



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

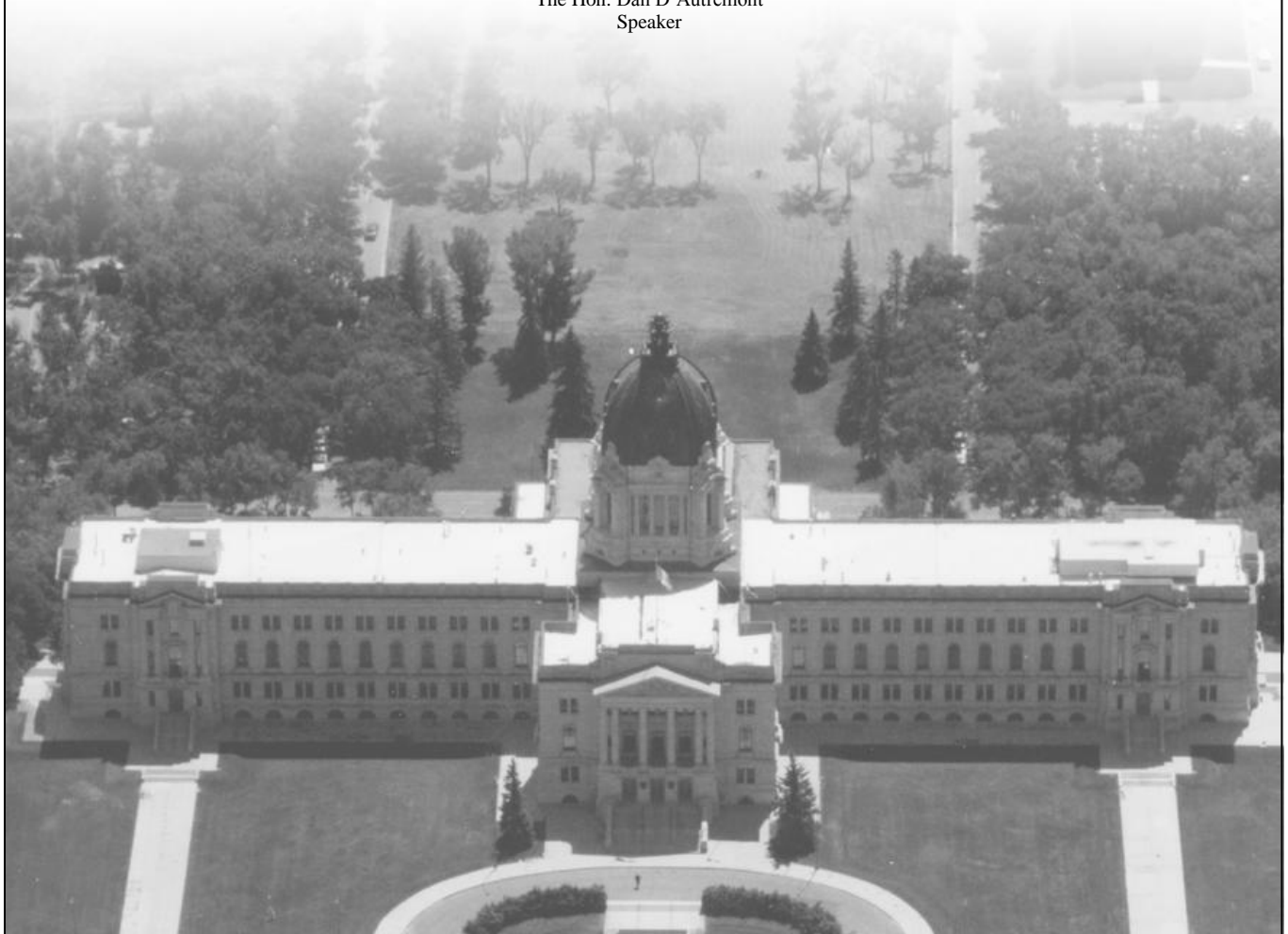
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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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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

<b>Name of Member</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>	<b>Constituency</b>
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, Hon. 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 resumed at 19:00.]

**EVENING SITTING**

**The Speaker:** — It now being after the hour of 7 o'clock, this House resumes second reading debates.

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

**ADJOURNED DEBATES**

**SECOND READINGS**

**Bill No. 45**

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

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today, to rise and speak on Bill No. 45, *An Act to Amend The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Act and The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Holding Corporation Act* or known as the miscellaneous statutes amendment Act, 2012.

It is an important piece of legislation. We know the Crowns are an important part of our economy here in our province and they've served us well. And definitely SaskTel has done that over the many decades of Saskatchewan's history in terms of technology and taking us from those rural exchange, or small town exchanges of phones and all of that, to now dealing with Internet and cellphones and all of that.

And of course we are where we are, and many people would credit the Crowns for giving us stability in our economy, in our phones, knowing (a) that we've got the telecommunications solved; we've got the insurance solved; we've got the energy part of it solved. And so when we talk about the Crowns, it's very important that we take time to reflect on these bills because a lot of things that were in place prior were put in place to protect the integrity of the Crowns.

And it's important that we keep that in mind and we ask questions. Are these changes necessary? Are they something that we must do? I mean often we think — and I know politicians often think — that if only it was a little easier, we could do things so much more quickly and solve a lot of problems. But boy, then we get into problems because it's a little too easy.

And so it's important that we take a look at the intention of Bill No. 45. What does it really mean? What does it really ask for and is it important? What are the unintended consequences? What might they be?

And if they make common sense, let's do it. But let's also make sure, let's take a moment to reflect on this. Because in a province like Saskatchewan, where our economy is so resource-based and based throughout its modern history in

terms of agriculture, Crowns are critical to maintain who we are. And I mean that as a whole province, not just the urban, the two urban large cities, but right across the province, right from the North right down to the South and throughout the province. So it's important that we take a look at this.

So it's not a long Act. In fact it's only one page, but I do want to take a minute to take a look at what the minister had said about this and why this was important. I'll just reflect a minute on what he had said. And he had talked about the first part was dealing with “. . . simple housekeeping matter[s] of monetary limits of order in councils and the length of the term of borrowing by SaskTel.”

So over the past five years I understand the Canadian bond market has expanded and now they issue bonds for 30 years or more. And this hasn't been provided to the province or SaskTel for a long time. It talks about the recent credit upgrades, and of course we have a long history now, a long history of credit upgrades for the last, I would think the last 10 years if not the last 15 years of credit upgrades. So this is important.

It talks about how it could potentially impact SaskTel's ability to participate directly in the province's borrowing program. So what he's really talking about is asking that SaskTel and, well SaskTel in this case, be able to participate in a program where the term is 30 years or longer. And that seems to make some sense so we'll take a look at that. And that's really, really important. So I think that that's one part.

But the second part, and this is one that I know, and I know my colleague from Regina spoke earlier on this. He talks about:

The housekeeping matter is to align SaskTel's dollar limit for the order in council with CIC's [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan] model that was recommended by the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations. Currently SaskTel requires an order in council for all lands purchased in excess of \$100,000. This could delay the . . . [delay] of land for cell towers.

Now, it's interesting. It says, could delay the land that they want to purchase for cell towers. So I'm not sure if it's specifically and only for cell towers or that's just an example that he's using.

Now he's talking about how it's a very competitive market, the cellular market, and how important it is to be able to move quickly. There's a couple of flags in there. First of all, I know in Saskatoon we've had some controversy about where cell towers are placed, and so I'm not sure how that all fits into that whole process. Do we want to make sure that when cell towers go up in neighbourhoods that they're welcomed and that people feel okay about them, that the land isn't quickly bought? A cell tower goes up and it's a done deal. Like I think we have to make sure that we take some time to think about that.

And if I read this right, when he's talking about the amendment for:

*The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Act* is amended in the manner set forth in this section.

And it's section 2(2):

**Subsection 11(3) is repealed and the following substituted:**

“The corporation shall obtain the approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council if the purchase price or sale price of real property included in one transaction entered into by the corporation exceeds the amount fixed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council.”

So it sounds like it could be both the purchase or the sale price and that's what the focus is around, the \$100,000. And it goes down into section 11(4) which follows and talks about the purchase price or the sale price.

So we're not just talking about the ability to buy land for cell towers. Maybe we are. Maybe that's the complete intention. But it is amending the SaskTel communications holding corporation Act and the SaskTel communications Act. And I have some questions about that because it's just not as clear as it might be. And so we need to know what that really means.

And so I have a lot of questions and I think that we now see . . . And actually it was very interesting, reading the remarks from my colleague from Regina Rosemont who is talking about . . . And he's the Chair of the Public Accounts and I think he has a fair bit of credibility in this. And I think we all worry, we all worry when this government on this side leans a little too heavy towards the Crowns for supporting them in their balanced budgets. And we've just seen that recently just a few weeks ago, and we've seen it in the past where millions, tens of millions, hundreds of millions have come from the Crowns over to the government.

And so when we see that kind of a habit by a government when they are pressed in terms of making their budgets work, we have some real concerns. And so when we see this kind of a bill before us, it makes us ask a few questions. What is this really all about? Is it really about just buying some land for cell towers or is this enabling them to do much more? And so, Mr. Speaker, I think that we have to ask them some questions about this, and we will ask some questions about this. Have they lost deals where they . . . [inaudible] . . . cell tower deals? I'd be very curious because I know of two cell towers, particularly in Saskatoon, where questions were raised about their location. And we would not want to see this happen so quickly that neighbours are pitted against one another because of a cell tower going up.

We need to take that time to get things and do them in the proper manner. So things aren't quite as straight forward as they might be. We talk about the 30-year. That may be a new pattern and that seems to be a logical thing. Of course we need to know more about that, but I am concerned about this government and its relationship to the Crowns and especially SaskPower and SaskTel and Sask Energy and using them to, as I said, to make their budgets work. And the public is watching as well. And so when this kind of thing happens . . . And of course the minister's framed it as just buying land, but here it's actually buying and selling. It's a two-way street. So the legislation raises questions about what really is the intent. And so we have

questions.

And I think it's rightly so that we take some time, particularly as we're getting closer to budget. And there's been all sorts of signals sent out that the budget's going to be a tough one. And this government has been known to, when tough decisions are made, they often go to the Crowns, and they often rely heavily on them, overly relying on them to an extent that many feel that they're really at risk. And then they're put into a tough spot where they are kind of forced to make . . . They may be making choices that later on would be viewed as not the best.

So we have a lot of questions about this. And we know that we can look back in the paper when we talk about SaskTel Internet, and we can know that last summer or about a year ago, we heard about rural Saskatchewan and SaskTel Internet, about 8,000 high-speed Internet users in rural Saskatchewan, there was some questions about the capacity of SaskTel to continue on with that. And so we really have questions in terms of making sure that this government is allowing SaskTel to do its work and not using it as a cash cow necessarily to get money so that when times are tough, they're having to deliver cash and not doing the kind of things that people right across this province are expecting.

And I think in Saskatchewan, you look at SaskTel as a provider of telecommunications right from the North right down to the South. Rural is right involved as much as the urban. And we look at cellphone coverage, and we think that's all very critical. But we see dangerous signals from this government in terms of how they can be hobbling this corporation. And so when we see this kind of enabling legislation to allow bigger financial transactions to happen without the public scrutiny, then we have some problems.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I think that this is one that we'll have a lot of questions in committee, because we know for so many people in Saskatchewan, SaskTel has a long history. We've all grown up counting on SaskTel. And we can tell just by the loyalty factor of how many people use SaskTel for their cellphones or how many people use SaskTel for their Internet addresses, you can tell there is a huge loyalty factor. So we can't be doing things that weaken our Crown corporations.

And so when we kind of do this, we want to know, is this being well thought out? Is there good management behind it? Is it sound? I'm not so worried so much about the 30 years. I don't know a lot about that. We'll have questions about that. But I am worried more about the \$100,000 and the ability to sell and buy land so quickly that the public scrutiny is not there.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I know we have a long evening ahead of us and there's a lot of bills that we want to cover. And so at this point I would want to move adjournment on Bill No. 45, *An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Act and The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Holding Corporation Act*, also known as the miscellaneous statutes Act, 2012. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

[19:15]

**Bill No. 46**

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Krawetz that **Bill No. 46 — *The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act, 2012*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased and honoured on behalf of the official opposition to stand today to give my initial comments about this particular bill that talks about the municipal employees' pension plan.

Mr. Speaker, I looked at the bill and read some of the comments of the minister, and certainly from our perspective the bill deserves and merits a lot of attention. It's important that people out there know that the pension plans that the minister made reference to in this particular bill deals with all the folks that work for our villages and towns, and I am assuming the cities as well, to look at the long-term sustainability of the pension plan and to make sure that you protect workers.

And, Mr. Speaker, as part of our smart growth strategy that the NDP has certainly adopted for the last number of years, I think that it's important that we look at that issue of how we make sure the people of Saskatchewan, the taxpayers, know that the pension plans that we have in our province are fair, they are very sustainable and, Mr. Speaker, they are there to protect the working men and women of our province.

There's no question, Mr. Speaker, as I travelled . . . I tried to travel here yesterday on a Sunday night and I probably got as far as Kenaston and the roads were quite bad, Mr. Speaker. They were so bad to the point where I believe the police finally shut down this main road. And I can tell you when I travelled through conditions of that sort, it's always nice to see some of the police officers and the emergency crews and the Highways people out there working very hard and working in conditions that are quite frankly very, very dangerous for all the people involved.

And, Mr. Speaker, I had no choice but to turn back at Kenaston because obviously the weather and the roads were getting worse. And at that point, Mr. Speaker, when you see people helping out each other, people that may have hit the ditch and you see emergency vehicles out there, it really makes you appreciate, knowing the value of the emergency workers out on our highways and our street and helping other folks, but also the value of the people that maintain the services, the public services in our province. And certainly the people that are there in case you need them, whether it'd be a nurse or a doctor or an EMT [emergency medical technician] — these are the people out there, Mr. Speaker, that are working every day in very tough conditions, very demanding environments, and they continue to show their support and commitment towards Saskatchewan people.

And that's why I look any time the Sask Party mentions pension plans. And to make sure that they're fair and sustainable, we within the NDP [New Democratic Party] take very, very . . . We pay very, very close attention to all the details of anything that the Sask Party brings forward when it talks about, when it talks about the pension plan and the ability for the pension plan to pay its own way.

Mr. Speaker, what's important is a lot of people don't know, when you look at some of the workers that are out there, the pension plan, under this particular case, a lot of the municipal employees contribute a certain amount and of course the government matches those amounts. Those amounts are invested. They're reinvested in our communities. They're invested into a lot of different sources of opportunity for our province, and over the years it grows.

And one of the things that's really, really important, Mr. Speaker, if you look at the notion . . . And we're not saying nothing's wrong with it, but the corporations have a pension plan called profit. And we support that notion because you shouldn't be in business if you're not willing to make a profit. But we look at the contribution and the ability for the employees. I think in the long term their profit is actually their pension plan for the end of their working lives, so where they're able to, to be able to live a decent, sustainable life in their old age. And, Mr. Speaker, that's something that's really, really paramount to our belief. If you want to build a good Saskatchewan, it's got to be fair for all.

And certainly from our perspective, Bill 46, when you look at the pension plan, we see some minor adjustments, Mr. Speaker. It talks about the board of directors. It also talks about the surviving spouse. And some of the amendments, Mr. Speaker, are some of the things that we think certainly if there's an opportunity to make the pension plans more sustainable and operate better, then there's nothing that the NDP will do to disrupt that.

But, Mr. Speaker, that's the reason why in opposition we take a very, very close look at all of these bills, and we pay a lot of close attention — we pay extra attention — to the Sask Party. Any time they talk about pension plans or working people or any of those particular bills, Mr. Speaker, right away within the NDP circles there's a lot of worries, a lot of confusion. And it's our job as the official opposition to pay particular attention to any meddling that the Sask Party has in any bills that affect working people because, Mr. Speaker, we've seen evidence time and time again that the Sask Party is going to war with our working people. And it's important that that gauntlet has been placed down by the Saskatchewan Party.

And the working people are not going to back down, Mr. Speaker. They're going to continue holding this government to account. And we in the opposition are going to support the working people to ensure that they don't make any changes unbeknownst to the working people when it comes to the pension plans. And that's why Bill No. 46 is really, really important to all of us and something that we'll pay very close attention to. On that point, Mr. Speaker, we would encourage people out there that have information . . .

And we know that the pension plan sustainability issue is all

throughout the land. I think the federal government, with any contribution, if I'm not mistaken, Mr. Speaker — and if I'm not right, certainly I would stand to be corrected — if you look at the federal government, they also have a 6.2 per cent. I think the employees of Saskatchewan, I think it's 7 per cent. There's a variation of pension contributions throughout the jurisdictions. And thankfully I believe Saskatchewan is on a path to sustainability. I think they also talk about a plan of fairness.

But let us not forget, the premise of a pension plan, whether it's this particular pension plan that the minister is making reference to or any other pension plan, that the workers themselves are contributing their own dollars — as opposed to being paid higher salaries — for the opportunity to be able to retire in relative comfort. And that's the whole premise of putting these pension plans in place.

So I would point out that the issues that are being brought forward on this particular bill, Bill 46, we'll pay very close attention to. We think that there's some issues, that there's a bit of fixing up on some of the minor details. So we will watch that and make sure that's the full intent of this particular bill. But rest assured, and a message to all the working people, any time that the Saskatchewan Party begin to talk about pensions or start meddling in any pensions of any sort that affects the working men and women throughout this province, Mr. Speaker, rest assured that the NDP will be paying very close attention. And we would encourage those members as well to pay very close attention to make sure, to make sure that the right wing over there doesn't start messing with something that has taken years and years to build. And, Mr. Speaker, this is what you call the pension plans of Saskatchewan and the pension plans of our country. So I think it's important. It's important that we pay very, very close attention to what is being done. And, Mr. Speaker, we will continue doing that.

I would also encourage all those folks that are in the know to come forward and share a lot of information on any pensions that are out there because quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, we all contribute to pensions as MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly]; the workers contribute to pensions as workers. And the amount of pensions that they contribute, whether you're a teacher, a doctor, a nurse, an MLA, we certainly make our contributions, matched by the province and it really . . . And then the money's invested so it makes a lot of sense to build this economy together through a pension plan.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, that it's an issue of fairness. It's certainly an issue of sustainability. We appreciate that. But let us not forget, in the place of higher income for workers, many of them have opted for pension plans. It's their only savings for the future and, Mr. Speaker, it is a good opportunity to protect our workers because, as I mentioned at the outset, if corporations are allowed to make profits, then workers should be allowed to build pensions. And, Mr. Speaker, that's a good balance. It's a solid opportunity for the people of Saskatchewan.

And I want to point out that Bill 46 is a bill that we're firmly interested in to make sure that the amendment that the minister has spoken about is all they do and that they don't try and hoodwink the people of Saskatchewan by throwing some unfair argument into the mix. And that's what the important role of the opposition is, is to make sure we hold this government to

account. So we have a lot more to say on this particular bill, Mr. Speaker. We're going to go through it carefully. We're going to seek some advice. We're going to do some consultation. And, Mr. Speaker, rest assured that all the employees over time, you know, and certainly all the employees in the future, know that when it comes to sustainability, when it comes to fairness, that that offer is extended to them. It's extended to all the parties involved and just makes common sense.

As I said at the outset, Mr. Speaker, it's a great opportunity for us to invest in our workers; it's a great opportunity for the workers to invest back in Saskatchewan; and it's a great opportunity to work hand in hand with the corporations that make profits and the workers that make pensions. Mr. Speaker, it's a great balance and it should always be sustainable and should always be fair, and from our perspective that's one of the premises that we undertake as we sit here in the opposition to watch what the Saskatchewan Party bring forward. And Bill 46 is no different. We will endeavour to make sure we look through this bill as thoroughly as we can and encourage all of the partners that are out there to do the same, to share the information with us, and continue to shine a light on anything that the Sask Party does when it comes to pensions, Mr. Speaker.

So on that note, I move that we adjourn debate on the second reading, Bill No. 46. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 46, *The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act, 2012*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

#### Bill No. 47

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff that **Bill No. 47 — *The Saskatchewan Watershed Authority Amendment Act, 2012*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Vermette:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to join in on Bill 47, *The Saskatchewan Watershed Authority Amendment Act, 2012*. Just looking at the Act and just going over it, it's taking a bunch of different, I guess, concerns that we have with water and water safety, providing water for the people of our province, whether it's drinking water, whether it's business that have to rely on water to make sure they are competitive, to make sure they have a water supply to continue to do the good work that they've been doing.

Now over years, you know, we had SaskWater. We had the Watershed Authority. You have different areas, and what they're trying to do in ministry, I think, health, there's been a lot of different components when it comes to water. And I think we hope at the end of the day this bill will bring together, you know, an agency that would look after water right through, working in partnership with industry, with municipalities to

ensure that we have safe water, that we have a continuous supply of water. And it'll work with the environment as well, Ministry of Environment.

And I know there's many challenges and people are getting more concerned today with types of, I guess, alarm bells, concerns that people are really concerned about the quality of good drinking water that people will have that for the next generation, and some of the damage that people are feeling is being done to our lakes, our rivers, and to the water supply that's vital not only to, I guess, southern people, the North, but all of Canada.

And I guess, the Idle No More movement, and I can say that I'm proud of the Idle No More movement, the awareness that they're trying to bring out not only within First Nations and the Métis and the Aboriginal population but with all Canadians, to ring the alarm bells about the federal government's dealing with water — the lakes, you know, protection. And there's not going to be protection on a lot of rivers, lakes, streams, where even in Saskatchewan we have lakes, rivers that are protected and were protected, and the federal government is weakening those protections to protect the water.

So here you have a provincial government trying to find ways to ensure that we have, we hope, meaningful . . . And going in an area, Mr. Speaker, that will protect water for the next generations for my grandchildren and great-grandchildren and for all members in this House and for all people in our province, but not only in the province, it could be in Canada. And we see some of the concerns that are being raised amongst the Idle No More movement, clearly about the supply and protection of water supply. And now you have a bill like this coming forward, and if the bill is going to have some teeth and you're going to bring different agencies together whether it's health, the environment, SaskWater — and they come together to make sure that those agencies, the resources, I guess municipalities, all the different groups, and they do have resources — I guess the idea is to focus those resources together to make sure we are doing what we need to do to protect the water.

[19:30]

So we know there's a lot of discussion that needs to go on, and that has to happen. And at the end of the day we'll hope that both sides, provincial and federal governments will hear the alarms and see what's going on. And I guess when you look at the environment overall and you look at the world and you look at some of the challenges that I think other countries are facing with not having the protection of water supply for their residents, for industry, there could be some serious challenges coming ahead.

And we see this as a start, and I say it's a start. I hope it isn't going to water down — and I say that — the protection's that currently there, that this will enhance. And we hope the government's hearing that. And if that's what the government is doing and they're going to bring the agencies together to strengthen regulations, to make sure that water supply is protected for drinking, that the water supply is there for industry in a balance — sustainable, protected to make sure that balance happens — then this is a good step in that direction.

But if all it is is smoke and mirrors, and in the end there are no protections to protect the water for the next generation so that we have water for drinking, water as we cook, water to go fishing, that all our lakes aren't contaminated, that they are protected. Whether it's agriculture industry working together with this, health, they're committed to this is what we're seeing in this, and that's what it's supposed to bring the resources together, Mr. Speaker, we hope that will happen. We hope they will consult with a lot of people, but sometimes unfortunately this government, the Sask Party government does not do that. It doesn't like to consult. It likes to have its own agenda. It pushes what it wants. It bullies people. It intimidates people. So people are a little concerned, and I don't blame them to be a little concerned. And they're cautious.

When you see a government that handles the files and some of the bills that they've handled in the past — and there's many of them we can refer to, Mr. Speaker, the way they've handled them — they haven't done them and been open with people. They haven't asked for proper input. They haven't consulted. They haven't asked for input. After the fact when the public finally gets upset and sends a message, it's no different than we've seen today with the rates with SGI and the motorcycle. It isn't so much SGI, the government has created some of those problems the way they've mismanaged the finances. So they're looking for every dollar they can possibly find, and if that means you're going to go and charge it on registering your motorcycles and some of those areas.

And the government can sit here and they can spin it the way they want, and they can try to say . . . but it comes down to there's been a lot of money in the government coffers that have not been spent properly, the way they should be, the way the public trusts a government, saying, here's our tax dollars, the public money, the assets that belong to the public. We want you and we trust clearly that you'll do right. This government's got some answering to do, and they will be answering to it. The public won't let things go away.

And I mean we have many, you know, I guess situations where can we refer to, and we will. And those questions will come forward as this session goes on, to find out exactly what some of the, I guess, concerns are. And you know, question period today was another area, Mr. Speaker, where we kind of shed some light on some of the areas where there's questions about public dollars, wasteful spending of taxpayers' dollars, hard-earned dollars that people work hard and they expect the government to take care of those dollars. They don't put that in the government's hands easy.

Some people are struggling today. They're not having a good time. It's not easy to try to put food on the table, to make sure their rent is paid. And it's not just people that are living in poverty. It's not. It's middle class. It's working families. They are struggling to make ends meet and when they see a government start to waste that money — money that's been put there, earned by hard work and sweat on their part and the government collects that in their coffers and charges them more for utilities. And the cost on the middle class, people living in poverty, and people who are struggling, it's pretty sad.

So when they say trust . . . And that's why we refer to this Bill and I'm saying that. The government will have lots of

resources, different ministries whether it's Health, Agriculture, Environment, to come together with those resources. They want to make sure that those resources, Mr. Speaker, are well taken care of — that it's not misspent, that there isn't a situation calling into question that's coming out. And there's going to be shed some light on some of those areas where government definitely has got the attention of the public.

And let's be clear. You go into the coffee shops; you start to hear people talking. They are asking questions about it. They can sit there and ignore it and they can try to, you know, brush it off. It isn't going to work. I think this is something that's going to stick with them. And I think as the investigation goes, and if it's hopefully the Provincial Auditor looks into it, and investigates, you know, the two-point-millions of dollars. And you know, it's amazing. Here we have a situation where we've got millions of dollars people are wondering about. And we're seeing dollars being asked, Mr. Speaker, from the residents that live in this province, whether it's utilities. They are asking for increase to cover off the utilities because they are taking the money out of the Crowns, because they are causing some of the problems that the Crowns are facing. And we wonder why. It goes to privatization. Is that where this is going? So people are really watching it.

And you know, it's amazing — this government, the Sask Party government focus on millions of dollars for three more MLAs which the public didn't want. They didn't consult them. They didn't ask. They didn't go to their doorstep. But it's amazing to watch how now they can go to the public to get the increases that they need to cover off some of the costs and some of the damage they are doing to our province. And you know, you talk about the growth of our province, and we encourage that. We need that. I know our party supports business. The business people have to work together.

There are challenges. There always are. You know what? You know, they can sit there and say what they want and do their heckling about it. At the end of the day, if business does well, our citizens do well. But there has to be co-operation. There has to be meaningful co-operation between employees, the business sector, and government. That has to work. This government doesn't focus on the working men and women of this province. They do not. They have a certain agenda and they work on that agenda. And that's their opportunity to reach out if they want to. I would encourage them to reach out not only to the business sector, to the working men and women but also the Aboriginal population that is suffering terribly under their watch, under their management, and under their mismanagement. And opportunities, they have such opportunities to reach out, but they don't seem to want to reach out to the Aboriginal population when it comes to training, education, when it comes to the business.

So here's another bill that they bring forward, you know. And they want to talk about bringing different ministries' and agencies' resources together. And that's fine to do that, but unfortunately we have other areas where I wish they would look a little closer to, and the Aboriginal population is one where they should be. It is a young population growing. There are many challenges and needs on and off our First Nations communities, our Métis communities, our Métis citizens.

There are challenges within our province with all citizens trying to make ends meet. The costs are going up. But sometimes you have to ask, in a province that's doing as well, we want to make sure our government protects our water. This bill, Bill 47, is going to try to attempt to do some of that, we hope. We hope. We hope that this bill . . . And we have a role as opposition to hold the government to account, and we will do that.

And at the end of the day, I'm proud of the work that my colleagues do over here, asking the tough questions, bringing the concerns of citizens who call and say, we can't get the MLAs from the Sask Party to call us. We have trouble getting our message across to the ministry. And when the public comes in here, and we've seen the film industry, we've seen different groups come here with concerns about the way this government bullies and pushes ahead on its agenda and what it wants to do without consulting. It sells off stuff without consulting. The public is watching.

And I know they like to laugh and talk about how many of them over there, and they're so humble — which they're not. They chuckle and they, you know, want to throw it around. That's fine. They can play that game. At the end of the day, the public will make a decision. And I wonder next election, that if they continue the way they're going, how many of those backbenchers will be there? Will they get a message from the public, or do they take it for granted?

But here's a good way. And you look at Bill 47. It starts to protect some water. It's a start. And I wanted to make sure, Mr. Speaker, we focus on Bill 47, what it's trying to do, we hope. We hope. But you know, sometimes, Mr. Speaker, we have to refer to other situations that have arisen in this House, other situations and concerns that citizens of this great province raise or try to raise to a government that they say does not listen. You have citizens in this province that say the government doesn't listen. The government moves on its agenda. And they talk about, oh you can have a government who say they hear you, but they actually don't act on what they hear because they have their own agenda. It's what they want. It isn't what the people want.

But I tell you, Mr. Speaker, the people will hold the finances of our province. The people hold, whether it's Bill 47 with resources and it's the public's dollars that run this ministry, it's the public dollars that that government is responsible to make sure they spend right, that contracts are developed, not a handshake. Now let's make it clear on that. People want to protect their money and they want protection, and it isn't done by a handshake or, oh yes, well we'll do a verbal contract. That doesn't cut it for the people. They want to make sure things are done, so they want to see actual contracts. And that's important. That's the accountability.

But obviously we're seeing some light being shed, and I think there's going to be a few skeletons that will come out of the closets over there. And maybe it's time that maybe the public — six years; they've had six years — maybe the public is going to start looking at them. They're so confident. And sometimes, good, I'm glad you're confident. But sometimes it goes too far. And I think the people are going to hold the Sask Party to account for their dollars, because they're struggling out there to make ends meet.



So they want to make sure, like in Bill 47, the resources that the government has, you take care of those resources — every dollar. You make sure you're doing what's needed. And they want to make sure that the resources that we have, and we see at the end of the day that people want to say, you did the right thing as a government. And sometimes we work together, whether it's the opposition and the government. We can work together. We've shown that co-operation. Sometimes there's a reason to work together and we pass legislation without hurdles. We try to improve because it benefits all of us in the province and it takes care of a need. So we've done that. And again, I'll say that — it's important, Mr. Speaker. Sometimes we come together and we do try to solve some of the serious issues that affect our citizens in our province. And that I say is governing the province together.

Now having said that, we're not always going to agree on some of the things. But I know one thing — the public wants to make sure that the resources that they give to this government and the government coffers, that the government takes care and shows respect, accountability. And I think the way we see things coming out — and we'll see more of that in the next probably months as things are uncovered — there are some serious problems going on. And I think the people are going to demand some answers.

And they're not going to ask for the little shell game and they ain't going to ask for the PR [public relations] spin shop and they ain't going to ask for the media spin that the government tries to put on some of the stuff, the photo ops that they want to be in. They're going to ask for some tough questions. They're going to ask us to ask those tough questions, and they're going to want some answers.

So I say, Bill 47, it's a start to work on protecting water. You're taking different ministries together and it's a start. And I know a lot of my colleagues will have a lot more questions. We're going to consult with individuals out there, seeing what is the best way to handle this legislation.

So when I say that, Mr. Speaker, clearly we want to make sure that the people of our province, the ministries come together to make sure that we're doing the right things and we are protecting the water so that there is good drinking water, safe drinking water, not only for municipalities but for First Nations communities, our municipal communities in northern Saskatchewan, wherever — everyone has a right to that.

So this may be a good start, but we'll see where the regulations go. We'll find out, like everything else, in the details what comes out with this Bill 47. But again, Mr. Speaker, clearly, clearly it's going to be interesting to see where things go in the next little while.

And at this point, Mr. Speaker, I know a few of my other colleagues want a few things they want to talk about and there's more bills that we have to debate, so at this time I will adjourn debate on Bill 47, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 47, *The Saskatchewan Watershed Authority Amendment Act, 2012*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

[19:45]

### Bill No. 48

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff that **Bill No. 48 — *The Management and Reduction of Greenhouse Gases Amendment Act, 2012*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise and make some comments about Bill No. 48, *An Act to amend The Management and Reduction of Greenhouse Gases Act*.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is quite a short piece of legislation because it effectively relates to the province attempting to bring our provincial legislation in compliance with federal legislation, the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999*, commonly known as CEPA. And what is required under that legislation for provincial legislation to be declared equivalent is that it has some provision for a citizen's investigation power so that citizens have the right to make complaints and actually have an investigation take place.

Right now our legislation doesn't have that specific provision, and when one looks at the sections that are part of this rather short bill, it effectively puts in those provisions. And so what we have is a situation then where the new sections, 62.1 to 62.3, have been added into *The Management and Reduction of Greenhouse Gases Act*.

And what it says is as simple as this, is that any resident who's 18 years of age, who has an opinion that there's some contravention of the legislation, can make a complaint and they can apply to the minister, and that investigation then needs to take place following the rules that are here. And basically that's what's here.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's important though to understand the context in which this particular legislation is being brought forward. We know that over many decades the concerns that have been registered by governments of all political persuasions in Canada from the provincial level has been that the federal legislation doesn't always take into account some of the regional nature of the country, and it doesn't take into account some of the very specific kinds of issues that arise in a local jurisdiction. And so what we will sometimes have is a situation where a company or a project or some activity complies with provincial legislation but not with federal legislation. And there's always been this discussion between the federal government and provincial governments around how to coordinate that kind of legislation.

Some steps have been taken over the last number of decades which have allowed for common perspective on how to regulate particular industries. And what this particular legislation does is remove another impediment to the province being the regulator

for one aspect of environmental issues, and that relates to obviously the management and reduction of greenhouse gases.

Now this could be something that's not necessarily that significant. But it's also part of a bigger issue around what's happened in Canada in the last six, seven, or eight years and one of the things that's happened in Canada as it relates to environmental regulation. And the perspective is that there's been effectively less and less emphasis at a national level on setting up standards and more and more of this being pushed down to the provinces and the territories.

Now given all of the discussion over the decades, it hasn't necessarily been something that everybody has been totally concerned about. But when you look at the kind of discussions that take place within the corporate legal world, within the people who are trying to comply with the rules, if I can put it that way . . . And often it's the vice-president and corporate legal secretary of a particular company who has to give advice on what are the rules that we have to comply with to proceed with our business, whether it's an oil refinery or a power plant or maybe even some of the fisheries operations. All of these different activities are rule-driven, and the rules are there for protection of the public, protection of the environment, and protection for the long-term future of our country. It also relates to a number of the forestry issues and things like that.

Now what we've seen in the last number of years has been a great reduction or neglect of these kinds of perspectives at the centre of Canada, at the national level. And it's played out in quite a number of different ways. But as it relates to greenhouse gases and the whole climate change issue, there clearly has been a perspective from the national level and I think to a point from the provincial level where evidence from scientific investigation is discounted.

We see on a national level that the ability of federal scientists to actually communicate with the public around the research that they're doing has been removed. We see that there's been a collapse of the funding for many of the projects. I think the biggest and most egregious example is a whole series of lakes that have been studied for many, many decades that were part of the Canadian contribution to world science as it relates to limnology, the study of the water and environment. That has been cut back and I think is close to being eliminated during this year.

Well that perspective at a national level has played down into many other areas. And frankly, one of the major problems that we're having right now, our Premier's going to Washington tomorrow to speak Wednesday and Thursday around the whole issue of the XL pipeline and environmental issues that are there. All people who live here in Western Canada are supportive of making sure that our products have ways to get to the market, and XL pipeline is another activity that is part of that particular task. It's building on obviously a long history we have in Western Canada of building safe and effective pipelines.

But one of the things that's happened in the United States and around the world is that that pipeline and that perspective has raised the ire of many of the environmental groups in the United States and Canada. And it's become a symbol around the fact that Canada's perspective or Canada's position in the world as

it relates to environmental protection, climate protection, climate change science, environmental science has been so damaged by federal government decisions and, I think, some of the things that have been happening provincially, that people are taking on some of the important industrial kinds of activities that we have. And so what we have is a sense that in Canada the environment, the climate change issues are not as important to our governments, both federally and provincially here in Saskatchewan. And that affects business. That affects the economy. And we're seeing those kinds of effects as we move forward.

This particular legislation is one that ties in with the federal legislation that is seen to be not as stringent a standard, not as world-class as Canada had always hoped to be in that position, and as a result we have our Premier having to go down there and defend what we're doing in this province in a situation where people who oppose our perspective around our oil industry and around some of those kinds of things can say, well yes, you're part of the Canadian system where you dismiss scientific evidence that everybody else in the world accepts, where you diminish the role of environmental regulation, where you diminish the role of government on behalf of all the people and of the businesses, on behalf of the environment. You diminish that role as protector.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when we in this province have ended up pushing aside some of these responsibilities that we've had . . . We've taken on some projects, but it's very clear when people look at some of the plans that we had 10 years ago that have been pushed to the side. We know that people are criticizing what we have done in Saskatchewan, but I think even more importantly what we have done in Canada on a national basis.

Now I know that the Minister of Environment, when he was speaking on his second reading speech on November 5th, got way over the top on explaining that our federal Environment minister was doing an excellent job. I think he even calls him a . . . "Peter Kent is indeed an excellent, excellent minister." Well, Mr. Speaker, some of the issues that we have internationally as Canadians and as Saskatchewan people point to the fact that the federal government and the federal Minister of Environment are not doing the kind of role that we have expected as Canadians.

And I make a plea to our provincial government that they don't try to follow or emulate some of that, especially as it relates to the funding of research, the funding of science. But unfortunately some of our great assets that we have here in Saskatchewan are under tremendous pressure around the funding that's available for them to continue to do the work that's absolutely necessary. And I make this plea here in this legislature because it affects our economy. It affects our ability to market products from our part of the world, our Saskatchewan, when we have others looking at us and saying, there's something suspect about your environmental regulation. There's something suspect about your participation in some of the things that are happening nationally.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what we want to do in legislation that we have in Saskatchewan is to provide assurance to the people of the province that Saskatchewan will remain this great, important place that we have always treasured. We want to

make sure that whatever industrial activity takes place in our province is done according to the best rules, the latest rules, and those rules that are going to protect our land and our water and our air.

[20:00]

And, Mr. Speaker, that happens based on the actual activities and perhaps some of the kind of work that comes from this particular legislation which is effectively putting in a complaint process around the standards, but it also happens with a basic attitude towards the value of research science. And, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately our present government seems to identify too closely with the federal government and their ability to dismiss the research and the evidence that we all need as Canadians to make sure that protections are in place.

Now the smart companies, the smart-growth people of the world at the inter- or transnational or cross-border companies that operate worldwide know that those places where the rules are the tightest, the rules are the clearest, the rules are based on evidence, those are the places that you want to do business because then your customers can be assured that you have a product that's come with the best standards attached and the best work that can be done. And, Mr. Speaker, that is the goal of our party and has always been the goal to try to be in that particular role.

Now I know from personal experience as the former Minister of Environment that when we sold the upgrader in Regina, the goal was to set aside that \$300 million to deal with a number of these issues. Eventually, \$30 million out of the 300 million was used for that. The other money went other places and it's disappeared. But, Mr. Speaker, the goal there was to use money from an asset that did have an impact on the environment to actually go and address a number of these issues.

And unfortunately the last five years or six years of this government has seen a steady diminishment in the size of the Environment department and in their oversight and in some of the activities that they do. There is an attempt to respond by saying, well we're doing it in different ways or doing it in smarter ways, but unfortunately I think that a lot of what's happened in our province is that we have gone down the same path as the federal government where we've diminished the value of research, we've diminished the value of evidence in how we plan and in what we do.

We all know that Saskatchewan is in the prairie basin where adaptation to climate change will become one of the main political activities for the governments of the province over the next 100 years. And the reason for that is going to the mountains and looking to see the source of our water. We know that the great water towers of the earth in the mountains which, you know, the Columbia glacier, the Athabasca glacier, all of those in the Rockies, they're diminishing in size to a point where people are concerned. And so what we need to look at when we're doing that is, how does that affect some of the decisions we made around greenhouse gases? Why are we managing and reducing greenhouse gases? Because we are concerned about the contribution to world climate change. And, Mr. Speaker, we are going to be in a situation where a lot of these issues are clearly part of the long-term concern that we

have.

Now when decisions are made in budgets that diminish these longer term goals for short-term political gains, we all lose. And I'm not sure exactly what's coming in the budget as we move forward as it relates to the management and reduction of greenhouse gases, but I suspect, given the Premier's present perspective on these types of issues, that this is an area where we're going to see less resources and less importance attached. This is wrong. It's bad for our present generation, but it's really bad for the next generations to come because this is going to be one of the biggest issues that we have in Saskatchewan.

Now when the Columbia River Treaty was put into place, I guess it'll be 60 years ago, coming in another couple of years, there was a big discussion in this legislature — and I've raised this here before — around whether Saskatchewan should be included in the Columbia River Treaty. Now we're sitting here and people are saying, well what's the Columbia River have to do with Saskatchewan? It's in British Columbia and it's in Idaho and it's in, well one of the tributaries is in Idaho, but it's in Washington and Oregon. And the issue is that one of the concerns raised by the Saskatchewan government in the '50s was where we would get more fresh water supply for the southern part of the prairies when the glaciers are gone. And clearly when you look at pictures that are taken in the '50s compared to now, we can see the diminishment of the amount of water that's there.

I know 10 days ago there was a seminar where some of our Saskatchewan experts were speaking, including the new expert on water from the University of Saskatchewan, at Canmore, Alberta. And one of the issues that they were looking at was, once again, the amount of water that's available. Those kinds of issues play right back into this particular legislation because they relate to how we respond and deal with the effects of greenhouse gases on a worldwide basis. And our particular task is to make sure that we are contributing to the full extent possible.

Now there are a whole number of areas where we have done some very good science and we've developed some very good projects that relate to the management and reduction of greenhouse gases. My plea to the government is that they don't just pass legislation and do those kinds of things, but they actually fund and provide resources for the science for the evidence to be developed here in Saskatchewan.

Now when a country such as Canada loses its reputation as being one of the people at the forefront of the environmental perspective in the world, it takes a long time to get that reputation back. The same is true of a province. And we have many, many challenges in this area that we have to continue to deal with, but the reputation that we have is crucial. And, Mr. Speaker, when our Premier goes to the United States to talk to US [United States] politicians, the pressure on those US politicians is to find out more about what the Saskatchewan perspective is on environmental regulation, what the Canadian perspective is about environmental regulation.

And I would rather have the Premier be able to go down with some solid evidence from our scientists, from the people that are actually doing the work that we need, rather than just have

some sort of sales flyers and PR because we know that in the long term that will not win out. And, Mr. Speaker, when you end up with these very serious problems and your only response is another phrase, another glossy kind of response, then we'll end up with difficulty as we go forward.

Now we know from the history of British Columbia that they ended up in a very, very difficult situation as it related to their forestry industry because of the worldwide perspective that their forest products were not respecting the sacred and special places of British Columbia as it related to the harvesting of the trees. And one of the responses after much turmoil in that province was through the work of the late Stan Hagen, who was a minister in the BC [British Columbia] government, to eventually working with many people and many of the individuals who were concerned about the protection of the coast was to set up the Great Spirit Bear wilderness, which encompasses a big part of the coast between Prince Rupert down almost to Sechelt, almost to Vancouver. And what that did was start the change of the worldwide perspective that there was something not good, there was something environmentally wrong with products from the province of British Columbia. That was a perception. It wasn't necessarily a fact but it was a perception that took a long time to deal with.

In Saskatchewan, and more importantly I think for the province of Alberta, they have a worldwide perception of their oil product being something negative, something that others don't want. And the question is, how do we make sure that our legislation and what we do in this province keeps us from getting into that kind of a negative perception around the world? Unfortunately some of the steps at the federal government level and at the provincial government level have put us in a situation where we're having to try to catch up. What we know is that a number of the activities that Alberta thought were helpful in promoting their industries as it relates to the oil sands of northern Alberta have actually been causing a great deal of difficulty.

And so, Mr. Speaker, this particular legislation may, in the whole scheme of things, seem to be quite a small piece but it has this simple requirement that an individual 18 years of age and older can make a complaint to the minister about a problem related to the management and reduction of greenhouse gases. And I think that's a good kind of provision to have in there, but we need to recognize that it's part of a bigger and more important world. It's about the perception of what we as Canadians, as what we as Saskatchewan people are doing and how we are concerned about our environment. And, Mr. Speaker, we cannot underestimate the importance of that perception.

And I remind the government, I remind the Premier that there's a major task here and that we need to do those things in Saskatchewan which show we can be leaders in this field. Let's not lose some of our really good science. Let's not lose some of our really good research. Let's not lose some of our institutions that are important in this worldwide perspective. And let's do it in a way that we can all be proud of what's happening and in a way that others will point to us and say, these people are doing this kind of work in an appropriate long-term way that protects the Earth.

Mr. Speaker, with that I would ask to adjourn debate on this Bill No. 48.

**The Speaker:** — The member has moved that Bill No. 48, *The Management and Reduction of Greenhouse Gases Amendment Act, 2012* be adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

[20:15]

### Bill No. 49

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff that **Bill No. 49** — *The Forestry Professions Amendment Act, 2012* be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure tonight to join into discussion on Bill No. 49, *An Act to amend The Forestry Professions Act*.

Mr. Speaker, this piece of legislation has to do, as the title would suggest, with forestry and with the profession of being a forester, Mr. Speaker. And it makes some changes with respect to individuals who are practising in this field in order to ensure that the professional designation that they do have, Mr. Speaker, is protected and has the same type of understanding and importance that it has in other jurisdictions across the country.

The few pieces to this piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, were outlined by the minister responsible on November 5th, 2012. The minister talked about the importance of this piece of legislation and the way that he described it was, "elevating the forestry profession to the same level as other provinces do in Canada with similar legislation." So it's the idea, Mr. Speaker, that if someone is calling themselves a forester here in Saskatchewan, it means the same thing as in BC or New Brunswick, in other places. And there is a passing reference, Mr. Speaker, in the minister's remarks later on as this relates to ensuring consistency with respect to trade and labour mobility agreements.

And actually I think, Mr. Speaker, I've given a number of speeches on other types of legislation that have come into being here in the Assembly because of the need for consistency with other jurisdictions based on agreements. And in each of those discussions, Mr. Speaker, what's often highlighted, and I think appropriately, is the need to strive for consistency across the country when possible, but also to ensure that Saskatchewan's own needs and considerations are in fact respected and adhered to as they need to be. So it's about striking the correct balance, as I would see it.

Mr. Speaker, foresters do a number of important things in our province. Forestry has traditionally played an important role in

Saskatchewan and ought to play a significant role in the years to come. It's important, Mr. Speaker, that those who call themselves foresters have the skills that are required to do the job well, that they have the professional accountability that is required by their peers, and that they also are there in order to meet the needs of the companies that they are working for. But more importantly, Mr. Speaker, to protect the interests of the forests that are throughout Saskatchewan, or at least throughout the northern part of Saskatchewan.

There's a number of issues where foresters need to know what they're doing according to the standards, according to the training that they've received, the examinations that they've had. And the designation is very important. So whether it comes to the issue of building a resource road and understanding how that is best done through a piece of forest and mapping that out in an appropriate way to have the minimal impact on the environment, or whether, Mr. Speaker, it has to do with enforcing protocols with respect to crossing rivers and creeks that may have fish or be fish habitat, not even fish habitat, Mr. Speaker, but it's important that foresters know the rules and enforce the rules properly as it relates to the companies that they are working with, and then as well as with the many subcontractors and other professions that may be working on the cutblocks, Mr. Speaker, in order to ensure that the rules are followed and that the environmental protection is first and foremost.

And of course there's many components to forestry, not the least of which has to do with the control of invasive species as it refers for plants as well as with animals. So the application of herbicides and pesticides as it relates to the weather and the conditions and all of these factors and as it relates to the . . . as it has an effect on the environment and people, these are important issues, Mr. Speaker. So it's important to ensure that the people that are calling themselves foresters are in fact operating under the highest standards that are required and that the meaning of being a forester in one area would be consistent with another part of the country. And so it's important for the profession to be able to regulate itself in order to . . . It's important for it to protect that designation so that when someone says that they are a forester, that they are in fact respected and doing the best that they possibly can. And it's important to ensure that individuals who might casually be using that designation are held accountable for doing so.

A number of components here, Mr. Speaker, that are addressed with the legislation here. It is said, Mr. Speaker, that this was done in consultation with the industry, and of course that's our desire and hope that that is the case and what normally happens. So I know as we continue to do our discussions and hear from individuals involved in the industry, Mr. Speaker, I hope that that is a true reflection of what has occurred and what will occur.

There is talk, Mr. Speaker, with the government's move to a results-based regulatory framework, so that does have major implications I think for the forestry industry as well as other industries, especially as it relates to environmental protection. So results-based is a positive thing because we want to see what the results are. And that should guide things, Mr. Speaker, but it should never be used as a euphemism for lower control or lower enforcement of regulations because we need to ensure that the

process is as good as it ought to be and that our resource is protected as it ought to be, as well as the environment as a whole.

So, Mr. Speaker, this piece of legislation is specifically addressing the forestry profession. It's bringing the standards within the province consistent with other jurisdictions. It allows some protection for the use of the term, which is important, and this, Mr. Speaker, elevates the role of the profession or the significance of the profession consistent with other professions so that those that are reliant on foresters, whether that's the general public who want our resources protected and preserved in a positive way or whether that's industry involved with the activity . . . This is an important step.

But as with everything that we examine, when it involves consultation with the industry and making decisions, it's important to ensure that the words coming from the minister opposite with respect to the second reading speech, it's important to ensure that they're accurate and consistent with the reality on the ground. And we look forward to continuing those discussions to determine that, Mr. Speaker. So with that I would conclude my remarks on Bill No. 49 and move to adjourn debate. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Saskatoon Massey Place has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 49, *The Forestry Professions Amendment Act, 2012*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

### Bill No. 50

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Duncan that **Bill No. 50** — *The Medical Profession Amendment Act, 2012* be now read a second time.]

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm pleased to enter the debate on Bill No. 50, *The Medical Profession Amendment Act, 2012*. I'd like to start the discussion a little bit by just discussing the minister's second reading comments and what he has said that the bill is going to do.

This particular bill, *The Medical Profession Amendment Act* will, says the minister, will permit the college to respond more quickly to the anticipated national changes in categories of licensure of the health professionals. And he also says it's about maintaining current addresses and contact info for physicians and will help the College of Physicians and Surgeons better communicate with doctors, keeping information up to date when they join or leave a practice. And the minister has said this bill is put forward . . . It will also support proper and secure storage, disposal, and transfer of patients' files.

So the one thing the minister also had mentioned in his second

reading speech . . . It's important in opposition or from anybody in Saskatchewan to know who is putting a bill forward because that tells you a little bit about what the bill might be doing. And the minister mentioned in his remarks that it is in fact the College of Physicians and Surgeons that is asking for these changes. He also talked about consultation in this particular second reading speech and he says that, I'd like to say:

And I'd like to thank the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association, the Saskatchewan Medical Association, the Saskatchewan Association of Licensed Practical Nurses, the Saskatchewan College of Pharmacists, the Registered Psychiatric Nurses Association of Saskatchewan, and all of our regional health authorities. These organizations provided valuable insight, and we appreciate their interest and their contributions to this process.

Well I'm very glad to hear that the minister has said that he's consulted with all these organizations. It's unfortunate that the government hasn't taken this approach with many other pieces of legislation and many other changes that it's foisted upon the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Consultation, I think, is the cornerstone of good policy making. You can't make good policies that will . . . What ends up happening if you don't consult and have meaningful dialogue with people who are impacted, it creates negative consequences, unintended consequences. So it's very important in embarking upon policy changes and legislative changes that you actually talk to people.

We saw actually today there were some questions raised in the legislature about proposed rate hikes for SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] for motorcycle riders. This is a 70 per cent plus increase. And the government has put this out there and there's been a lot of pushback and the government is back-peddalling a little bit. But you know what, Mr. Deputy Speaker? You could save yourself a lot of trouble when you bring legislation or any kind of policy change forward if you talked to people who are impacted by policy.

We also today talked a little bit about *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* and consultation. And actually, I had the opportunity to speak to the bill earlier on and pointed out that this government, when it proposed *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*, 90 days of consultation on 100 years of labour legislation, whereas the federal government in 2005 set out a paper in February of 2005 and didn't come up with recommendations until almost two years later, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So that to me is what consultation is about, allowing people to participate in the process. So I'm glad to hear that there has been an occasion where the government has consulted.

But in my three years in this legislature, there's also been times where we've heard that the government . . . The government tells us that they've consulted, and even lists groups and organizations, and we discover later that in fact there hasn't been any contact or any discussion with those groups. So our job in the opposition is to reach out to groups and organizations and find out if really they have been a part of this process as they've been so named as being part of the process.

But with respect to Bill No. 50, I think it's important to talk a

little bit about what the College of Physicians and Surgeons actually does. It's a statutory self-regulating body that's established by legislation, the medical professionals Act, and charged with the responsibility of licensing properly qualified medical practitioners. So basically for any doctor to be licensed here in Saskatchewan, he or she has to be approved by the College of Physicians and Surgeons.

The college is also responsible for developing and ensuring the standards of practice in all fields of medicine. So this is very much about public safety, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The college is also responsible for investigating and disciplining of all doctors whose standards of medical care, ethical or professional conduct are questioned. So the College of Physicians . . . That's a little bit about the College of Physicians and Surgeons.

One of the changes that the minister had mentioned, he had said that these changes will permit the college to respond more quickly to the anticipated national changes and categories of licensure of health professionals. There's one particular agreement on — I'm assuming that this may be where some of the changes will be taking place — there is one regulatory agreement by the Federation of Medical Regulatory Authorities of Canada, an agreement on national standards for medical registration in Canada. And the 13 provinces and territorial medical regulatory authorities all belong to this. So Saskatchewan, the College of Physicians and Surgeons is a member of this body.

It's interesting. They have principles that they've laid out that I would just like to touch on briefly, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The principles of this agreement on national standards for medical registration in Canada include "That the protection of the public is the primary responsibility of the medical regulatory authorities." Principle no. 2 is "To the minimum standards set out in this agreement for full and provisional medical licensure in Canada."

Principle no. 3 is "On consistent and sufficiently rigorous registration . . ." And this is what this agreement is all about. They agreed, these 13 bodies agreed that "On consistent and sufficiently rigorous registration and licensure processes for physicians across all Canadian jurisdictions." They agreed "To support the mobility of physicians across Canadian jurisdictions." And they agreed "To assess the following criteria [what they call] (the 5 E's) to issue a license to practise medicine." They talk about:

- a) Education (undergraduate education leading to a medical degree);
- b) Evaluation of undergraduate medical education (knowledge, skills and professionalism);
- c) Experience (postgraduate medical education);
- d) Evaluation of postgraduate medical education (knowledge, skills and professionalism); [and]
- e) Evidence of currency of practice.

So those are the principles laid out in this particular regulatory agreement on national standards.

[20:30]

So, the one other thing that the minister had mentioned, which I

said at the start of my remarks, is he talked about privacy and how “The college will be able to better communicate with physicians and keep information up to date when physicians join or leave a practice.” And the minister argues that this “. . . will support proper and secure storage, disposal, and transfer of patient files and improve disaster planning processes.” Obviously this is about privacy, and so the minister has said that.

And we’ve seen, in my time here in the legislature, several cases of breaches of privacy of confidential information, sensitive patient files that have been incredibly problematic. The one thing . . . And again, this legislation and the College of Physicians of Surgeons is there. It’s not just doctors’ legislation; this legislation is set out to protect people. This is very much about protection of the public.

And when it comes to privacy, perhaps the minister should have added to his list of consultations perhaps the independent officer, the Privacy Commissioner. The Privacy Commissioner points out, in a conversation with the opposition, that this piece of legislation . . . Or there is no acknowledgement in any of these changes to requiring physicians to have a privacy policy.

He also points out, the Privacy Commissioner also pointed out that he sees this legislation as empowering but not requiring action in regard to privacy. So this will be through the college bylaws. For example, the change of address speaks to a physician but it doesn’t speak specifically to their records. And it’s the records that are the problem, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So this is perhaps someone that the minister should have added to his list and perhaps should go back to the Privacy Commissioner and see if there is anything else that should be included in this legislation.

So with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do know that I have colleagues who will also be weighing in on this legislation as well. And we will continue to have our dialogue with organizations and individuals who are impacted by this, and we’ll carry on this debate. But with that, I would like to move to adjourn debate.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Saskatoon Riversdale has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 50, the medical profession Act, 2012. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

### Bill No. 51

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 51 — *The Public Inquiries Act, 2012/Loi de 2012 sur les enquêtes publiques*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It’s a pleasure to stand tonight and enter into the debate on Bill

No. 51, *An Act respecting Inquiries concerning Public Matters and making consequential amendments to certain Acts.*

And I think this is an important bill. Clearly it’s a product of some very thoughtful work. Whenever we see the work that comes out of the Uniform Law Conference of Canada, it’s nice to see work that we try to get a consistent approach right across the country. We all have our unique characteristics that should be reflected in our laws. But as much as possible I think that, and in that we are Canadian and we expect a certain level of standards when it comes to how we approach these kinds of matters, it’s good to draw on work such as that.

So I find this interesting because I do think that we’ve talked a lot on this side about consultation: how to get the best type of legislation we possibly can, how do we serve the public interest as well as we can. And clearly this kind of legislation speaks to it. It is an enabling piece of legislation. I just feel, unfortunate that I would like to have seen it in place already and many of the things we could be talking about could be the result of these things. We always like to drive around in a Cadillac, I guess, as much as we can when we could walk to the store. But I think that this kind of work is interesting.

And I found the minister’s comments here helpful to understand how this came about. And he gave a bit of a history, you know, talking about the current public inquiries Act; it’s been in force for nearly a century and the kind of work that’s come from that. And there’s been some very significant pieces of work that have come from people who’ve helped us understand the challenges that face Saskatchewan people and their public issues.

It’s interesting that we’re really talking about creating two types of inquiry commissions: one, the study commission to research, examine, provide advice on public policy; and hearing commissions where they may be a bit more serious when it comes to matters where there’s a possibility of findings of misconduct and so on.

And I would really think the study commission is one that would be of interest. I mean, you know, we have been so focused and I have, as Labour critic, been so focused on labour issues recently that I would have thought that would’ve been a perfect example of where we could’ve used a study commission.

You know, my colleague from Saskatoon Riversdale talked about Judge Arthurs’s report, *Fairness at Work*, and how I’ve always thought that was a very good piece of public research that informed issues that are important to people across Canada. We should have been taking that kind of approach on the many issues here in our province. And so I hope to see, I hope to see — and I think on our side if this bill does get to be passed — that we will be asking for more of these types of things because we need better, better information and it needs to be done in a public way, a public way so we can all be engaged.

For example, one of the things I thought that was very interesting in this bill before us — and I want to make sure I get the section right, bilingual, so I have to make sure I read the right page for us all to get the most out of this — and it’s on page 5, actually page 6, “Participation at inquiry.” I always feel that it’s very important that as many people can participate as

possible because that is a way of developing capacity or a greater understanding of the issue at hand.

Now it's not that this is an educational project, but as well, those people who come out to listen to these commissions at their hearings will come away thinking, oh I didn't realize this, or now I understand this. And I think this is very, very important. So it talks about:

**Participation at inquiry**

A commission shall give those persons who reasonably believe that they have an interest in the matter that is the subject of the inquiry an opportunity to apply to participate in the inquiry.

Then the:

(2) A commission shall determine whether a person is permitted to participate in an inquiry, and the manner and extent of his or her participation, after considering [and there are three factors]:

- (a) whether the person's interests may be adversely affected by the findings of the commission;
- (b) whether the person's participation would further the conduct of the inquiry; and
- (c) whether the person's participation would contribute to the openness and fairness of the inquiry.

And I really appreciate the word openness because too much now we have seen and in this labour process that we've been engaged in, even though the minister has released documents on the Internet, it really hasn't been a full, open process because people have not had the chance to see people come and bear witness or participate in a dialogue. And it's really important to do that. And it goes on:

(3) A person who is permitted to participate in inquiry may participate on his or her own behalf or be represented by counsel of his or her choice.

So I think it's really important that we think about these things. And I think that, you know, the opportunity for us to have better, stronger public policy because of this and as well that second stream of the hearing where we can get to the bottom of situations where there may be potential for misconduct. And we want to have that public trust re-established because, as you know, in a government atmosphere it's important that the public believes and has a confidence in the government and its agents and the people who operate on its behalf or at different levels where the government has been asked to step in.

So I think this is an important issue. And one of the things that I didn't see in this but it may be in here — we'll have to ask questions at the committee — is did the minister have a chance to touch base with the officers of the legislature, particularly the Ombudsman, who has some experience in doing this kind of work? And were they able to give their input into how this might proceed? Because clearly, you know, he does talk about the 100 years of experience in the old Act.

So maybe we really need to, when we do this new one, that we draw from some experience. And I'm thinking of particularly

the Ombudsman. I'm also thinking of the Privacy Commissioner because you know, as well as being a big fan of public meetings and all of that, I am very cognizant of the fact that there's a privacy issue here as well. And it's very important that, have we taken that into account? And quite often we will see issues of that where it's just not been taken into account and really needs to be taken into account.

So I think that there's a lot here and it's very interesting. The question that I will have again . . . You know, it was funny and I keep going back to the example of the labour situation we have in front of us with Bill 85, but when we asked about this when the minister announced it last May, he said it wasn't going to cost anything and it was just going to be absorbed in the budget. Then we find out in December that in fact it actually cost to that date, the end of November — and I don't know what it's cost since then but I imagine the bill keeps going up; I don't imagine it's going down — but it was \$700,000 that it had taken, the cost. So at that point I would say, value for money. Would he have been further ahead to have a study done, actually hire some experts in the field to do the work that really needed to be done?

So my question will be, in the budget that we see in a couple of weeks, will ministries have the ability to say, okay we've just been told that we would like to have a study on this or subject B or subject A or subject C. Will they have the resources to be able to do that? We see where a ministry had to come back for supplementary estimates and ask for \$700,000 because they seriously underestimated the cost of the work ahead. And that was a significant, significant hit on a budget that's not that big. The Ministry of Labour does not have a large budget and for him to be overspent by \$700,000 when clearly somebody could tell that this was going to cost some money.

But again, I think he would have been better served by using one of the instruments that we're talking about here in this type of thing, where it would have been much . . . People would have had more confidence in the outcome, they would have been upfront, they would have said it's going to cost \$500,000. It would have been very odd for the minister to say, we're not going to give you any money. But he would have said probably, you know we are anticipating it's going to cost us 700,000. Probably, by the end of the day, I would not be surprised if Bill 85 and that whole process of getting there will be knocking on the door of \$1 million in the course of the whole year.

And that's probably why they're in a rush to get it done, so the bills stop coming in, you know, because it is costing more money and they don't want it to drag on. Maybe that's the reason. I don't know, but it could be because we know that it was first estimated to cost nothing.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I digress. I should get back to this bill at hand. Forgive me, but I do want to talk about this because I think this is very important. How do we have the confidence of the public in the work that we do? Because these are important issues at hand and clearly we have a challenge. We have several challenges in this province that are worthy of study, and one of them is jobs; the workplace, all of that. And I think that this is important work that we need to have done.

And it does go on actually, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It does talk



about public hearings and talks about that the commission shall ensure (a) that hearings are open to the public and the public is given access to the information submitted in a hearing, which is very, very important. And two, that if it's a problem:

(2) A commission may, by order, exclude the public from all or part of its proceedings, or restrict or prohibit the public reporting of all or part of its proceedings and the publishing of any evidence at the inquiry, if the commission decides that the public interest in an open hearing or in reporting or publication is outweighed by another consideration . . .

And so it goes on. And actually, it does talk about for:

any reason for which information could or must be withheld by a public body pursuant to *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* or *The Health Information Protection Act*.

[20:45]

So there you go. That seems to be something good and that connects with that. That's very important, public security. And in the opinion of the commission, it's necessary for the effective and efficient fulfillment of the commission's terms of reference and the right of any person to a fair trial. Clearly that's a principle of our democracy and that needs to be in the legislation.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think that in many ways we are looking at something that has a lot of potential. And of course as I said, the potential though is it's always neat to have something pretty special in the tool kit but if you're never going to use it, that's a problem. And if you're not going to provide the resources within the budgetary cycle to say, listen if you've got an issue you really want to examine, here's a couple of tools . . . You can either do, as the minister described, a study commission to research, examine, provide advice on public policy, or hearing commissions to delve into those matters where there may be issues or the possibility of finding of misconduct.

So we think this is something that will be of interest, to see how it's used in Saskatchewan. You know, we do have committees that do work and they're out there. You know, one that comes to mind that I know this government took a lot of pride, in fact it was a campaign promise, was the committee on child exploitation through the sex trade some 10 years ago in 1999. And of course, it was a campaign promise that they would reconvene that. Now maybe this would be the group to do that. I don't know. But it was very interesting was that it was an all-party committee to do that. And I hope that at some point they will do that.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would think that . . . I know that we've got a busy night ahead of us and there's lots of work for us. There's no shortage of that for sure when we come back in the spring. But to that end, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to move adjournment of Bill No. 51, *An Act respecting Inquiries concerning Public Matters and making consequential amendments to certain Acts*. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Saskatoon Centre

has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 51. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

### Bill No. 52

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 52** — *The Public Inquiries Consequential Amendments Act, 2012* be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. My comments won't be very long indeed because this is a consequential Act and there was not much. And even as I review the minister's comments, pretty much the same. But it is important to know that when we do this, that it's important that we look at all the tentacles of legislation and that it's out there and we must make sure that everything is in place. And it is interesting that when you look through it, it is actually quite a list. It's a considerable list of Acts that must be amended and of course it only makes sense that we do that, and of course that they would follow hand in glove with the previous bill, Bill No. 51.

And so as I review this, this is relatively straightforward and I think that it will be very important that we have more questions on 51, 52. They come together, as I said, hand in glove, and I don't have much more to add than that, other than saying I would like to move adjournment of Bill No. 52, *The Public Inquiries Consequential Amendments Act, 2012*. Thank you very much.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Saskatoon Centre has moved to adjourn debate on Bill 52. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

### Bill No. 53

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 53** — *The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal Act, 2012 (No. 2)* be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise to speak to Bill 53, *An Act to repeal miscellaneous obsolete Statutes and to amend The Saskatchewan Development Fund Act*. So this is, I suppose, putting two bills or more into one to keep down the numbers on the bills of the legislature. It's another way, I suppose, of doing a bit of PR. You get too many numbers here and it looks like this government's only

concerned about passing bills. So perhaps when we get number 86 or 87 or whatever the number was we hit today — I guess 86 — this bill could have added another 12 numbers, so we might have hit 100 and then we would show that the present government really loves to legislate and create all kinds of regulations and rules and difficulties.

So they've created a bill called the miscellaneous obsolete statutes Act to do a whole bunch of different things. And I know that the Minister of Justice wasn't going around plucking these bills out from various places and throwing them in here. He was responding to the messages that he got from ministers in other places. So when you get a bill like this, I know last year we had six or seven very specific clauses that were repealed, and I know one of them related to the quality of meat. And I know when the whole XL Foods issue arose I thought, well if we hadn't repealed that obsolete bill, we might have had in Saskatchewan a method to provide for some of the quality that we needed when it seemed like some of the federal rules were lacking.

So let's take a look and see what we have in this particular legislation. The first Act that's to be repealed is *The Crown Foundations Act*. And this is an Act that was specifically set up at the request of the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Regina and it related to taxation policy, effectively federal taxation policy, which gave a higher tax deduction to donations made to the Crown — to the government — than it did to donations made on a charitable basis.

A couple of years later that rule was changed so that there is no difference. And I think the net effect was that the high hopes for this legislation have been diminished, and the use of this particular method of raising funds through Crown foundations at the universities has effectively ground to a halt. And as a result, the request has come to perhaps get rid of this legislation because it no longer serves a purpose.

Now I think that there are possibly some other discussions that could relate to whether universities should have foundations or have specific funds, and I think we actually do have quite a few mechanisms that allow for universities to raise funds. And so this is not necessarily going to cause any great deal of difficulty in Saskatchewan. But it does raise the question of financing of university education, post-secondary education, and it does raise the question of the Sask Party government running on an election, setting out in a budget that they're going to transfer money to the university for a specific project.

And this was all very public and very clear in the fall of 2011, but by the spring of 2012 when the budget came, a big surprise to the university was the fact that \$100 million was not going to be given to the university to cover the Health Sciences Building cost that had been incurred at that point. But all that was going to happen was some facilitation of borrowing the 100 million, and clearly it related to a failed attempt by the government to show that they had a balanced, in quotes, a suspect balanced budget. It also had the effect on the University of Saskatchewan of jamming them by adding another \$100 million to their debt load, making it difficult for them to deal with a number of other projects that they had in their operation.

And so, Mr. Speaker, when we have legislation like this which says a concept of helping to fund universities is obsolete, it also makes us want to take a look at, well actually, you know, what do we actually do to fund our universities and our colleges and other post-secondary institutions?

Unfortunately I have been getting and feeling and picking up many signals over the last month or two, and now I guess it's started with ads paid for by the Saskatchewan Party that got on the radio today which are softening up the public to the fact that there's not enough money to provide for a number of the promises that have come from the Saskatchewan Party. A bit of an unusual tactic to do that, although it appears that the Saskatchewan Party have lots of money to spend on that kind of hype and PR. I think the public would rather that they use almost \$100,000 as donation to university or as some other positive thing rather than getting out there with some hype and PR.

So what we have here is this Crown foundations Act, which was a way of funding universities, repealed; it's being repealed. But it's a reminder to us that there's something not right how our universities and colleges are being funded right now. There's something not right in the kinds of pressures that our school boards are feeling that affect the education of the children in the classrooms. There's something not right in the financial pressures that have been placed on the health regions that mean that important items of service for the people are suspect.

We heard an example today in question period about a program brought forward by Kinsmen Telemiracle as one of the contributors as it relates to the electrocardio centre at the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region that this may be in jeopardy because of some of the financial decisions of the government. It's that kind of disconnect between what looks like a good economy and a lot of the finances that are going sideways in ways that the public doesn't accept and it doesn't understand that make it difficult for all of us to be leaders in our community.

So when the government comes forward and says this method of funding universities is obsolete, it raises the question of what kind of long-term support are we going to be providing to our educational institutions. We all know that the long-term health of the province depends on us making sure that the most important asset of the province, the young people of the province, have the best educations possible.

And so when this legislation is brought forward, even in this kind of obscure way, it points to the fact that we have some major difficulties in this province. The ads of the Sask Party at the cost of I think \$92,000 are an attempt to blunt the people's perception of possible inability to manage our funds in the province. And we're all waiting with apprehension the budget on March 20th.

[21:00]

So there's 11 different sections in this bill that relate to different pieces of legislation. I don't have any great deal of difficulty with the repeal of this Crown foundations Act, but I do have a great deal of difficulty with the way that the financing of post-secondary education is being handled by the present

government, and this particular legislation points to the fact that we have a problem here. Our universities are scrambling. The people at University of Regina and University of Saskatchewan are trying to figure out why there are so many difficulties at a time when this province is doing well economically. And the Premier and the members opposite have a lot of questions that need to be answered as it relates to why we're in the financial situation that we are in right now.

So I'm going to move on to the next piece of legislation that's referenced in this miscellaneous statutes repeal Act, and that relates to *The Cut Knife Reference Act*. This is an Act that was brought in many years ago to deal with the fact that legislation introduced in this legislature had not spelled the name of the town of Cut Knife appropriately, and so it was spelled incorrectly in quite a number of places. And so to deal with that particular issue, this Cut Knife reference Act was introduced.

We have the assurance of the Minister of Government Relations via the Minister of Justice that there are no further problems related to the spelling of the name Cut Knife in any legislation in Saskatchewan, and so therefore we don't need this any more. I suppose we can rely on that assurance, and I suppose if it's not accurate, well we could always reintroduce *The Cut Knife Reference Act* to fix it. But this is one where we're relying on the Minister of Justice who has received assurances from the Minister of Government Relations that all is well in this world.

So the next piece of legislation that's being dealt with is called *The Municipal Debentures Repayment Act*, and this Act is being repealed. And it's always interesting to look at the history in Saskatchewan of how we finance important projects. It's quite clear that this particular legislation has been around about a century, and it relates to how municipalities could issue debentures or issue debt arrangements to get sufficient funds to build projects that would allow for payment over many years, up to 40 years. It's interesting to note that this legislation gives that extra 10 — or well I guess it's even more than that — extra 15 years over what the federal legislation has done around repayment of debts and the discussion that we've had over the last few months as it relates to Minister Flaherty's perspective. But effectively this whole method of borrowing money has not been used, it says here, for the last 15 years.

Now one of the things that's not said here, and we may have to ask some questions in committee about this, relates to the fact whether . . . Given that some of the debts are 40 years, there's an obligation to repay over 40 years. If it hasn't been used for the last 15 years, it's possible there are still some bills or some debentures out there that are governed by this legislation. So we'll need assurance from the minister in charge of this, which I guess is the Minister of Government Relations through the Minister of Justice, that there are no outstanding debentures which would be affected by the repeal of this legislation. And that may be a task that the minister or some of his staff may want to check this out because it's the last thing we want is to have repealed the legislation which sets out the rules for the original borrowing. And clearly we say that this kind of legislation is in place to protect the municipality but also to protect the people who lend the money to the municipality to do the work that they want to do.

So that's an interesting piece of Saskatchewan's history that is

being transferred to the dust bin, and we'll have a chance to ask some questions about that in committee and perhaps shed some light on the positive contribution that this legislation has made over the last 100 years and whether there are still any holdover instruments that need to be protected.

The next piece of legislation that's to be repealed is called *The Municipal Development and Loan (Saskatchewan) Act*. And this particular legislation was created to complement federal legislation which was repealed about 30 years ago, it says here. And so I don't think there's any great problem there with repealing this legislation, and I thank the civil servants for bringing this one forward so that we can get rid of it.

The next one is called *The Municipality Improvements Assistance (Saskatchewan) Act*, and this Act is to be repealed. And this is legislation that came into force in the late '30s to complement or allow for the provincial implementation of federal legislation that allowed for building of projects by the municipalities or by the power corporations that they owned. And it is interesting in Saskatchewan that most of the municipal power corporations have been incorporated into the Saskatchewan Power, the provincial corporation, except for the distribution side in Saskatoon which has continued to be owned by the city of Saskatoon, and they obviously get their power primarily through Saskatchewan's power.

But this particular legislation also is part of responding to federal legislation. And that legislation federally was repealed in 1983, so there's no need to keep this legislation either.

The next Act to be repealed is something called *The Municipal Industrial Development Corporations Act*, and according to the information that we have, this Act was passed in 1960 to allow for the, effectively, promotion of industry within municipalities. The name is maybe a little dated, but it's very similar to *The Enterprise Saskatchewan Act* that had a very short life in this government. It was the big idea of the 2007 election campaign that didn't work. Or it didn't work the way that the Sask Party government wanted, and so it's already hit the dust bin very, very, very quickly. It did not have the staying power of some of these older pieces of legislation. I think it had something to do with the consultation that wasn't there and with the fact that the revenues or the monies that were originally promised to be part of the whole scheme were not continued. But in a lot of ways these last municipal financing ones have similarities with Enterprise Saskatchewan, this big, glowing, bright light of the Sask Party's 2007 election campaign.

This legislation, *The Municipal Industrial Development Corporations Act* basically has ended, but there were some active corporations still in effect up until September of 2011. And this one may be another situation where we'll have to ask more specific questions of the Minister of Justice, and he will obviously get the information from the Minister of Government Relations so that we can be sure that we're not repealing legislation that still has some particular role in the province. And it's never a good idea to get rid of something that has provided a good role in the province.

Now the next piece of legislation that is listed in the Act is *The NewGrade Energy Inc. Act*, and this is basically the Act that incorporated the Saskatchewan part of the Co-op upgrader in

Regina. And practically this reflects the fact that that particular interest of the province was sold to Federated Co-op, and there's no longer the necessity of having this legislation in place.

But it does once again beg the question of what happened with the proceeds from the sale of the NewGrade Energy operation. We as a government, in 2007 when the sale was made, had designated the proceeds of around \$300 million to be used for environmental protection climate change issues. We know that the Sask Party government took 90 per cent of that money and used it for other purposes and have not followed through with that particular plan that was there, and the public will, in the long term, look at some of these things as characteristics of this Sask Party government and their attitude towards dealing with environment and environmental issues.

Another Act that's being repealed by this legislation is called *The Sales on Consignment Act*. And this is legislation that obviously is no longer really in use because people don't sell things that way anymore. And I think that it speaks to the situation where the way that we finance both purchases and sales has changed dramatically as we have tried to harmonize them with other provinces and also with our neighbours to the south in the States and the state laws. And so we have things that very much mimic the uniform commercial code in the United States which sets out standards around instruments that are used for buying and selling products. And clearly this particular legislation has been replaced by other ways of financing sales. And that's part of how the world changes and I guess we'll have to accept that. So that particular part I don't have any great deal of question about it.

[21:15]

Now the next item that's mentioned in this legislation is called the Saskatchewan Development Fund. And effectively what happens here is that *The Saskatchewan Development Fund Act* can't be repealed until it's amended to deal with some of what happens when it's wound up and dissolved. And so what this legislation does is sets out the rules for windup and dissolution of the Saskatchewan Development Fund and the various funds that they have and what happens when the corporation is no longer there. And once those rules are in place, then it sets out that this development fund Act is going to be repealed.

As part of this legislation it then says that even though *The Saskatchewan Development Fund Act* is going to be repealed, there's still a requirement for the corporation to prepare financial statements for January 1st, 2013, up until whenever the corporation is actually dissolved by the legislation, and that these reports will be fully done in a way that will meet the needs of the Provincial Auditor. So in a way, this particular repeal section may be a little bit premature. It might have been just as well to wait until next year to add that one. But obviously the whole crew were quite keen on repealing obsolete statutes so they threw this one in as well.

The next one mentioned in the legislation relates to *The Subdivisions Act*, and *The Subdivisions Act* will be repealed. Clearly *The Subdivisions Act* is an old piece of legislation that created rules for subdividing property in rural municipalities, that effectively allowed for development in rural areas in a way

that could be reported to the land titles office and the, I think he's called the chief of planning or the director of planning. But in the land titles office they would be able to use the subdivisions created by this legislation and make sure that it was properly recorded at the land titles office. It obviously was a solution to a problem that was there in 1914 with our new land titles system and the recording of information. I don't think it's any longer necessary.

It does raise the question though of the Sask Party government's plans this year to privatize the Information Services Corporation, which has the responsibility of managing land titles, but also more importantly much of our private information. And it raises the question about why they would pick this particular legislation to privatize here in Saskatchewan when for many, many years it has been a part of what we do as a province, as a public service for every person, whether they're humans or whether they're corporations. And so this particular issue of ISC [Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan], we'll get a chance to debate that in a few other spots in this legislative calendar. But here's a reminder in this legislation of a change that's being made to legislation that was designed around the needs of people. And it's, I guess, maybe sad to see a little bit of the history go that . . .

It also raises the question of subdivisions in rural areas. And anybody who has land across the province in areas that are some distance from our larger municipalities knows that there are developments that take place that don't appear to have the same kind of planning and foresight as is available in some of the larger municipalities. And it begs the question, when you see the comments here about this legislation, about whether we need to have legislation that covers planning for the whole province.

We know that in the province of Alberta they have that type of legislation already. But here in Saskatchewan we're still operating with a real hodgepodge of rules that you can feel sometimes when you go into certain parts of the province. And so this may be a reason for, or maybe this is a signal that there is some broader municipal legislation in the works. I guess we have to ask the minister in committee whether that's the case.

Now the final piece of legislation that's being repealed here is *The Vegetable, Fruit and Honey Sales Act*. And I know that this legislation is legislation that's been around for quite a while, and it basically allows for the certification of these products for sale in Saskatchewan. And effectively what we're doing once again, it's similar to what we did last year. We're eliminating the provincial regulations that might be in place for food products and relying on the federal rules that are in place that effectively then allow for our producers to sell products both in the province and out of the province.

I think that there are concerns that we lose some of our local sense of responsibilities around production of food. We have had some fairly major concerns about the safety of our food in the last year, and I think there may be some questions that we will have around this particular legislation to make sure that the national rules, the national standards are in place that will effectively do the job that assures the public that their food is safe.

We know at the national level they have been doing substantial cuts in every department. And it may be that the replacement regulation that is referenced by the minister — and I guess once again here the Minister of Justice is putting forward information that he's received from the Minister of Agriculture — but we're receiving assurances that this legislation actually will have some kind of federal coverage that will do the same thing. I think there may be questions that we should ask in this area to make sure that is true, because once again we're concerned about the safety of food for human consumption.

So, Mr. Speaker, this particular bill is short, but as I said earlier, clearly the Minister of Justice has listened to all of his colleagues and lumped a whole number of different changes into one bill so that, kind of like the budget, they can keep there being some balance. I think they've kind of said, we don't want to have more than 100. We don't want to have 100 bills in the legislature this fall. So they threw a whole bunch of them into this basket and have included them all together.

So I think that a number of my colleagues may have comments about various aspects of this bill as well, and so at this point I will adjourn debate. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Leader of the Opposition has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 53, *The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal Act, 2012 (No. 2)*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

#### Bill No. 54

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 54 — *The Seizure of Criminal Property Amendment Act, 2012*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Vermette:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to join in the debate on Bill No. 54, *The Seizure of Criminal Property Amendment Act, 2012*.

I suppose here . . . And of course nobody in the province, I know people don't want, I guess, crime and the property used to commit a crime and for those individuals to get to use that crime to continue the activity. And I guess the government has come up with and, you know, the department, Ministry of Justice has come up with a way to seize property from a crime. And whether that's . . . I think there's going to be a lot of discussion on this. A lot of people feel like, yes, you need to have this; this is a good provision to have to make sure that we're seizing property that individuals have used that have, you know, used the opportunity or whether it's a house . . . I guess the selling of drugs, whether it's the vehicle, phones. They refer to different ones that the government has already gone forward and tested and one was where there was money seized, phones. But I think it was a forward, a test case that they used. And they refer to that in this bill.

So there's different things going on, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on how Justice, law enforce use that tool. And that's truly important. But also on that, we have to make sure at the end of the day that we don't have citizens that are accused. We have to make sure clearly the proof is there, that police officers that are investigating this type of procedure, making it very clear that whatever illegal activity is being brought on to whether it's a homeowner or the activity of crime, whether I own the home and somebody's in my house and I'm not aware they're doing this crime — they might be selling drugs, or whatever the activity might be — we have to make clear that the individual somehow that owns the property is aware of this crime was going on, that they're aware of this type of activity was going on on their property, in their property, to make sure that citizens are protected in the province, that we're not having someone who didn't know anything and then all of a sudden they're losing their assets, their property because somebody else was doing some illegal activity on their property.

So I want to make it very clear, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that yes, we agree and I think most people in our province would agree that this provision, giving the Justice department and the government to seize assets of a crime, of illegal activity going on, people are not . . . And they probably support that, as the most part. But I think clarification needs to be very clear. People want to make sure that the Justice department, our police departments, whether they are an investigating unit, whether it's a drug gang, whatever you want to want to talk about — activities, illegal activities that are going on — are clearly based on facts, that it's gone before I guess the court, a judge, to hear. So we want to make it very clear that those provisions and residents, citizens of this province have to be protected.

So we want to make it clear and by talking about this, by working through this Act, it will give us the opportunity, it will give the Ministry of Justice the opportunity to make clear the regulations, make clear the rules that can be used to seize property. That is, someone is, you know, I guess, doing the illegal activity that we're trying to stop in this province so this gives the government the opportunity to seize the property, the vehicles, like I said, whether it's cash, whether it's some big items. Maybe it's vehicles, boats, motor homes. There are all these different . . . whether it's a house. There could be different things, whether it's a business, to seize those assets and to put them back in the government coffers, I think, and clearly where they're coming.

[21:30]

And I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have to be clear that we want to make sure that our citizens are protected. And this provision in here . . . And I now know that there's a number of different areas in this piece of legislation that clearly outlines the way the Justice department and the police force would use this piece of legislation.

But again we want to make sure that it's something that will work and not take away from someone who has not done any illegal activity or is aware that there's illegal activity going on in their property, in their vehicle, and if they're not aware of it, to have their property seized when they're truly not aware. So that has to be very clear that we would make sure that Saskatchewan residents, like I said, are protected, that this bill

outlines the rules how the Ministry of Justice can grant to the police force or to the investigation, whether it's a drug unit, whether it's a, I guess, a task force, but to seize these assets to Justice, to bring those assets into . . . from illegal crime. I want to make it very clear that we want to make sure those individuals are protected. And we have to make sure.

And I know the courts will do the job that the courts need to do to hopefully protect citizens' assets and to make sure that they don't lose their assets in a way that truly wasn't the intent of the activity going on, whether it's illegal or whether it's selling of drugs. And there's many different things that they refer to in here.

But I want to make it clear. I think there has to be provisions. We have to make sure the Justice department, whether it's the lawyers out there, will give their opinion on this legislation. We have to make sure that we've consulted that. And if we've done that, we want to make sure that we do the work that we need to do as legislators to make sure residents are protected. But also we want to make sure that individuals do not, I guess, obtain wealth or assets from illegal activities.

So let's make it very clear on there. I think overall we would support it, but we want to make sure. There's a lot of details. There's things that have to be worked out, and I know the Minister of Justice, being lawyers, the lawyers will go through this and they'll make sure the Ministry of Justice will go through it. So there's a lot of work that has to still go into making it clear how this piece of legislation will be used by the Ministry of Justice, by law enforcement, to make it very clear that the provisions are there and it's used in a way that is truly the way it was meant and intended to be used, not in a negative way in the sense of someone being . . . losing assets or property clearly when it wasn't the activity that was going on.

So we want to make it clear. Nobody would like to see somebody lose their property based on, I guess, hearsay. The proper, I guess, document, the proper proof would have to be clearly outlined in this. So at this point, Mr. Speaker, I'm prepared to adjourn debate on Bill No. 54.

**The Speaker:** — The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 54, *The Seizure of Criminal Property Amendment Act, 2012*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

### Bill No. 55

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 55** — *The Consumer Protection and Business Practices Act* be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure at this hour of the evening to join in on the discussion of Bill No.

55, *The Consumer Protection and Business Practices Act*. This piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, is fairly lengthy. It's longer than some of the pieces of legislation that we encounter here in the Assembly and that's important, Mr. Speaker. So it does take some time to go through the many pages in order to ensure that it's comprehensive and meeting the needs of Saskatchewan people.

This legislation, Mr. Speaker, was introduced earlier to the Assembly, and the minister responsible provided a second reading speech on November 6th, 2012. And in this speech, Mr. Speaker, the minister responsible outlined the purpose of the legislation as well as took some time to highlight the important aspects of the Bill.

Mr. Speaker, when thinking of *The Consumer Protection and Business Practices Act*, I can't help but think of some of the interactions that I've had with constituents who have come into the office. And as members in the House know, we have a variety of constituents and a variety of people that come through our doors. And the variety is representative in many instances of the broader population, and in the broader population there is a lot of diversity. There's differences in education levels. There is differences in socio-economic levels. There are individuals that might be more savvy when it comes to business practices and what are acceptable consumer protection measures. And, Mr. Speaker, there are those who may not be as knowledgeable in those instances.

I can think, Mr. Speaker, of some of the people that have come through my door, particularly thinking of a few conversations that I had with a few seniors who were put in a situation when an individual came to their door or phoned them up, when they felt like they were pressured into an arrangement that was not in fact in their best interest. And we can all think of our own loved ones, Mr. Speaker — perhaps parents, perhaps grandparents, perhaps a favourite aunt or uncle — who might be older and not necessarily, Mr. Speaker, feeling totally comfortable in some of the practices that they confront in entering into contracts or with respect to some of the business practices that they might encounter.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the example that I used here was in the situation of older people or seniors, but also it's not limited to those individuals who may find themselves in a position of vulnerability or not having the full ability to appreciate the consequences of entering into a contract in a particular area. And this may occur, Mr. Speaker, for a variety of reasons. Perhaps the younger person is busy; perhaps they're occupied with family matters and other things and don't have the time or the ability to do the proper research when confronted with a proposal. Or, Mr. Speaker, perhaps there may be issues in some circumstances with literacy and understanding of contracts and what is fair and what is appropriate.

So those are the different issues. And we can think of these situations of perhaps loved ones that we know or people that come into our constituency offices who need to have the right types of protections put in place to really defend and promote their interests.

Now we shouldn't have a scenario, Mr. Speaker, where the rules put in place are overreaching or are disadvantaging a

business that might be operating. But, Mr. Speaker, I think first and foremost it's necessary to ensure that the safeguards that we have in place, the variety of rules that are there, are in fact defending the interests of consumers in order to ensure that there is a fair and level playing field that they encounter when having to make decisions about their spending and purchasing practices.

As the minister highlighted, Mr. Speaker, on November 6, 2012 in his second reading speech, this endeavour put forward in Bill No. 55 was a process of updating and rationalizing the consumer protection framework for Saskatchewan. It begins with the consolidation and simplification of the existing consumer protection Act, making the legislation more accessible and easier to understand.

So what we have here in the opening remarks by the minister is a statement of the intent that the government is pursuing here, Mr. Speaker, is to gather a variety of pieces of legislation together into one spot in order to have a comprehensive Act in one place. And so for that reason, Mr. Speaker, with the minister having stated that is the reason why this piece of legislation is being brought into being, Mr. Speaker, it's for that reason that I made my opening remarks about the need to have the right balance in order to ensure that consumers are indeed protected while businesses are able to operate and function and do well here in Saskatchewan.

But as with any piece of legislation, when it involves the combining of a number of individual or smaller pieces of legislation into one larger piece, there is a lot to digest. And as I said in my remarks at the beginning, this is a significant piece of legislation with quite a bit of content to it. And when doing this process, it's important not to have some pieces fall through the cracks. It's important, Mr. Speaker, to examine all the aspects of the legislation in order to ensure that there are not unintended consequences with respect to the changes that are occurring.

Now we've seen other pieces of legislation where this has taken place. And of course with the labour legislation, the employment Act that is before the House and discussions are occurring. This is an example, Mr. Speaker, where we have many individual pieces of legislation which have been developed over many years, with the involvement of many people, being put together into one piece of legislation.

And I know in my experience as an opposition MLA, having gone through the process of receiving this piece of legislation and spending some time going through it myself, and then, Mr. Speaker, having been approached by members in the community, whether they be individuals or whether they be members of organized labour, what they've told me, Mr. Speaker, is that there is so much content in the new piece of legislation as it relates to working people here in the province that it requires a great deal of expertise that an individual would have to have with respect to the earlier pieces of legislation, and then seeing how minor changes in some instances could have major implications for the new piece of legislation.

So it's important to have that appreciation of how the combining of pieces of legislation into one large piece is a significant job. It's a significant job for those in the Ministry of

Justice who did the drafting to put the legislation together. I'll give some credit to the minister, Mr. Speaker. It's a significant job to put that together and bring it forward to the Assembly as the minister has done. That requires work. But as importantly, and perhaps more importantly, it requires the proper scrutiny by the opposition and the public as a whole in order to see how the amalgamation of those various pieces of legislation into one can in fact serve the best interest of Saskatchewan people.

So that's important. And it does take time. It takes energy and it takes a fair amount of expertise to understand what was in the previous legislation, what carried through to the current legislation or what was adjusted in the current legislation, and how those changes may in fact have a significant influence on the course of events here in Saskatchewan.

So we know that is the case with respect to the labour legislation that is before the House. And I believe, Mr. Speaker, when we look at Bill No. 55, *An Act respecting Consumer Protection and Business Practices, to repeal certain Acts and to make consequential amendments to other Acts*, the same situation is present here. Although the implications may not be quite as extensive as the labour legislation, I think there is still a great deal of detail here that requires our attention.

So, Mr. Speaker, moving on to some aspects of the legislation as identified by the minister in his second reading speech on November 6th, 2012. There is a new part of the Act that the minister identifies called designated activities and licensing: "... a new part of the Act called designated activities and licensing will permit us to consolidate other consumer protection legislation into the Act." Now he says:

Mr. Speaker, consumer protection in Saskatchewan is spread across 12 separate statutes, each with different standards, enforcement mechanisms, and results. Of these, seven are licensing Acts or contain licensing provisions.

So this is some more detail, Mr. Speaker, relating to the point that I made about how there are many different components to the legislation and how, while individual pieces have some common similarities with respect to the content of the legislation and its implications for consumer protection, there are differences with respect to the types of legislation with some of them being responsible for licensing.

[21:45]

So bringing them together, it's the minister's argument that it brings consistency and in many circumstances I could see that as a positive thing. However, Mr. Speaker, it's also important to ensure that nothing is lost, that no protection that is currently extended to consumers here in Saskatchewan is being removed as a result of the amalgamation or the combining into one.

The minister also states that "The Act will allow for individuality of rules governing the businesses depending on the particular needs of the industry being licensed." So there is a recognition here, Mr. Speaker, by the minister, that there still needs to be the opportunity for legislation that is unique to an individual sector, understanding that there may be specific needs for that sector.

Now one might argue that is the reason why there were individual statutes to begin with, to cover individual aspects. So again as legislation is combined, it's important to have that comprehensive look but it's also important not to lose the individuality of a particular industry, and I think that is an important aspect.

The minister states that some flexibility will apply to consumer contracts, he states, of which five types are typically regulated pursuant to *The Consumer Protection Act*. And the five that the minister identified in his speech are Internet sales, future performance, personal development services, travel club, and remotely formed contracts. And he says if our government decides to regulate other types of contracts, the new Act will provide a simple mechanism to do so.

So this is the understanding, Mr. Speaker, that five areas are identified, and I assume those five areas are existing in the statutes that are present through the legislation. What the minister is stating here is that if the government — and the emphasis is on if — if the government decides that there are additional areas that need regulation, I would assume, Mr. Speaker, that they would be following the template provided here by the five that are already present in the legislation.

And as always, the minister says that if additional industries were brought into the legislation beyond the five, that there would be the proper and necessary consultation that occurs with the industries. And that is important and that is my hope that that would in fact occur. However, Mr. Speaker, we've seen instances where government members will say that but then they will have a bit of a case of selective hearing or sometimes selective hearing combined with some fairly strong stubbornness where they were not willing to recognize what they have heard or to change their course of action.

So I would hope, Mr. Speaker, that as any of these consultations occur, that there would not be an approach that does not fully respect and understand the viewpoints that are being brought forward. And I would hope, Mr. Speaker, that the government members would approach such consultations with an open mind, not coming to the consultations with a predetermined decision, not coming to the consultations with a view of how things ought to be. But I would hope, Mr. Speaker, that they would come to the consultations with an open ear, a willingness to genuinely engage with the industry, see what is needed, take that information, and then make decisions that are in fact in the best interests of all Saskatchewan people. I think that that is hugely important, Mr. Speaker.

An important change in this bill, Mr. Speaker, as the minister identifies, it's his opinion that this will provide a significant benefit to consumers. And it has to do, Mr. Speaker, with respect to providing clarification to the section of the Act that prevents the contracting out of the protections of the Act. The minister states that this "... has been enhanced to ensure that standard form contracts cannot tie consumers into arbitration clauses or prohibit them from participating in class actions."

"This will ..." and the minister goes on to state, "This will not prevent the consumer from selecting arbitration if that's the appropriate dispute resolution mechanism. However, Mr. Speaker ..." as the minister said "... it becomes the

consumer's choice, not the supplier's."

So this, Mr. Speaker, is providing more ability for a consumer to make the decisions that he or she would deem to be appropriate and fitting for the particular situation. In situations where there is arbitration as an option and the consumer wishes to pursue that avenue, this would be open to the individual. And I think that is important, Mr. Speaker. I can think of a number of instances where arbitration is the pursued course of resolution for an individual, providing an opportunity for two sides to come together and to have an outside opinion look at the facts, and provided a ruling based on what they deem to be fair and appropriate and the best course of action.

It's also important, Mr. Speaker, as the minister highlighted in this piece of legislation, to not rule out the possibility for class actions if an individual feels like that is the right way to go. I think it is necessary for some individuals who may feel like they need to go down that path in order to receive fairness and justice in their view. And that's why we have a court system, Mr. Speaker, that can provide rulings on matters such as this. So I see Bill No. 55 recognizing the needs for that, as the minister identified in his second reading speech on November 6th, 2012.

Another component that the Minister identified in his speech as it relates to Bill No. 55, Mr. Speaker, the Minister called this a small but important feature so I'll leave it up to readers of *Hansard* and listeners at home to decide whether or not is an important feature, but as he states, it's a feature ... I'll read the quote, Mr. Speaker:

Another small but important feature is the one that permits Saskatchewan courts to have jurisdiction over consumer actions, regardless of the part of the Act under which the consumer rights arise.

So, Mr. Speaker, this here identifies the importance of the Saskatchewan courts. After all, this is a piece of legislation that affects Saskatchewan consumers and businesses operating within the province of Saskatchewan, so it's only appropriate, Mr. Speaker, that the courts would recognize or have authority over this aspect. I could imagine a situation where it'd be frustrating, Mr. Speaker, if an individual had a problem with an aspect of the legislation and they decided to go through the courts and pursue a legal resolution to their situation, if the local courts within the province did not have the ability or the authority, Mr. Speaker, to address this matter. I think that would be frustrating to the individuals involved in the situation.

And so it is important, Mr. Speaker, that we keep that view in mind as legislators. I know it's frustrating when a constituent comes to us as an MLA with a particular concern, and as members of the House would know, Mr. Speaker, while we understand most often the divisions of responsibilities and the powers of the different orders of government — of municipal, provincial and federal — this is not the case, Mr. Speaker, always with average citizens who are busy living lives and raising their families, running businesses and giving to their communities. To them sometimes government is just government and we're all painted with the same brush, even if we're serving at a municipal level compared to provincial or federal. And in many instances, Mr. Speaker, regardless as to



whether or not we're on the government side or the opposition side, people just see us as part of government. And that's the response that you often hear from people.

So it can be confusing for individuals sometimes. So it is necessary, Mr. Speaker, that when possible if authority, when it is appropriate, to be extended to the provincial level when there's a matter that affects people in Saskatchewan, I think it is appropriate that our courts can handle matters when that is in fact in the best interests of everyone considered or everyone involved.

The final component, Mr. Speaker, that the minister identified in his second reading speech as it relates to Bill No. 55, which is a lengthy piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, has to do with the enforcement components of the legislation. Basically, I'll read the quote from the minister so listeners at home have an idea of the take from the government side as to what this legislation would be accomplishing, for those who weren't watching on November 6th, 2012 before the new year was brought in. The minister said on that date:

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the enforcement administration provisions have been removed to a part that applies to the whole Act. This will make it easier for the consumer protection division of the Financial and Consumer Affairs Authority of Saskatchewan to do its job. Through this legislation, Saskatchewan is doing its part to provide a fair and balanced legislation that protects the vulnerable consumer while avoiding an undue burden on Saskatchewan businesses.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this legislation, though it might, that wording, Mr. Speaker, might seem fair and decent to the average person who has not been following the news, Mr. Speaker, or following the proceedings of this Assembly. But, Mr. Speaker, when the term fair and balanced is used, while those words in themselves or the expression is a good phrase and one that I myself might use from time to time and others would as well, Mr. Speaker, the problem is there have been too many instances when members opposite have talked about fair and balanced and the course of their actions have actually been something very different.

And we can think, Mr. Speaker, of different pieces of legislation where the talk has been about being fair and balanced but we see that inappropriate consultation has occurred. We see at times, Mr. Speaker, consultation occurred that only listened to certain people. It was often friends and insiders of government. And, Mr. Speaker, we see instances when they say they're being fair and balanced but that hasn't in fact been the course of action.

Let's take for example, Mr. Speaker, one aspect, the film employment tax credit, Mr. Speaker. You know, the talk would be about fixing the policy, as members opposite would suggest, and that this is being fair to all industries. That would be the type of language. I'm paraphrasing; I don't have those exact quotes in front of me, Mr. Speaker. But that has most certainly been the tone that members opposite have used when dealing with the issue of the film industry here in the province.

But what the actions have shown, Mr. Speaker, that on the

contrary to being fair and balanced as members would suggest, they've actually in this instance picked on one industry, forced and pushed its demise within the province, and in so doing encouraged many people out of necessity to move out of the province to pursue greener pastures because the opportunities to participate in the film industry, Mr. Speaker, have simply dried up. And we're in a situation now, Mr. Speaker, where even some of the closer allies of the Sask Party would recognize that this was a wrong-headed decision, that this was not in the best interests of Saskatchewan people and not in the best interests of the Saskatchewan economy.

And so when the talk of fair and balanced comes forward, Mr. Speaker, I do say I take it with a significant grain of salt because of the past actions, the recent past actions, that we've seen from the Sask Party government.

So looking at this legislation, Mr. Speaker, it is lengthy, and I can appreciate some of the efforts that government has made in this instance in updating the legislation. That is an appropriate thing to do from time to time. Of course legislation does need review. It needs to happen through listening to Saskatchewan people, through listening to legislators, through listening to the professionals within the civil service who review these pieces of legislation and have an appreciation for how the legislation affects the activities of the provincial government and of various ministries.

So review is fine, Mr. Speaker, and change is fine within legislation as well. That's the prerogative of government to do that, and that in itself is not a problem, Mr. Speaker. But what can be a problem is when the details are not looked at closely enough. What is a problem, Mr. Speaker, when government chooses to listen just to some people. What is a problem, Mr. Speaker, is when through the combining of various pieces of legislation, aspects are hidden that aren't in fact in the best interest of Saskatchewan people.

I think in those instances, Mr. Speaker, it is a real concern for Saskatchewan people. So in this instance when we see 12 separate statutes being put together into one — statutes that have been in existence in the province for some time and have been providing consumer protection — we want to make sure, Mr. Speaker, that this is in fact creating a better piece of legislation, not one that is combined just for the sake of combination but one, Mr. Speaker, that improves protection for consumers while also allowing businesses to operate as fully and as successfully as we all want them to operate here in Saskatchewan.

[22:00]

So I think that's an important consideration. And my thoughts, Mr. Speaker, go back to those of constituents because that's what we need to keep in mind whenever we're considering any piece of legislation here in the Assembly. We have to think about how this affects the people that we represent, the people that have sent us here to bring their concerns forward whether that individual is rich, whether that individual is poor, whether that individual is highly educated or has a very low level of education, Mr. Speaker, whether that individual comes from . . . recently arrived in the country or whether they've been here for generations, Mr. Speaker. That's what we need to do. So I think

of those individuals and I would hope, Mr. Speaker, that the changes that we see in this piece of legislation would indeed accomplish that.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I would conclude my remarks on this piece of legislation and move to adjourn debate. Thank you.

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

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

**The Speaker:** — Oh, sorry. The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 55, *The Consumer Protection and Business Practices Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that the House now adjourn.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried. This House stands adjourned to 1:30 tomorrow afternoon.

[The Assembly adjourned at 22:02.]

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