can't find them. So here you go, Mr. Minister of Finance. You're now responsible for the money that these people have saved.

So it seems to be covering up a little bit of a gap that was in the bill and as the indication here in the explanatory notes is that the members would still continue to have it claimed but they're not administered by the plan.

There's only one more change and that's another housekeeping



change in clause 21(1). So I think at this point, Mr. Speaker, that's really the extent of my comments on *The Saskatchewan Pension Plan Amendment Act*. Again you know, kudos to the people over at Justice for working hard to bring these technical changes and clean up the language in these types of bills; and secondly, to the board of *The Saskatchewan Pension Plan Amendment Act* for the good work they do in managing this fund of over \$300 million.

Perhaps this government could take some lessons from this board in terms of financial management and start looking at the comments and the criticisms of our Provincial Auditor, in taking them seriously when it comes to the state of our province's finances, and using the wisdom of these people that are looking after these funds and maybe following more acceptable accounting principles for portraying our finances to the good people of Saskatchewan.

So again we continue to recognize the good work that's being done by the people that are responsible for the program, and congratulate the 32,000 citizens of Saskatchewan who have taken advantage of the Saskatchewan Pension Plan over the years.

So at that point, Mr. Speaker, I think that's going to conclude my comments on this bill, and I move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 82, *The Saskatchewan Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2012*.

**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 Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Boyd that **Bill No. 83 — *The Foreign Worker Recruitment and Immigration Services Act*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to join the Assembly here today, and it's a pleasure to have the energy in this Assembly, that warm welcome to take to my feet to speak to Bill No. 83, *An Act respecting Foreign Worker Recruitment and Immigration Services*, Mr. Speaker.

Now this bill looks as though at first blush that it brings forward some practical measures, some supports to ensure that we're providing fairness, that we're protecting those that are coming to Saskatchewan, and we're ensuring the rights of immigrant workers, of foreign workers, of individuals choosing to build and better their lives in our province and bettering our province in the process, Mr. Speaker.

It's a piece of legislation that brings about, I understand, five different aspects or five different changes, Mr. Speaker, but it's addressing what it suggests are some circumstances where these

workers, these foreign workers have been exploited, where contractors may have not kept their word or may not have dealt with them in good faith. And certainly we do need to make sure we're doing all we can to be protecting all workers in Saskatchewan, and certainly we need to be doing all we can to be protecting those newcomers that are building and bettering our province, Mr. Speaker, building and bettering their lives in our province as well from all around the world.

And I know how important it is that we make sure that we have fair, respectful workplaces, circumstances that allow those that are coming from all over the globe to build their lives here, making sure that they're able to do so and build the same quality of life that has the same fair opportunity as anyone else, Mr. Speaker. And when I look at what's been put forward here, I think there's a couple practical measures. Certainly we're going to go out and do consultation and engage with those whom this impacts and make sure that this is as practical and meaningful as it can be.

But I think there's some failed opportunities on this front as well. We can do a better job I believe of educating our foreign workers — those that are coming to our province to work — of their rights, making sure they understand those rights, and making sure that we get across, get over some of the language barriers that may exist, Mr. Speaker, because for some that are coming to the province, certainly some of the language barriers that exist can prevent some of those workers from understanding their rights to their fullest extent. And I believe we need to do a better job of making sure that we have an advocate working with those workers, that we have education for those workers so that they understand their rights and that they're not exploited.

We also need to do a better job in a broad-based way of addressing occupational health and safety and we have . . . The current number of safety inspectors or safety officers is certainly too few, Mr. Speaker, and we need to, at a time where we're welcoming workers from all over the world but also the workers that are here right now, we need to make sure that we're able to in fact enforce the legislation, the protections that have been in place for many years. And to do that, we need to make sure we have the capacity by way of officers, safety officers to do just that.

So this is something that's really important. I know that it suggests that there's some improvements of providing protection for these workers through this piece of legislation. That's something that we welcome, but we want to make sure that this is as strong as it can be.

I will say, Mr. Speaker, it's passing strange that this government talks about providing protections to workers in one breath and then on the other side has broken its own word with many workers that have chosen to build their lives here in Saskatchewan, broken their word with far too many immigrant families that were choosing to build their lives here in Saskatchewan. And I can cite just a few examples of that, Mr. Speaker, but certainly the broken promise as it relates to allowing those that are choosing to build their lives in Saskatchewan, allow them to bring their families to Saskatchewan and build out that network here in our province, and the actual gutting of the family class of the SINP

[Saskatchewan immigrant nominee program] program, Mr. Speaker, that's but one example of the broken word of this government as it relates to those newcomers, new Canadians, those immigrant families that are choosing to build their lives here in Saskatchewan.

So it's passing strange that in one breath they're speaking about strengthening protection — something we fully support. As I say, we could certainly go further by way of proper education about workplace rights and workers' rights here in Saskatchewan with those workers. We could take it one step forward by making sure we actually have the appropriate complement of occupational health and safety officers in those workplaces to enforce the legislation that we currently have.

But we have a government that's suggesting and providing some strengthening and protection on one side but on the same side are breaking their own word to thousands of families all across our province. Not only that, we have the broader context of the pressures where we see the federal cuts by way of refugee health care cuts in this province. This is something that we need to stand united as a province. It's an issue that we need to stand up for fairness and stand up for the rights and dignity of all, Mr. Speaker, here in this province, and something we need to be strong in resolve towards working towards that resolution to a cut that is damaging, a cut that's unfair, a cut that is, in many ways when you look at the impact, something that disgusts Saskatchewan people and doesn't represent the kind of Saskatchewan or the kind of Canada that the people I've been talking to believe we should be, Mr. Speaker.

It also speaks to the case of this unfair, unjust treatment of these young international students that are currently at the University of Regina, those students that are being deported in very harsh measure by the federal government, Mr. Speaker, something that we need to stand united as a province on, Mr. Speaker, something that we need to stand up for fairness, recognizing that this minor infraction that these two young students involved themselves with is nothing more than an honest mistake with appropriate consequences that should certainly be applied. But the deportation of these students is unfair and unjust.

So when we're looking at this piece of legislation, we need to look at how it could have been strengthened. Well we could be strengthening it by putting an education component in place for workers building their lives here in Saskatchewan. We could be strengthening it by making sure we have the proper complement of occupational health and safety officers to enforce the legislation that we have in this province, Mr. Speaker. And we should not be taking the regressive steps that we see government opposite, where they've broken their word, broken their promise with immigrant families from around the world that are choosing to build and better their lives in this province, preventing them from bringing their families to our fine province, Mr. Speaker.

We also could be making improvements in the classroom, Mr. Speaker, where we see the diversity that's occurring all across our province and properly supporting that diversity to make sure that all students, those that are coming from all over the world, those that live here in the province for generations, Mr. Speaker, are in a position to learn and to thrive, Mr. Speaker.

And it's about an enriched education for all. And instead we see a government that's been intent on cutting and constraining in the classroom and not properly supporting English as an additional language programs, Mr. Speaker.

I see the importance where we could be strengthening settlement supports all across this province, where we wouldn't be making cuts to offices that interface with immigrant families, those families that are building their lives here in southern Saskatchewan, northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, rural Saskatchewan. And we need to address the big issue, Mr. Speaker. When I'm sitting down with those that are building their lives in our community, in our province, in Regina but also all across this province, we need to be addressing the big challenge of housing, Mr. Speaker, and the fact that far too many are not able to find adequate, affordable housing. Far too many are subjected to vulnerable circumstances. Far too many don't have peace of mind that they deserve, Mr. Speaker.

And when we speak about an immigration policy, Mr. Speaker, we need to do so in a way that's dignified and respectful of those that are coming to build their lives here in Saskatchewan, recognizing how important they are to our province's future, not from a simplistic view of an economic widget, Mr. Speaker, but in a view of building and bettering their lives in our province with the same fair opportunity that we all have to the same access to quality of life and with an understanding, Mr. Speaker, that as we grow, as our immigration continues, those individuals will shape who we are as a province as well and will determine who we are as a future and be ready to be involved as a province in making those democratic changes in representing all of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

So this piece of legislation is something that we'll do further consultation on. It seems to bring forward some measures of protection. That's something that we support. We'll continue to do that consultation to make sure that the measures that are brought forward don't have unintended consequences, Mr. Speaker, that aren't in the best interests of immigrant families throughout our province, of newcomers and new Canadians, Mr. Speaker. But I will certainly be solidly on the record calling for all the types of supports, improvements, and enrichments to provide the opportunity for those that are choosing Saskatchewan to build and better their lives to make sure they can access the kind of quality of life, dignified quality of life, Mr. Speaker, that they so deserve.

At this point in time, Mr. Speaker, I will adjourn debate of Bill No. 83, *An Act respecting Foreign Worker Recruitment and Immigration Services*. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — The member has moved adjournment of 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 Speaker:** — Carried. It now being 5 o'clock, the Assembly stands adjourned to 10 a.m. tomorrow morning.

[The Assembly adjourned at 17:00.]



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