



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

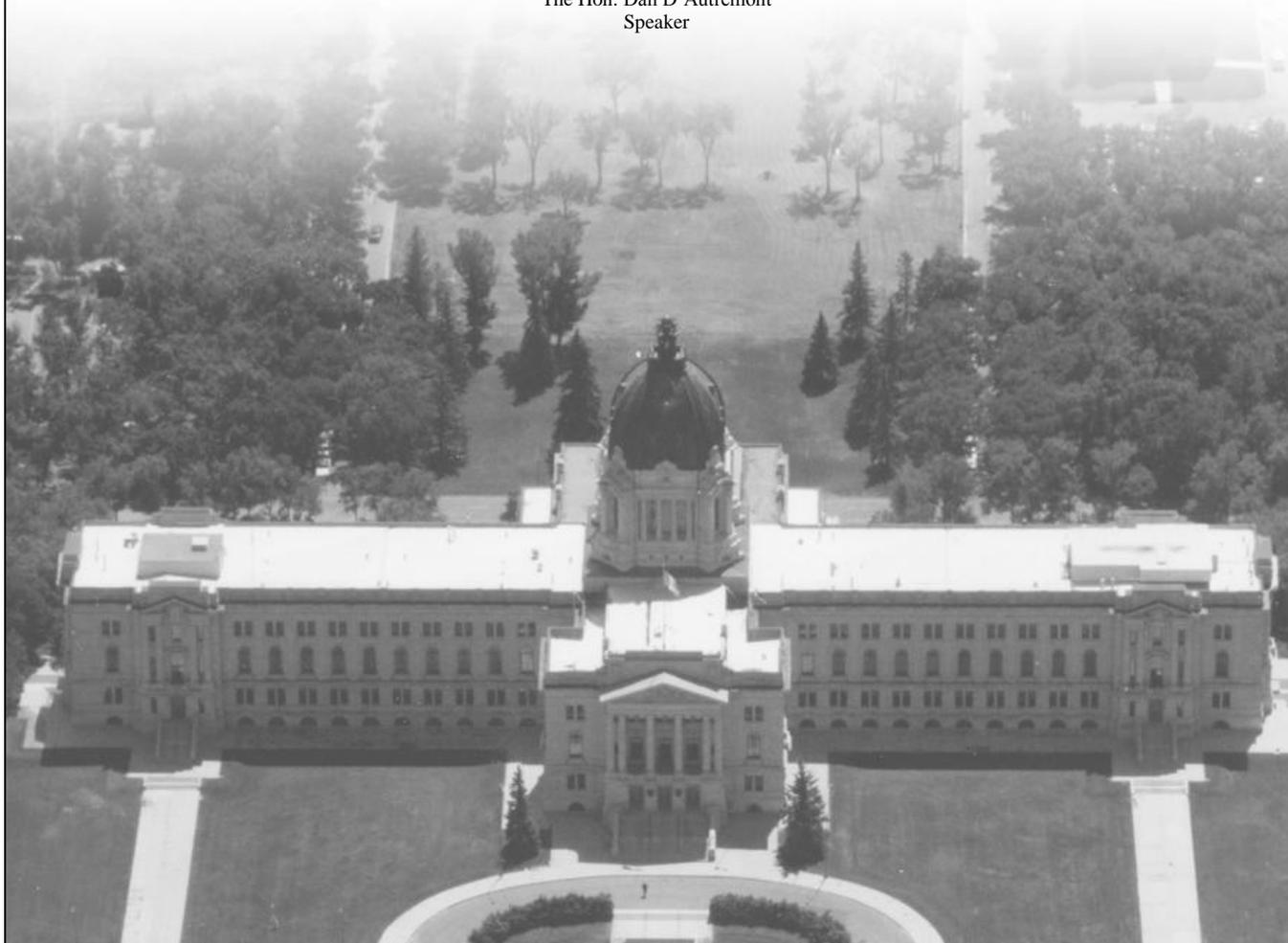
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

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The Hon. Dan D'Autremont
Speaker



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[The Assembly resumed at 19:00.]

EVENING SITTING

The Deputy Speaker: — It is now 7 o'clock. The Assembly will resume the sitting, resume debate on Bill No. 53, *The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal Act, 2012 (No. 2)*. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Riversdale.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

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.]

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am pleased to enter where my colleague left off on the debate on Bill No. 53, *An Act to repeal miscellaneous obsolete Statutes and to amend The Saskatchewan Development Fund Act*.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what this Bill sets out to do, it will set out to repeal 11 pieces of existing legislation. The purpose of the . . . [inaudible] . . . the minister says to repeal bills that are no longer necessary or have become obsolete.

I know my colleague from Saskatoon Centre had at one point referred to Bill No. 53. When we talk about repealing old, out-of-date Acts or obsolete Acts, he actually talked about, this is like cleaning your basement, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You've got all these boxes in your basement, and sometimes we think if we haven't opened a box for a very long time that we should just haul it out. But I know my colleague from Saskatoon Centre pointed out the importance of, sometimes you have to peek in that box and see what actually is in that box, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You may not have used it in a few years, but it's important to still have a good idea what you might be passing on or getting rid of, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I know committee will be an opportunity to lift that lid on the box and take a look at some of these Acts in a little bit closer detail and ask some questions about the government's intent.

Some of these seem fairly straightforward, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Some of these Acts that will be repealed are *The Crown Foundations Act*. This Act was introduced in 1994 to allow universities to take advantage of a difference in the income tax treatment of donations made to charitable organizations and to the Crown. The minister pointed out in his second reading that, at the time, the income tax deduction for donations made to charitable organizations could not exceed 20 per cent of a taxpayer's income whereas donations to the Crown could be as high as 100 per cent of the taxpayer's income.

The Act permitted Crown foundations to be established for Saskatchewan's two universities to act as a conduit for donations to those universities. So this Act, when it was passed

in 1994, allowed donors to take advantage of a larger tax benefit. But the minister's pointed out that in 1996 the tax credit distinction between donations to charitable organizations and donations to the Crown was eliminated and the new limit of 75 per cent of a taxpayer's income is now the same for either type of donation. So there's no longer any tax advantage gained from establishing a foundation, so the minister would argue that there's no need for this. And he says that the Crown foundations at both universities have had no activity in the past several years, and both universities support elimination of the foundations.

So another bill that will be repealed is *The Vegetable, Fruit and Honey Sales Act*. And I know actually in the minister's second reading speech, Hansard always records what the speaker is saying, but there was also . . . sometimes catches inaudible interjections from the members in the House, Mr. Speaker. And at that point, I don't know if there was some great enthusiasm for *The Vegetable, Fruit and Honey Sales Act* or some displeasure. I'm not quite sure, Mr. Speaker. But when the second reading speech was taking place, there were some extra conversations going on around it.

And this particular Act has been in place since 1947, and it permits inspectors appointed pursuant to the Act to certify that vegetables, fruits, and honey for sale in Saskatchewan meet the standards specified in the regulations. But apparently, Mr. Deputy Speaker, since that Act was first introduced, changes have occurred in the industry to the federal regulations that have rendered the Act irrelevant and, as the minister says, cumbersome. And federal legislation actually now regulates producers selling to retailers or wholesalers both inside or outside of the province, and the retailers actually use federal legislation even if the produce is being sold in the province.

I'm interested in that piece of that Act, Mr. Deputy Speaker, *The Vegetable, Fruit and Honey Sales Act*. It's already been about 24 years but I took an apiculture class back in university. I have no idea what inspired me to do that, Mr. Speaker, but it was actually quite a fascinating class learning about the apiculture, the beekeeping industry here in Saskatchewan.

Again, I'm not quite sure what inspired me to do it, but it was quite fascinating. You'd be interested to know that Saskatchewan not only produces some of the highest quality honey in the world — our northern location and our long, warm summer days, although it's questionable whether or not we'll actually see long, warm summery days ever again here in Saskatchewan — but our climate of long, warm summer days and our skilled beekeepers help produce more honey per hive than any other province in Canada, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And I know that some beekeepers . . . actually, interestingly enough, I know back in, I think it was 1992 when I took this class, possibly even 1991, there were some concerns. Often bees will be imported. We didn't do a lot of it back then and I'm not sure where we're at now, Mr. Speaker, but we were pretty well positioned here in our climate here in Saskatchewan. But I remember the day when a more aggressive African bee was a potential risk for beekeepers, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I remember learning a little bit about that in my class but it's been, like I said, more than 20 years ago, so that's a while. But

the bottom line is apiculture, beekeeping is a very important industry here to our province, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And actually beekeepers have another concern here, just looking at . . . Right now the beekeepers' board is concerned about the negative impact of bees on comb approved for import into Saskatchewan, so that hasn't changed. I think some of the issues around what the problems are have changed, but there is still some concerns about importing bees on comb into Saskatchewan. And actually, interestingly enough, our Agriculture critic would be interested in hearing this, that they're encouraging beekeepers to direct their concerns regarding the importation of bees on comb to the Minister of Agriculture — so might be some interesting questions for estimates tomorrow night, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as my colleague from Saskatoon Nutana has an opportunity to talk about that.

But back to Bill No. 53, which again is a bill the minister has said whose goal is to repeal obsolete legislation or legislation that's no longer needed. I think we have to be mindful of that term, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I believe it was this time last year that the bill that made SCN, the Saskatchewan Communications Network, an entity was repealed. And it was a choice that the government made to first fade SCN to black but then to privatize it. And then the company to whom they sold it has flipped it and made quite a profit, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But that was one of those bills this time last year that was rendered or deemed obsolete by the government.

And I know that there are many people in Saskatchewan who think that the Saskatchewan Communications Network was not obsolete and provided a great service, not just to the film industry for its broadcast licence, but in sharing Saskatchewan stories and Saskatchewan content with people across Saskatchewan. So I think we have to be very mindful when we refer to something as obsolete or no longer needed, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So it will be interesting in committee when we take these boxes from the basement and have the opportunity to flip the lid in committee and discuss what exactly some of these . . . a little bit more about some of these bills.

Another bill that's going to be repealed is *The Saskatchewan Development Fund Act*. This Act was passed in 1974 and created the Saskatchewan Development Fund Corporation to perform the duties of trustee, custodian, and manager of the Saskatchewan Development Fund, which was an open-ended investment trust. In 2009 the board of directors of the corporation resolved to close the fund, and since then the minister said all accounts have been redeemed and operations have been closed. In 2010 the board of directors resolved to begin the process of winding up the affairs of the corporation, and the minister says the corporation no longer has any assets or liabilities. So this bill not only repeals it, but it includes provisions to wind up and dissolve the corporation and repeal *The Saskatchewan Development Fund Act* as it no longer has any purpose.

But again I always think it's important to check the context of no longer having any purpose, as I would point out that *The Saskatchewan Communications Network Act* was one of those

Acts deemed obsolete in the miscellaneous statutes Act last year, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The minister has said that the NewGrade . . . Or the minister who brought this Act forward has said that the Minister of Government Relations put forward six pieces of legislation for repeal. *The Cut Knife Reference Act* is one of them, which was passed in 1978. The Act replaces Cut Knife, which was previously one word, as two words but apparently there's no current legislation that refers to Cut Knife as one word and so the purpose of the Act has been fulfilled and repealed.

The NewGrade Energy Inc. Act will also be repealed. So this Act was to facilitate the financing, construction, and development of the heavy oil upgrader in Regina. In 2007 CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan] sold its interest in the NewGrade Energy Inc., and as such the Act is no longer required. 2007 was before my time in this legislature, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I'm wondering where the proceeds for NewGrade Energy have . . . what have we seen?

I know one concern that we have here on this side of the House is the long-term sustainability of what we get from our resources, Mr. Speaker, an idea of a sovereign wealth fund, the idea that we're putting away resources for future generations — my kids and grandkids, your kids and grandkids — making sure that we have those non-renewable resources that we utilize now, that there is some future benefits for generations down the path.

And so I wonder, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that when we think about proceeds from sales of government, that they just don't get wrapped into general revenue funds or used for one-time things. I think it's a good idea to think about our natural resources or anything that we might sell, as this government might sell, that we should think about, well, are we putting that money into savings or are we just plunking it down and it's getting lost in the mix, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

There are several other bills that are being repealed: *The Municipal Industrial Development Corporations Act*. And this Act was passed in 1960 to assist cities and towns with the attraction and promotion of industrial development by providing accommodation or financial assistance to industries. This Act provides the authority for incorporations, powers, distribution of profits or assets, directors, and other matters for industrial development corporations that are established under the Act.

But the minister says there are no active corporations that meet the criteria in the Act, and the last active corporation was formally dissolved back in September of 2011. So this Act will be repealed as the municipal governments are able to establish the corporations pursuant to *The Municipalities Act*, *The Cities Act*, or *The Northern Municipalities Act*.

And another Act of these 11 that will be repealed is *The Subdivisions Act*:

The Act was passed in 1914 [Mr. Deputy Speaker, a very long time ago] and provides the Saskatchewan Municipal Board with the authority to revise the property assessments of a subdivided area in a rural municipality and to permit the owner of a subdivided area to occupy

adjoining vacant land for the purpose of common cultivation.

The Act also permits the registrar [the minister says] of land titles to exercise a variety of powers in a subdivided area without obtaining planning approval from the director of planning. The Saskatchewan Municipal Board has no record of using this Act in the last 25 years, [Mr. Deputy Speaker, so that's been quite some time] nor do land title officials recall having received an application pursuant to this Act. All sections of the Act have been either superseded by other provisions or have become redundant or inconsistent with current legislation . . .

And this Act, the minister says, is ready to be repealed.

But I know again, just going back to the whole basement analogy, there will be an opportunity in committee to pop open the lid on all these boxes and talk about this, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Thank you.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 53, *The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal Act, 2012 (No. 2)* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

The Deputy Speaker: — Oh, sorry. Okay, you can read it.

Principal Clerk: — Second reading of this bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. To the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

The Deputy Speaker: — This bill stands referred to the Committee of Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

[19:15]

Bill No. 58

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 58 — *The Workers' Compensation 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. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today to enter into the debate on Bill No. 58, *An Act respecting Compensation for Injured Workers and making consequential amendments to certain Acts*. And it is an important piece of legislation that we're debating tonight and one that I think that we need to make sure we consider this fully and take a look at what are all the implications of this.

Now it's interesting because we know that, and as I mentioned in earlier remarks on Bill 85, that actually the first form of this bill was something in 1908, 1909 — prior to our Workers' Compensation Board, but a way to recognize workers and injuries in a way that would be fair to both employers and to employees to make sure when injuries do happen that there is some sort of insurance scheme that makes it work for all parties involved. And of course it's taken a long time to get it to this state. And we have to make sure that it represents all interests, that it's both fair and reasonable but affordable and doable.

And so what we do now is, in the legislation, that every five years there's a committee of review that is struck with equal numbers of employees, workers, and with employers or employer representatives. And that way they can take a look at what are the issues that have emerged over the past few years and address them in both legislation or regulation or policy, updating it. And it's an important function of good legislation that there's some form of built-in consultation.

Unfortunately we're seeing with other bills, that doesn't seem to happen. But with occupational health and safety and with workers' comp, we have those committees of review that are just a matter of process. And everyone can expect it, and everyone knows that every five years we will be having these consultations. And then they go out and they travel about, and they hear what people have to say about concerns.

And this year, or it actually was a couple of years ago the final report came out, and there's some 50-some recommendations, a little bit different than in previous years. I remember reading previous reviews that are much more in depth. But you know, at the end of the day we want to see an improvement and I think this is what is so critical about this. So there's some 50-some recommendations in this, and this piece of legislation addresses some of it, and some of it doesn't. And I think that I want to talk about a couple that are in the piece of legislation, the maximum wage rate . . . And the governance is not addressed.

But a couple of pieces I just want to highlight. And I will speak more in a few minutes around privacy, the issues of privacy when it comes to workers and their claims and their files. The Privacy Commissioner has some thoughts about that that I think needs to be put on record.

The other one that the folks who did the review came up with suggestions around funding of the workers' advocate office, the OWA, office of the workers' advocate and occupational health and safety. Both of those functions or parts or areas are funded by the Workers' Compensation Board, but are run out of the Ministry of Workplace Safety.

And so the funding is there, but because of this government's

initiative, the lean initiative, there is an impact. The committee of review felt that was unfair, that particularly in today's situation in Saskatchewan which has been for several years that we have such a high injury rate, that they needed to make sure that there was appropriate funding for those two offices. Of course the occupational health and safety that in fact that we would have fewer accidents, and we can all support that and we can all get behind that. And that means better implementation of the regulations and legislation that we have in place. And that should not be a party or victim of cost reductions. We think that's just too, too important. And I would agree with the committee of review that because Workers' Comp is paying for it and it's part of what they do, that that's really important.

And the other part is around the office of the workers' advocate. And we all know, and I would imagine that we all have had people who've had WCB [Workers' Compensation Board] claims come and visit us about concerns they have about how they've been treated at WCB. And it's so important, the role of the office of the workers' advocate in ensuring that they have an advocate when they go to make their claims or their appeals, that that office is fully funded. And it is a shame, and it's not a good thing that they may be victim of reduced expenditures because of the lean initiative. And so that was one thing that the committee of review wanted to highlight. And they did so, and we'll be raising that.

But that's an important issue because again the whole issue around workplace safety both in terms of prevention . . . That's the number one thing, that if we can prevent injuries, that's what we want to do. But if they do happen, that we want to make sure everyone is treated fairly and that nothing happens untoward because there just wasn't enough resources when in fact there probably was enough resources. But if there was a government policy in place that blocked that, that was going to be a problem.

So, Mr. Speaker, I do want to talk a little bit about the issue around the maximum wage rates and the maximum benefit level. And this has been one that often raises a lot of concerns because when an injury happens, and if it's a problem that the wages are just not keeping up — or their benefits I should say, their benefits are not keeping up — that is truly unfortunate because they may have families to raise. They may have circumstances where it's important that they are receiving appropriate benefits.

And the unfortunate thing too as well is some of these folks, particularly if they're working in construction or in one of the mines or one place where they actually do receive fairly high wages, that because of the situation as it is now, that it's just not the same level of benefits that they probably should receive just because of the mortgage that they may have or the different commitments they have. And it's just not fair that these folks who were doing very well in high paying jobs and then have an accident, then find out that actually their benefits are not that high.

So as the committee of review noted, it's one issue that they've repeatedly heard during their sessions — what's the maximum annual benefit? — and that there was, as you might imagine, two sides of the coin. One side, the employers thought that 55,000 at the maximum level was quite appropriate, and that

should be left at that. And in fact that level, that was the cap that was specified in the Act currently, has been in place since 2005. But I understand that it had been raised actually as cost of living and then met that cap in 2005. And so what they want to do now is set the maximum benefit level higher. I understand it might be immediately to 59,000. That's a recommendation out of the committee of review. I'll check my notes when I refer to the minister, what he said, but over the next four years increases annually to a percentage of the annual average wage in Saskatchewan until it reaches 165 per cent of that average annual wage. And then it will remain and it will be indexed at 165 per cent.

So that sounds like a reasonable solution. I'd have to find out more about that when we actually get into committee about that and ask what the implications are for income that is lost, who would be the kind of claimant who might get that benefit. I would imagine that people who are working at lower wage circumstances would not be eligible to get the maximum because that's just not . . . but those who are much higher than that, and we know there's several sectors or several types of employees who would actually be making significantly higher than that, and at the time, and we know particularly now with the cost of housing that clearly they would be carrying mortgages and that type of thing, and it would be a difficult situation.

And so I want to take a minute to review what the minister has said here when he talks about the committee of review. But he talks about the positive step forward for the indexation of the benefits for injured workers and that this is an important thing. He talks about the maximum wage rate, and of course that it would be increased to 59,000 for workers injured after this bill comes into force. And so there will be a group that may be less vulnerable.

And I am worried about those who saw an increase in 2005 but have not seen an increase . . . And that would make it, to 2013, some eight years without even a cost of living increase. And that's significant. So I don't know what the minister is going to do about that. I think that's really not fair and we should have further discussion. And we will when we get into committee about that.

So I think that's very important. I think that some of the other issues . . . He talks about Workers' Comp borrowing, that type of thing, talks about clarity to a number of WCB internal processes, including the fair practices office, which is very, very effective. And I think that's an important thing. I think that's a key part of some of the new initiatives that the Workers' Comp Board has been able to work in the past several years.

One of the other issues that the committee of review asked about was actually expanding the board of the Workers' Compensation Board from three. There's a Chair now and a representative from labour and a representative from labour. The folks at committee of review thought we should be taking a look at five, so that could expand the ability or the capacity of the board to do more work and be more effective in its work. It's one that they have not accepted, and again we'll have more discussions about that.

But I do want to raise one other question, and that is around

privacy. The committee of review raised the issue of privacy in a couple of different ways. And it's one that we always want to make sure that we have the appropriate amount of information that needs to be shared. And the emphasis is on needs to be shared as opposed to we think we need to know everything just in case there's something that's missed.

And of course the Information and Privacy Commissioner here in Saskatchewan has written a letter to the minister about this, who wrote it November 19th, 2012 regarding Bill 58, *The Workers' Compensation Act, 2012*. And you know, he talks about . . . He's not quite agreeing with the minister when the minister says the bill represents a positive step forward for workers' compensation in Saskatchewan. And he said that there is still an issue that warrants focused attention of the Legislative Assembly and is not addressed in Bill 58.

And he talks about the long-standing concerns that his office has raised for a number of years over the interpretation of the Workers' Compensation Board of *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and the current workers' compensation Act. And he lists several, several concerns and talks about the annual reports, his recent annual reports and some of the concerns that have been raised around the way Workers' Comp does its business.

"Overall . . ." I quote:

Overall, the complaints and concerns we hear regarding WCB include the following:

WCB demands personal health information that is not relevant to the compensable injury;

WCB shares more information about an injury with an employer than is necessary or relevant; and

WCB does not let claimants see their own case management files unless and until an appealable issue has been identified, and even then may not allow the claimant to view their entire file.

[19:30]

So you have, you have some odd things happening. WCB sharing more information with employers and then not sharing it with the person who the file is about. So this is something that we need to talk about. And actually I'm going to raise this as well within Bill 85 as well because I know there are severe concerns about privacy and the imbalance between what the employer gets to know and why, and what the employee's rights are. So we're really concerned about this.

He goes on to say:

We are also concerned about WCB's position that OIPC does not have jurisdiction in many cases that involve WCB.

And it goes on, and so we have a lot of work, a lot of work. And this will be one of key areas for our questions when we go to committee, is around the office of the privacy and information commissioner and their thoughts with WCB because we do hear

that. And not only . . . I mean when people are hurt it's, you know, you feel just the violation of your limits of what you'll be able to do but also the fact that you're not being treated fairly. And somehow WCB needs to be brought up to date in terms of the privacy expectations that we have now in a modern Canada and a modern Saskatchewan.

So it does have some specifics. He talks about amending the Act to specify the board is subject to *The Freedom of Information and Privacy Act*. That would be only logical, it seems to me, but I think we'll have to have a conversation in committee about that. And the other recommendation is repeal the exemption *The Workers' Compensation Act, 1979* has in parts II, IV, and V of *The Health Information Protection Act*. So I think we need to talk further about this.

So I know that many, we've got a lot of different speeches to hear tonight and we want to make sure we get as much work as we can get done. So again, to the government side, we will have a lot of questions particularly around the privacy aspect of the Bill, especially those issues the Information and Privacy Commissioner has raised. We'll be wanting to know more information about the maximum benefit levels, and particularly those folks who haven't seen a raise in a while. And some of the other issues that the committee of review has raised, and particularly around funding for the office of the worker's advocate and occupational health and safety initiatives that happen, we just think this is a priority. And we all share that; we know this is a priority for the government because they often say that and will spend a lot of energy and resources to get that word out. But we really need to put our money where our mouths are and really get that job done. It's about time that we do.

We see, as percentages, the numbers squeaking down but actually in the data we see from this committee of review, the actual real numbers are actually climbing up. And that's just not the way it should go. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I would move that this bill then go to committee. Thank you.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the Minister of Advanced Education that Bill No. 58, *The Workers' Compensation Act, 2012* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Principal Clerk: — Second reading of this bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I designate that Bill No. 58 be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

The Deputy Speaker: — This bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

Bill No. 70

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Marchuk that **Bill No. 70 — *The Education Amendment Act, 2012 (No. 2)/Loi n° 2 de 2012 modifiant la Loi de 1995 sur l'éducation*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure this evening to join in on the discussion that has been occurring over the past weeks on Bill No. 70, Mr. Speaker, and this is *The Education Amendment Act*. Obviously, Mr. Speaker, a very important piece of legislation because it is dealing with education, something that we all care about in the province and in the Assembly because it is about the building blocks for our society and it's about how we ensure that our young people have the best opportunity to reach their full potential and how we are able to extend opportunity to more and more people here in the province.

Over the past days, Mr. Speaker, in the Assembly, we have been talking a lot about education through the budget debates that occurred over the past week, Mr. Speaker, as all members had a chance to talk about the issue of education, and also through question period, Mr. Speaker, where we've also been discussing a number of issues on the educational front.

One issue today that was discussed by our critic, Mr. Speaker, was the issue of the Sask Party's fondness for standardized tests and how there's a greater focus to spending millions of dollars, Mr. Speaker, on testing as opposed to teaching.

And I raise that, Mr. Speaker, because it's a reminder that as we make changes to *The Education Act* — which is a sizeable document, as it ought to be for something so important, Mr. Speaker — as we make changes to *The Education Act* we have to ensure that we are actually taking steps that improve the delivery of education here in the province. Steps that allow school boards to do their job well. Steps that allow educators, whether they be principals or educational assistants or teachers, allow them to do their job well. And, Mr. Speaker, that we are working and striving towards a culture and an approach where it is about excellence for our students, and regardless of the background of a student — whether they're born into a poor family or a rich family, whether they live in the North or the South, urban or rural, Mr. Speaker, whatever their ethnic background may be — that they have the best opportunity to reach their full potential. And that needs to be the lens through which we examine any sort of change to *The Education Act*.

This piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, touches on a number of areas. It's a collection of changes that need to occur to the Act in order to modernize in some cases and clarify in others. And as I go through some of the examples, Mr. Speaker, there are some changes here where an issue has come up in a particular school division or with a particular group of people and some lessons have been learned and some changes are being

suggested through this legislation.

And so let's go through some of these changes, Mr. Speaker. The first change in this education Act here is to change the compulsory school age to six years from seven, Mr. Speaker, recognizing the age that it's necessary for children to be going to school and be receiving education and starting that process, Mr. Speaker. And this is I think something that most people in the province would see as a positive thing in terms of allowing young people to receive education at the earliest opportunities. And so it's one change, Mr. Speaker, that's identified by the minister in his second reading speech right off the top.

The second change, Mr. Speaker, is about changing the definition of a school to reflect the addition of pre-K [pre-kindergarten] programs. And pre-K, Mr. Speaker, has been something that we've discussed in this legislature quite a bit. It's something that isn't a consistent application across school divisions, or school divisions that operate this at different levels and in different places, Mr. Speaker, but it is an important component because it is about early intervention. And it is about allowing children, especially those who need it, Mr. Speaker, an early opportunity to start development or continue development, I should say, and to receive the education that they need and preparing them for kindergarten, but more importantly just preparing them for life, Mr. Speaker, for those families that choose pre-K as a good option. So the change in definition here allows . . . It's changing the definition of a school to include this pre-K aspect, which I think is an appropriate step, Mr. Speaker.

Another change that we see coming forward through this legislation is the changing of the definition of the school day. And this has to do with other changes that we've seen, Mr. Speaker, because of the school year changes. And as the minister identified in his speech, it changes the definition of what is the school day to reflect some of the amendments that were enacted on January 1, 2013 regarding the new school year. And as the minister stated, the new definition recognizes that a school day could be comprised of instructional time and non-instructional time. And he said, "The proposed revision to the definition of school day has been identified as necessary during our work to finalize new regulations for the school year."

So it sounds as though, Mr. Speaker, as the Sask Party government made the decision to change some of the dates around the school year, this has had a ripple effect in some other areas. And we see here a different definition of the school day in order to accommodate some of the changes that are being brought forward in another area.

Just as I said, Mr. Speaker, that it's appropriate to change the definition of a school to reflect the addition of pre-K, it's also appropriate, Mr. Speaker, I see — and this is what's brought forward in this legislation here — to allow for the development of policies around pre-K. And it's only appropriate, Mr. Speaker, that if this is part of the changes to the definition of a school, that it would be, the decisions made around pre-K would be based on sound evidence or on sound policies, and that they would be done in a clear and transparent manner. So it fits in nicely with the other change that was brought forward by the minister.

So we can see, Mr. Speaker, as we're going through some of these changes, some of them are of a housekeeping nature. Some of them are based on good changes that have been occurring when we look at the issue of pre-K. And some of them, Mr. Speaker, have to do with other changes that have been brought forward, such as the changes to the school year.

It's obviously the desire of the provincial government, speaking in the broad sense of government and opposition, to have full compliance with *The Education Act* by educators, by families, by anyone interacting with the education system. And what we see here is another change brought forward that changes some of the fines and penalties around non-compliance. And as the minister stated, the fines would increase significantly. He said fines are presently from \$500 or less for an offence, and with this change we see the minimum amount increase to \$5,000 for a first offence and that subsequent offences would be \$10,000. So a sizeable jump.

The important part that I'll highlight on this change is that the minister stated that this was done in consultation with the STF, the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, and the SSBA, the Saskatchewan School Boards Association. So I hope, Mr. Speaker, that the right consultation and the right input was received from those organizations and that they are in support of the changes, as the minister has indicated that they do support this change in order to provide a better deterrent for those that might be thinking about being in non-compliance.

Another component which is important, Mr. Speaker, has to do with the definition of a provincial resident. And the minister identified the existence of refugees for example who are attending schools, and they most certainly should be attending schools. We've had broader discussions here in the legislature and in the province about some of the benefits provided to refugees, and I think it's important to provide children of refugees with an opportunity for education because it would be adding injury to insult in some situations, Mr. Speaker, to not allow refugee children to receive an education when they are here in Canada.

But another component which I found interesting, it had to do with, Mr. Speaker, the provision of education to the children of temporary foreign workers. And we know that there is an increased fondness that the federal government and I think the provincial government has for temporary foreign workers, and this provides the ability for the children of temporary foreign workers here in the province to receive education.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would support that, but I do want to highlight the irony in this policy, Mr. Speaker, because it's tied into broader discussions that we've had in the Assembly about the Saskatchewan immigrant nominee program, specifically around the changes that occurred motivated by the Sask Party government, directed by the Sask Party government, around the changes to the family class and how we've seen a shift and a departure in policy around immigration, especially as it relates to the SINP [Saskatchewan immigrant nominee program] where we're not having enough of a focus, in my opinion, on developing the strong social ties that are required and necessary for good immigration policy and to allow families to have the type of success and establish the types of roots here in the province that we truly want.

And we've seen, Mr. Speaker, on the federal front, changes that would allow temporary foreign workers to be paid less than Canadian workers in some instances, providing an incentive perhaps for employers to have a greater reliance on these individuals. And I mean when we think of, for those of us who aren't of First Nations ancestry, Mr. Speaker, who came to the province through immigration, which is my own situation and many people I know and many people in the Assembly, we've come, our ancestors came to Saskatchewan and were able to establish yes economic activity, but also strong social ties that allowed them to thrive and do well over the generations. So I do want to point this out. It's yes I think appropriate to provide education for the children of temporary foreign workers, but what I think is it's a result or a consequence of other decisions that the federal government and the provincial government have made with respect to immigration policy.

[19:45]

And another component that we see, Mr. Speaker, has to do with the boundaries of school divisions and the desire at times when someone is living on one side of a boundary of a school division, but they wish to attend school in the adjacent school division perhaps because of economic trading areas and social patterns of activity, there is a mechanism in place, as the minister identifies, where students can apply to go into the other school division. What this is proposing and this changes that there be a 5-kilometre buffer zone along the boundaries which provide greater flexibility for students that are living close to the borders to choose the school division that makes the best sense for their family and bus routes and all of those things.

So now the flexibility is good and appropriate, Mr. Speaker, but we do have to be cognizant of the fact that there can be unintended consequences at times about making this process easier. So I would hope that would have been a part of the discussion that occurred with school divisions about what some of the impacts may be for some school divisions that face perhaps a greater activity along this type of border issue than some of the others. So I do think that is an important consideration.

In these proposed changes, we also see a discussion about capital grants and some updating, Mr. Speaker, as it relates to school divisions. As we speak about capital and school systems, we have heard about the Sask Party's intention to go down a privatized model for the development and construction of schools here in the province. So I do flag this as a concern. I think it is tied in to that issue, and it's tied in to discussion about what is the most responsible and what is the most cost-effective way to build school facilities here in the province.

We also see, Mr. Speaker, a repeal concerning the submissions of returns. And as it was identified in the minister's speech, this repeal is occurring because it's covered through legislation through Government Relations and is redundant in *The Education Act* change.

One other component, Mr. Speaker, has to do with property classes redefinition as it relates to education property taxes, some adjustments there. And the one other component, Mr. Speaker, that we see, has to do with increased representation for the community of La Ronge as it relates to the Northern Lights

School Division. It was identified in the minister's speech that through consultation with the mayor and other northerners, Mr. Speaker, that given the importance and the size of La Ronge within the North, but also within the Northern Lights School Division, that it made sense to increase the possibility of representation for the community of La Ronge. So, Mr. Speaker, I would defer to the wisdom of northerners and locals on that issue and trust that that is a wise decision, not having a lot of personal information specifically about the topic.

So, Mr. Speaker, as we can see, this has been a bit of a grab bag of changes to *The Education Act* on a number of fronts, some of them more significant than others and some of them opening up broader policy discussions with respect to immigration and with respect to the construction of capital projects. But some of them, Mr. Speaker, of a smaller nature and are the result of other changes that have occurred with respect to the school year and changing of language around pre-K, Mr. Speaker, which is, as I see it, an appropriate step and a decent thing to be doing and an important thing to be doing, based on my knowledge of it.

So I've appreciated the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to provide some remarks on Bill 70 in question period and in budget speech as we have the chance to talk about the education system as it relates to specific topics, whether it be standardized testing or capital projects, Mr. Speaker. So it is nice to have the opportunity to talk about some of the other issues in a bit more detail that may not always be on the front page of the paper or in the A section but still have a lot of importance and relevance to Saskatchewan children, Saskatchewan families, and Saskatchewan educators.

So with those remarks, Mr. Speaker, I would move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 70 at this time.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 71

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Harpauer that **Bill No. 71 — *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2012/Loi de 2012 modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la réglementation des boissons alcoolisées et des jeux de hasard*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am pleased to enter into the debate on *An Act to amend The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Act, 1997*. This is Bill No. 71, and what Bill No. 71 does is lay the foundation for about 70 different changes to alcohol licensing and regulation here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Looking at . . . This government underwent a red tape review and has many liquor regulations that haven't undergone a comprehensive review for decades. And so the minister is proposing making some of these changes, modernizing — the word often comes up — modernizing liquor regulations, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Many of them are basic. Well some of them are just catching up to what other jurisdictions are doing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, including corkage or being able to bring your own bottle of wine to a restaurant, for example, and taking that wine home for a corkage fee. There are many jurisdictions who already do that. One very positive thing about that obviously, about being able to afford a bottle of wine but also that it also, it also allows . . . I think often what happens is someone will buy a bottle of wine in a restaurant and feel the need to drink it all. You've spent this much money and you want to get your money's worth. And so allowing the opportunity to bring your wine and cork it and take it home I think is a positive thing when it comes to putting a check on impaired driving.

There's several other things that this bill is doing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, again around just very basic things. I'm just trying to find my article here that . . . Age restricted theatres will be allowed to serve alcohol. Concert halls and convention centres will be able to sell alcohol at televised or pre-recorded events. Spas and salons will be able to sell and serve liquor to customers. Hotels will be able to provide guests with alcohol through room service. Another change, for example, Sunday brunch will be able to be offered in karaoke lounges with minors present. So some of these are very common sense changes that we don't have any big difficulty with.

I think on this side of the House we . . . When you make changes on one side of the ledger, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you need to do it on the other side as well. So if you're making alcohol more accessible on one side you need to recognize that perhaps there are some challenges on the other. We've heard about record deaths here on our highways here in Saskatchewan, a large number of them because of impaired driving, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We have some serious alcohol issues in Prince Albert. There's a drinking problem in Prince Albert, is the headline of a CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] story. "Although Prince Albert has only about 35,000 people, according to the 2011 census, it racks up more intoxication arrests than either Regina or Saskatoon."

And there are stats showing that the problem is getting worse, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There was a recent study actually just at the end of 2012, and I don't have it in front of me, but we have some of the highest numbers of risky drinking behaviours or binge drinking, which is drinking five or more beverages at once, which is often something that young people do in university.

And so when you make changes on one side, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you have to make sure you're doing a balanced approach on the other side and putting in place an addictions and mental health strategy perhaps, looking at some of the risky drinking behaviours, updating your impaired driving legislation.

Before the legislature another bill that we have is *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act*, which is making some changes because

of a very tragic death in a construction zone last summer. Those changes are absolutely imperative, Mr. Speaker, but I would argue that this would have been a perfect time for us to make some changes on our impaired driving legislation as well. And I'm pleased that, after some pressure, the government has struck an all-party Traffic Safety Committee to look into all kinds of issues that have led to fatalities on our highways, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I think that that's a very good thing, but I do have some concerns that you come up with a report and recommendations and I'm eager to see once this . . . I'm pleased to be the Vice-Chair of this committee, but I hope when we have heard all the evidence and we make good recommendations . . . Well first of all, I hope that the recommendations reflect what we hear and that the government is committed to acting on some of them. Undoubtedly there will be recommendations on impaired driving legislation. I know I've had, the last several months I've had an opportunity to look closely at what other provinces or what other jurisdictions are doing, and I think it would have been an opportunity . . . As I said, we've made changes on this one side, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This spring session could have been an opportunity to make some changes on some of our impaired driving legislation to ensure that we go into the summer a little bit safer, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Some of the changes could have involved . . . And I'm hoping that some of these recommendations will come out of this Traffic Safety Committee. But BC [British Columbia], actually, one of the things that BC does, at .05 on your first offence, not only is your licence suspended, but there is a vehicle impoundment for three days, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which is very . . . This change happened about two years ago and I spoke to someone actually who has worked in traffic safety for 30 years, and he said he has never seen a public policy change that has had such a huge impact on death rates. And death rates in BC have dropped dramatically because of this.

They're attributing it largely to the vehicle impoundment piece, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because when you take someone's car away for three days, you can't get through a weekend. You can't be that teenager, the 19-year-old who took the car on Friday night, and you got your licence suspended overnight. So you've just left the car where you left it, and you go home and tell mom and dad, oh I left my car at the bar. I left the car at the bar. If your licence and your vehicle is impounded, if your licence is suspended and your vehicle is impounded for three days, it has a very real impact. It will impact your ability . . . It takes you beyond a weekend basically, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And that has proved to be a huge deterrent for people. And again this one individual who has worked in traffic safety for 30 years and is cited in many of the academic articles in the literature has said to me that that was one measure he's never seen anything so effective in his 30 years working in the industry, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

There are some other things again. So you make changes here; you should seriously think about making concurrent changes on the other side of the legislature.

Or something that Ontario is doing, which is interesting, is they have a zero blood alcohol content for all drivers 21 years and under. So the interesting thing about that . . . And one could

argue well maybe it should just be legal age, 19. But the whole idea behind this — and it's still in early days to see what kind of impact this particular change has, Mr. Deputy Speaker — but one of the arguments here is you're, from a very young age, you're separating drinking from driving. So if we talk about having an impaired driving culture, people still accept impaired driving as the norm. This is one way to get our young people learning from day one that you don't drink and you don't get in your car. There's zero, zero tolerance for having alcohol in your system for those first five years you're a driver, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And so the evidence is still coming in on that. That's a fairly new change, but I think when you think about a culture shift, that is one policy that they see having the capacity to change some culture.

Ontario has very low drinking and driving rates. Just for the record, Saskatchewan . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Why would we talk about drinking and driving? We have here this piece of legislation that is going to make alcohol more accessible, and we have some of the highest drinking rates in all of Canada. The highest of all the provinces, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And again I had mentioned binge drinking is a huge problem. So I think that it would have been wise to put some of these policies in place on the impaired driving side of things at the same time that you brought forward legislation to make alcohol more accessible, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Another piece actually that BC has also done — which initially they had some difficulties with it and there were some court challenges, and they've ironed out the legislation and resolved that issue now — but it was on interlock. So when you get a licence suspension you will have to . . . It was mandatory to get an interlock program. But one of the changes they've made is to make it allow people to get their vehicles back and drive, but drive responsibly, so you have to breathe into the interlock and then you're allowed to drive. But instead of bumping it way down, so you have a licence suspension for X amount of months and then you can drive your car, the whole idea is to get people back in their vehicles, but again separating drinking from driving.

[20:00]

And what some of the studies have shown is that people actually have a suspended licence and will learn how to drive while they're suspended and get around the rules. So this interlock program is very proactive in ensuring that if you're driving, you're not drinking, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So I think it would have been very wise on the part of the government to look a little bit more closely. If you're making these changes, you have to look at the big broad picture and how they might impact other parts of your policy. And the reality is we don't have a great track record on alcohol here in Saskatchewan. Whether it's on impaired driving, risky drinking, addictions are a huge issue, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I know one of the things actually that I found quite interesting that I have to commend the minister on is:

Two of the changes in this bill will enhance SLGA's [Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority] ability to

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

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was a waitress, a server for a very long time. That's how I paid for my university. I've worked in restaurants and I've worked in bars, and I've had many opportunities to see impaired people in the public. And allowing people, if people are intoxicated when they come in . . . Or you might not always know that as a server, and you serve them one more and they're . . . So you generally would ask them to leave. But asking a person who's incredibly intoxicated to leave opens you up for all kinds of problems. So allowing that individual to be able to stay there until you've ensured that they are going somewhere safe and in a safe way, I think is very important.

I know that another issue that always came up as a server . . . I worked at many different restaurants and many different pubs. So one of the pubs I worked at was Louis' on campus and I have to say that was an incredibly great organization to work for. And I remember spending one Sunday afternoon getting server training on learning how to ensure that we were serving responsibly, and it was great training to have. But even though I had that training, I also worked in another establishment where the manager wasn't quite so supportive of my desire to cut people off, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So I think a place that we could have maybe gone or considered going in this legislation is mandatory server training, but again it requires . . . It's great to have the training but it requires an employer who is willing to support you or back you when someone who has had too much alcohol and it's time for them to call it a night, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because it's not much fun trying to ask someone to leave or telling them that you're not asking them to leave, you're telling them that you can't serve them any more alcohol. And generally when people have had too much alcohol, they're not very interested in being told that they can't have more, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So I think that Bill No. 71, *An Act to amend The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Act* in fact does some positive things. It brings us up to where many other jurisdictions already are but I would say this government is remiss in doing the other side, the other part of the work in ensuring that if you're making alcohol more accessible, that you sure as heck better be making sure that your citizens are safe. And with the track record that we have on alcohol-related deaths here in Saskatchewan, there's a lot of work to do in that regard, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So with that I know that others . . . I look forward to the opportunity in committee to talk a little bit more. I know we'll have some questions in committee for this. Thank you.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the Minister of Crown Investments Corporation that Bill No. 71, *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2012* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Principal Clerk: — Second reading of this bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. To the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

The Deputy Speaker: — The bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

Bill No. 72

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Harpauer that **Bill No. 72 — *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2012*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am very pleased to rise in the debate tonight on Bill No. 72, *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2012*. And we certainly have heard a lot about this Act, given some of the recent events in Saskatchewan on our highways and events relating to tragedies where people are driving too fast. Certainly the motor vehicle is a large part of our lives and we use them . . . I know just coming here last night from Saskatoon and driving on the highway, a lot of ice packed from the recent snowfall, and I could see off in the distance emergency vehicles. I knew something had happened. You start slowing down, and there's a fellow there with his warning suit and directing me to go actually across the highway on to the other side of the highway, which is a bit disconcerting when you're used to driving on a four-lane highway and you see oncoming traffic. So I just thought about that fellow, and I actually did think about this bill and what is necessary to protect those highway workers which, for him, was a very dangerous circumstance to be in.

And I could see the emergency vehicles, but was not really sure what was going on when he was standing there directing traffic with a flashlight. So it's a dangerous place for them to be, and it's one that I think we have to commend those workers for, for being out there and available in emergencies like that, or in the case of the young woman who was tragically killed last summer. She was just doing her job in terms of the highway maintenance. And those kinds of things are always difficult for us as a society to appreciate and understand, and certainly it's the role of government to ensure that that doesn't happen, as much as is possible within a legislative sphere.

So I think this bill makes a number of changes in addition to the

one to ensure that there's more stiff penalties, there are stiffer penalties for people who disregard the law in those safety zones. And so these are very appropriate measures I think for governments to do, and we certainly support those changes.

There's other changes that are being proposed as well, I understand, in this bill. And one is the stickers on our licence plates are no longer being required, which actually is good news to me too, because I always hated when you had to go out and clean off the licence plate and it was muddy and cold and then you had to put your new sticker on and sometimes it went crooked and all those things. So I think what's going on now with the new systems that SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] have implemented and the way we have computer systems right there in the law enforcement vehicles, they can actually look up your current information right away just by punching in the licence number. So the sticker has become irrelevant. And the minister in her comments indicated that that's one of the changes in this bill. It's just a housekeeping change and it's going to reflect current practices and standards. So because law enforcement don't rely on those stickers to validate vehicle registration anymore, it's going to eliminate redundancies and save costs and streamline the renewal process. So these kinds of changes are very welcome, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and ones I think that make a lot of sense.

I think what we would make comment as far as the extent of this bill though is that perhaps it could go further. And I know that some work will be undertaken very shortly by the special committee that's been established by this legislature to look more into traffic safety and all the reasons that people are getting killed on our highways. And we certainly know, for example, groups like SADD [Students Against Drinking and Driving] Saskatchewan, students against drunk driving or driving and drinking and MADD [Mothers Against Drunk Driving], the mothers that are also organized in this fashion, would like to see stiffer penalties in relation to people that are careless and drink and drive.

And we know that there's a number of deaths that occur on our highways as a result of alcohol consumption and improper driving and we are looking forward to additional changes to this bill to ensure that . . . You know, in this case when, you know, the punitive aspect doesn't always succeed in changing everyone's behaviour, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I believe that with the ability to impound vehicles and issue stiffer penalties for removal of licence privileges, those types of things do have an impact and are certainly something people have in mind before they choose to get behind the wheel after having consumed alcohol.

And so in that circumstance we are looking for a complete review of this and we're pleased to be participating in the committee work that will be taking place looking at those issues. And two of our members, from Cumberland and from Saskatoon Riversdale, will be participating in that and look forward to hearing from the people and finding out what sort of changes would make a difference for us in *The Traffic Safety Act*. So we look forward to those additional changes.

Just a couple more comments on the minister's introductory comments. There's some changes also being used for photo radar. And one of the changes is that in the section 192, it used

to say that you couldn't obstruct your licence plate to prevent it being photographed by a red light camera system. There's a change being added to that and that's a speed monitoring device. So photo radar apparently now can also photograph the licence plate of the vehicle. As it's being tested, the radar itself, the speed of the vehicle is being monitored. So that's a new change, and again it highlights the impact of technology on our ability for law enforcement and also just how computers and Internet and the database systems allow a complex system like SGI, Saskatchewan Government Insurance, to issue licences and licence plates. And when you think about what a great deal it was to be able to pay monthly . . . We used to have to pay for the whole year and now we can pay monthly. So all these things, we're taking advantage of the technologies available to us and making sure that we are keeping up with the times, so to speak.

And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think at this point those are probably the extent of the comments that we are going to have in relation to this bill and I think that's the extent of my comments as well. So thank you.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the Minister for Crown Investments Corporation that Bill No. 72, *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2012* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Principal Clerk: — Second reading of this bill.

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

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

The Deputy Speaker: — This bill stands referred to the Committee of Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

Bill No. 73

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Reiter that **Bill No. 73** — *The Municipalities Amendment 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. It's a pleasure to rise tonight and enter into the second reading debates on Bill No. 73, *The Municipalities Amendment Act, 2012*, and it is quite a substantial piece before us and it has lots of substantial work in here. And of course, you know, this kind

of thing often lends itself to times when you have question and answer and we will get to that at some point.

But I do want to take a minute and I know there will be others who want to have some time to talk about the bill itself because it is a fairly substantial piece.

And we do think about, you know, when we're dealing with the different levels of government and we often think that many of our citizens, and probably rightfully so, when they look at services and they look at how we do business, to them we're government. And whether we're provincial, federal or municipal, we're all the same. And so in many ways, because of the way our system is set up through the constitution and how rights and responsibilities are devolved out of the constitution and it's a way that we've come to appreciate how Canada is run, right from our villages and hamlets right up to our cities, our provinces, our regions, this all plays out.

[20:15]

When I speak about our regions too, Mr. Speaker, it's not by a slip of the tongue. I mean actually some of the things that the minister has referred to in his remarks talks about the New West Trade Agreement and that type of thing. And of course that brings to mind to me CETA [Canada-European Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement], the European trade agreement and how . . . And now none of this is related to that, but I know that there are a lot of concerns about some of our trade agreements and the impact it has on our ability to be in charge of our own affairs.

And you know, we often have a lot of concerns about trying to make sure that our communities are vibrant, our economies are strong, and that if we can create work and jobs in our own cities and towns and provinces that's a good thing. Sometimes though when we sign these trade agreements, we create situations that we had not fully foreseen, and that becomes a bit of a problem. And so it is important that we take some time to read these bills, think about them a bit, discuss them, talk to our stakeholders. And if there was, it would be, you know, a great day if there was some way that we could get our constituent input into some of these issues. But it is difficult because they do seem remote when we talk about some of these specific things. And they become very interested when it's something that's directly related to them.

And I'm thinking of particularly the first time the minister talks about boundary exemptions and how do you transfer from one type of . . . to an RM [rural municipality] to a city annexation. Those can be very difficult. When you talk about it in theory, it's a little bit more abstract and a little easier, but not very interesting. And then when it happens to be your farm, it probably is a very big deal, and so it's just that much more real.

So these are the challenges we have as politicians, and it's our responsibility to make sure it's fair and it's doable as it possibly can be and it's practical. And so we rely on those stakeholders like SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] and SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] to give us their best advice, but appreciating too that they have strong, strong stakes in these decisions as well. And so we have to take the time to make sure we get it right.

And so as I review the minister's comments, I'll just take a moment to talk about them because I think it gives us a good insight into the bill itself. But as I said, you know, with so many of those things — and we seem to see a few of these bills and probably that's not a bad thing — but we see a quite a few that have a lot of detail and will need a lot of scrutiny when it comes to committee. But we're not there yet and we're still at the big picture place.

So, first he talks about . . . He has several main ideas that he wanted to pursue but the first is that they will, this amendment "will improve processes related to the boundary alterations or annexations for the municipalities involved for the Saskatchewan Municipal Board and to support government's growth strategy." So that's an interesting thing. And how do we do that in a way that's fair, that's responsible, and not push around some of the smaller players?

Some of these RMs may feel that they want to . . . it's their leverage that's being taken away here. I'm not sure; it will be interesting to see what their thoughts are on that. And then apparently the SARM and SUMA had some specific requests. And then we talked about the New West Partnership Agreement and the agreement on internal trade when it comes to business licences and municipal procurement. And that's very important. And then there is some administrative matters making sure language is clear.

But first let's talk about the boundary limitations. And he talks about how there is "a new time limit on how long a municipality must wait for response to a proposed annexation application from the other affected municipality before the process is considered disputed and can then proceed to the Saskatchewan Municipal Board . . ." And of course then they would require mediation. So this is important that there is a timely process and that there is some way that there is a process that people know that as this province is growing and as our cities and our communities grow, that there is a proper way and a fair way that's outlined. And so this is very clear that there will be a process for approval of a portion or parts of the board that can be agreed to.

So we're interested in that, talking more about that. If there are some specific areas in the province that are hot spots, of course we would probably assume that that would be around the larger cities, well in fact all cities. I think all the cities. You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think when we talk about the number of cities we have — I believe it's 12 or is it getting to be 14 now? — but of course those smaller ones are growing at quite a pace too. So that's very important.

The other one that is talking about some of the requests, and one of them was to be able to do . . . when they're creating taxation policies for within their own RM, it sounds like there's challenges when parts of their RMs are very heavily populated with acreages, that type of thing, and needs a different tax tool than some of the others than required because they're expecting services that are more urban-type. And so this is a challenge.

And so the RMs have expressed an interest that they can talk about additional service areas, and I think that sounds fair enough. I do want to make a note that of course there's important safeguards within the legislation. For example,

additional service areas cannot be established to specifically target an individual, residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural property or be specific to a business or a business activity. So I think that speaks to the fairness. And it's a good thing that that might have been one of what we call unintended consequences, when we hadn't fully thought that out or if an RM decided to just go a little bit too far and decided that one type of business was worthy of a special tax for a service area.

But that's interesting, you know, because I know some RMs can be home to one specific type of industry or business. I mean, I'm thinking of a potash mine or, you know, different types of oil, that kind of thing. And so I'm not sure how that plays out into it.

They talk about municipal debt limits. And that's important that that can be dealt with and how we can utilize the municipal board in making sure that issues around debt and borrowing are done and borrowing approval are handled in an appropriate fashion.

So another area of amendments includes enabling municipalities to establish and enter into voluntary municipal business licensing arrangements and common issues of overweight vehicle permits with other municipalities. And this seems to make a lot of sense. I mean, I think this deals with a lot of our concerns. And I know, particularly if you have and were about to go into spring season, overweight trucks on the RM roads is a big, big issue. And so if we can establish some consistency across the borders, that would be a very, very good thing.

Now of course they do mention the amendment supports the province's commitments under interprovincial, national, and international agreements, such as the US partnership and the Agreement on Internal Trade. And of course that's one of the things that I was asking about; I wonder if that could be the implications around CETA. That's very, very important.

And then they do talk about "The last main area of amendments addresses other requests of stakeholders to clarify certain administrative matters such as signing of council meeting minutes, consistent terminology regarding service or filing of assessment appeal notices . . ." Now I wonder if they have problems with the number of times they define employee or worker, like in a certain other bill that I know. We may be back defining, getting that straight, but that's for another time.

But these are . . . You know, and it does actually remind me a lot of *The Cities Act* because when that was introduced, that was a huge, huge piece of legislation. And we've seen *The Cities Act* come back before this House almost on an annual basis, almost annually because there is concerns. And so that's why we have concerns about other omnibus bills, just because they seem to be here every year and they don't really fix the problem that they thought they would and . . . if you don't get it right.

So Mr. Speaker, I think that this does make a lot of sense, and I think that those folks who serve as RM councillors and Reeves and our city mayors and our city councillors all are deserving of a lot of respect. And even if people are in a rush, we do need to take the time, we need to take the time to acknowledge the good

work that people do for us. They really are well-deserving of that special recognition, and I think this is, this is important that we do. And so when they bring forward suggestions for how we can improve our municipalities Act, our cities Act, anything to do with levels of government, let's take the time and hear them out.

Now it is, though, our responsibility that we make sure that it's in the basis of fairness and that there is nothing that can create an unfair or a disadvantage or singling out or targeting groups. I know that sometimes we often hear of those concerns. And there are people who come to our offices are concerned that how the game has changed and they're changing the rules as we go forward, and in the RMs where there can be issues around just the number of people involved. Everybody does know everybody. We want to make sure that our laws are fair and transparent and as accountable as possible.

So I think that the three things that the minister really wants to establish here about boundary descriptions, I'll be interested to hear how that . . . The questions that we ask in committee, particularly around any specifics, that will be of interest. The service areas that SUMA and SARM brought up, that's very important. And just talking about these different levels of agreements, and whether it's New West and whether it's the internal agreement on trade, or I'd be very curious to know if there's implications for CETA. I think that's very important. And of course when we talk about debt limits and that type of thing, clearly in this time that we are seeing incredible growth in infrastructure, that it's important that we have these conversations about debt. And we think that this is really worthwhile.

So a lot of this stuff is coming forward. And we know there's going to be a lot of conversations about this, and we're hearing concerns. But we're also hearing that people want to move forward with it. But I know that there will be many folks on our side who will continue to raise these issues. You know, we've had a good break over the Easter week and been home and been able to see and talk to people about the concerns that they are raising. And I think it's important that we do support our municipalities in as many ways as we can. As I said, they're trying to do the very best job that they possibly can with the resources that they have, but sometimes all the tools aren't there. And when they make these kind of suggestions, we should listen to them.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I know there's many other speeches and many other items we need to cover tonight, so I move adjournment on Bill No. 73, *The Municipalities Amendment Act, 2012*. Thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Centre has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 73, *The Municipalities Amendment Act, 2012*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

[20:30]

Bill No. 74

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Reiter that **Bill No. 74 — *The Cities Amendment Act, 2012*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm pleased to wade into the debate on Bill No. 74, *The Cities Amendment Act, 2012*.

The original cities amendment Act, it's the legislative framework through which Saskatchewan's, our 16 cities, exercise their powers and provide services. This Act had been in place since January 1st, 2003, and so now there is a bill before us proposing amendments to this cities Act.

Some of the amendments in this, I'd just like to go through the minister's second reading speech and talk about the four different areas of amendments that the minister is proposing. The first is related to the process for boundary alterations in the cities Act, and it'll include "... a new time limit on how long a municipality must wait for a response to proposed annexation application from the other affected municipality ...". I think that the goal is to cut down when an annexation application comes in, having it stalled over time, which would eventually quash it. I think this amendment will address that, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

It also requires "... mediation before the Saskatchewan Municipal Board hears and decides an application for annexation on which the affected municipal councils cannot reach agreement ...". I know that I've said this here, not just related to cities and municipalities, personally mediation I think is always a good thing. When you can bring parties together with a third party neutral individual who can help you sort through your differences, and differences happen at all different levels, including between municipalities and in this case cities, Mr. Deputy Speaker, so mediation I think is a good thing.

This particular set of amendments also clarifies "... that an application may be amended or withdrawn at any time up until the board completes its review, after which the board's decision shall apply." The minister has pointed out that these amendments are all consistent with amendments that are proposed with *The Municipal Board Act* and all through municipal Acts. So these actually sound vaguely familiar I'm sure to people who might be watching at home because I know that we've debated and discussed these across the other municipal Acts as well.

The second main area of amendments, the minister said, comes from:

... requests from the cities and SUMA for authorities consistent with the other two municipal Acts, *The Municipalities Act* and *The Northern Municipalities Act*, regarding matters such as unpaid municipal utility charges and trailer home permitting. [These] ... amendments will allow cities to add unpaid city utility charges incurred by a tenant to property taxes provided the prior notice is

given to the tenant and property owner and any utility deposits are applied to the charges. This authority was requested by resolution of SUMA [the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association].

And it's already provided for in the other two municipal Acts. So all these three Acts are being made consistent, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Cities, the minister has said, also has "... requested the ability to license and permit trailer homes as an alternative to assessing and taxing these as improvements, similar to the existing authority in the other two Acts." So that amendment is bringing *The Cities Act* up to speed with the northern municipalities and the municipalities Acts, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Another category of amendments that this Act proposes is:

... enabling cities to establish and enter into intermunicipal agreements and arrangements that reconcile business licensing requirements so that a business or certain types of business could operate across participating municipalities under a single licence.

And the minister has noted that "... these are voluntary provisions and ensure cities have the legislative authority to agree on such arrangements," which that seems to be a reasonable proposal, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And the minister has pointed out actually that these amendments support the province's commitments under the New West Partnership Agreement and the Agreement on Internal Trade — not external trade, Mr. Deputy Speaker; that would be very different than internal trade.

And the goal of this particular amendment is encouraging "... municipalities to reconcile their business licensing regimes similar to what Saskatchewan has done in partnership with the other provinces of Alberta and British Columbia regarding the extraprovincial business registration option that became effective ... [last] July."

Mr. Deputy Speaker, and a final amendment, the final set of amendments:

... address other requests from stakeholders to clarify certain administrative matters [the minister said] such as the signing of council meeting minutes, consistent terminology regarding service or filing of assessment appeal notices, and adding contact information for appellant agents to assessment appeal notices. These have been requested by the cities through their city solicitors, city assessors, and city clerks.

The minister also points out that his ministry identified amendments to clarify certain provisions like those regarding education property tax reporting, so now these reports will go to Government Relations instead of the Ministry of Education.

"As well other amendments clarify that fees for issuing a permit, inspection, or approval not exceed the cost of administration and enforcement similar to the present situation regarding licence fees." That makes good sense, Mr. Deputy

Speaker, that fees for issuing a permit, inspection, or approval shouldn't exceed the cost of administration and enforcement.

The one thing that the minister points out, that:

... [his] ministry consulted extensively on these amendments with the city sector, including individual cities and city officials as well with SUMA and the Saskatchewan Association of City Clerks. Other stakeholder groups [the minister has gone on to say] were also consulted on specific aspects of the proposed amendments. These consultations began in mid-February 2012 and concluded this past summer.

So I'd just like to point out, and I know we've talked about this in this House before, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but this government's track record on consultation has not been incredibly strong ... [inaudible interjection] ... And the Minister of Highways is saying, oh come on, Danielle. But I need to point out that there's been many examples of this government's lack of consultation. We heard about Bill 85 today — 90 days. This government took 90 days to consult on 100 years of labour legislation, Mr. Deputy Speaker — 100 years of labour legislation in 90 days — and those 90 days actually also happened to fall over the course of the summer, in times where people in Saskatchewan try to take advantage of the weather, often have summer holidays. So it was not an opportune time to consult, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But that's only one occasion where this government has not had a stellar track record.

So I need to point out that these consultations began in mid-February 2012 and concluded this past summer. So February, March, April, May, June, July maybe ... Did they conclude in July or August? So seven months, seven months, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So it sounds, it sounds like, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government has done a reasonable job of consultation on this bill, but seven months, seven months to consult on this where they took 90 days to consult on 100 years of labour legislation, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This government has not had a stellar track record when it comes to making sure it's connecting with people who are impacted by legislation.

And we all know that you can't just talk to like-minded people when you want to create public policy or change legislation. It's important to reach out to all kinds of individuals who maybe don't always see things your way, Mr. Deputy Speaker, or people who are impacted by legislation. And it sounds like with *The Cities Act* that that has been the case. They've talked to stakeholders, a whole gamut of individuals, which is important but it is important when you consult that you are ... I just need to point out that this isn't always the case with this government, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But there are some, it sounds like, changes that are coming from individuals or from stakeholders in organizations that are worthwhile and will make the running of our cities a little bit smoother, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But I know that I have colleagues who will be wading into the debate on Bill No. 74, *The Cities Amendment Act*, in the coming days, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and 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. 74, *The Cities Amendment Act, 2012*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 75

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Reiter that **Bill No. 75 — *The Northern Municipalities Amendment Act, 2012*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A pleasure this evening to join in on discussion on *The Northern Municipalities Amendment Act, 2012*, Bill No. 75, Mr. Speaker.

This piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, has to do with northern municipalities obviously, as the title would suggest, and specifically, Mr. Speaker, work in a number of areas where there are some changes ongoing in order to ensure that some proper changes occur so that the legislation best reflects what is needed for northern municipalities.

The changes, Mr. Speaker, are brought in through three areas. The one has to do, Mr. Speaker, with, as the minister would describe it, as competitiveness in a growth strategy, Mr. Speaker, with respect to business licensing, overweight vehicle permitting, boundary alteration, municipal procurement. And, Mr. Speaker, this aspect, we've had the opportunity to discuss it as it relates to municipalities in other context, not specifically related to northern municipalities, but we've talked about this as it relates to other ... in other speeches on other pieces of legislation.

It has to do, Mr. Speaker, with the idea of business licensing and provisions enabling one municipality to enter into agreements with other municipalities with respect to licences, and to allow for less ... to prevent duplication of requirements with respect to licensing so that a business operating in one area could operate in another area if the agreement was in place and they could have a single licence thereby streamlining the process for the business and not putting in place additional barriers to the smooth operation. And, Mr. Speaker, this, as we've discussed in previous items of legislation, has to do with the New West Partnership and some of the changes in place there in order to ensure that things can be streamlined when appropriate.

It is important though to note, Mr. Speaker, when entering into these types of agreements, that that there not be unnecessary trade-offs with respect to autonomy of local levels of government as it relates to the requirements that they need to have in place in order to meet the needs of their constituents. So I think that's important, important item to note and something to keep in mind when we're talking about requirements in one area having application to another area.

Also, Mr. Speaker, there is the voluntary aspect here with one area entering into an agreement with another as it relates to overweight permits for vehicles, Mr. Speaker, so that in situations where municipalities want to enter into a voluntary arrangement where one area would recognize the permit issued by another, that this legislation would provide and allow for that, Mr. Speaker. So that is the one component that this legislation provides. And the government sums it up with respect to competitiveness and growth strategy, Mr. Speaker, as it relates to business licensing and boundary alteration and different components.

And as I said, it is important to listen to small businesses. It's important to listen to municipalities. And it's also important to respect autonomy. And it's important to respect processes that have been in place allowing for local governments to make decisions in the best interests of the citizens in that area. That's the first component of this piece of legislation.

The second component, Mr. Speaker, has to do with changes that are needed with respect to inactive municipal development corporations. So this would be in situations, Mr. Speaker, where a development corporation was started up at one point in time but is currently inactive. And the legislation here that's been suggested would help deal with that situation with respect to some of the reporting that is required and some of the meetings that are required under the Act, taking into account the reality that a development corporation may be inactive in an area.

It also has special provisions that are included for northern hamlet incorporation and northern settlement dissolution. So these are some aspects of the legislation, Mr. Speaker, that are unique to the North, recognizing some of the settlement patterns and the nature of communities in northern Saskatchewan. And this provides some changes to allow for the recognition of hamlets but also for the dissolution of settlements when no longer appropriate, Mr. Speaker.

Seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that it's necessary for legislation to be responsive to locations where this may be the reality with respect to smaller communities, with respect to some of the changes that need to take place in order that the legislation is reflective and responsive to the local needs within northern Saskatchewan.

[20:45]

The third component that is identified in the minister's remarks based on the legislation that was brought forward and the amendments, Mr. Speaker, has to do with administrative matters with respect to council meeting minutes, signing off, and some of the necessary process that is required at the municipal level with respect to notice of assessments that are being given for appeal notices and the details, as I said, around meeting minutes and the need for there to be consistent terminology across different pieces of legislation. And often when we look at legislation, Mr. Speaker, especially in the municipal context, there may be pieces of legislation that affect cities or affect rural municipalities and in this situation, Mr. Speaker, affect northern municipalities.

So it is in my view appropriate to have consistency in language across those pieces of the legislation in order to ensure that

there is consistency. And that's an important thing so that when people look at the legislation in one area, they know what the context is, they know what the issue is, and they can see how this particular topic or issue is dealt with in a sister or brother piece of legislation, so to speak, within the realm of municipal government but whether it affects the North or the South or a large centre or in a more rural location.

So those are the three main areas of this legislation, Mr. Speaker. There is also a component here that was included through *The Northern Municipalities Act* that wasn't provided or wasn't included in earlier changes in 2010, as the minister said, due to some technical reasons. So we see the inclusion of that. It's important that the changes here, Mr. Speaker, are developed in consultation with people in the North, especially local leaders and those that are serving in elected office. I think that is very important that there has been the input of SUMA, the New North, and the Northern Municipal Trust Account Management Board and with the last, Mr. Speaker, addressing the issue of the development corporations in the North in different communities, Mr. Speaker.

So the three areas to recap, Mr. Speaker, that the amendment here is covering to *The Northern Municipalities Amendment Act*, the first has to do with some steps that the government wishes to take in order to, as it describes it, to improve competitiveness and growth as it relates to licences. As I said, Mr. Speaker, when there are instances where it makes sense, it's based on common sense, and when it is the will of small businesses to do that, I think that does make sense provided, Mr. Speaker, that it does not unnecessarily erode any sort of autonomy or control or oversight that the municipal level of government provides.

With respect to the vehicle provisions for overweight permits, it is a voluntary arrangement, Mr. Speaker. So where there is the will and the desire to have voluntary arrangements and recognize permits issued by another area, Mr. Speaker, so long as it's not forced and it serves a good purpose and is easier to do, that I think on a face value, Mr. Speaker, has some merit.

Also with the municipal development corporations where some have been inactive and some adjustments need to take place with respect to recognizing a corporation of northern hamlets but also the dissolution of northern settlements, Mr. Speaker, this legislation addresses and touches on that issue.

And lastly the third area with respect to some of the administrative amendments with respect to meeting minutes and requirements that northern municipalities would have to follow in order to be in step with the legislation, there are some adjustments here with respect to modernizing, as well as with some of the language that this piece of legislation has with other pieces of legislation with respect to municipalities.

And it is the minister's statement that consultation has occurred with SUMA and the New North and the Northern Municipal Trust Account Management Board. So, Mr. Speaker, I'm hoping that that consultation was genuine and that the remarks received from those organizations and individuals working in those organizations are in fact reflected in the changes here and are in the will of those organizations.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, on Bill No. 75, I would conclude my remarks and look forward to the chance to speak on municipal issues more at future dates. And I know other individuals within caucus may have a desire to speak to this piece of legislation, so I move to adjourn debate on this piece of legislation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Leader of the Opposition has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 75, *The Northern Municipalities Amendment Act, 2012*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 76

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Reiter that **Bill No. 76 — *The Municipal Board Amendment 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. I'm pleased tonight to enter into the debate on Bill No. 76, *An Act to amend The Municipal Board Act and to make related amendments to other Acts*.

And of course there seems to be many bills coming forward that are dealing specifically with the issue around boundary and boundary changes and annexations between RMs and municipalities. And this is one . . . In fact I was speaking earlier on a previous bill talking about the role of the Municipal Board and how it will be used as a vehicle to help resolve some of the issues. And in many ways this bill itself is that way of enabling it to be pretty constructive.

But we have some questions about that, and I'll take a minute here to review the minister's comments about the bill and what the implications are for it. Of course clearly this is done, and as they say it's done in a way to promote the provincial growth agenda. And of course we are very supportive of growth. We're not sure that the agenda that they put forward is as solid as one might expect, but we have what we have.

And we know there are challenges, and some of them very public in the newspapers between our large cities and the surrounding RMs, and it's been causing some real concerns. And we need to deal with that in a way that is constructive and fair and that people are heard, and actually that people are not taken advantage of, or different levels of government aren't sort of ganging up on smaller levels. That's not fair at all. But we think this may be a reasonable alternative. But we have some questions about this and we will have those questions when we get to committee. But I know there will be others who want to speak to that when the time comes.

But what they do is, the minister has talked about the amendments in this bill relate to the part of the annexation process after the application reaches the Municipal Board for a

decision. So they talk about four processes that will help it. First it clarifies the board secretary's ability to determine the completeness of the application and notify the applicants of deficiencies before it may be considered by the board. This will speed up the process and save the board's time for higher priority questions.

Now I just have to say, Mr. Speaker, that when I was reading through the bill I found this very interesting actually, if we can take a moment. Of course the board's secretary is someone that is of significance. And it's important that the work is complete and full and all the details are there and all the t's are crossed and i's are dotted. But I'm not sure. It seems to me to leave a lot of power in the hand of the secretary to say, this isn't good enough and that's done, you know. So it goes:

(1.1) Before an application mentioned in subsection (1) is reviewed by the board, the secretary of the board shall review the application to determine if, in the opinion of the secretary, it provides sufficient information and:

(a) if the secretary determines that the application provides sufficient information, refer the application to the board for review; or

(b) if the secretary determines that the application does not provide sufficient information, notify the applicant in writing of the deficiencies in the application and specify a period within which the deficiencies must be remedied.

(1.2) If, in the secretary's opinion, the deficiencies mentioned in clause (1.1)(b) have been remedied within the specified period, the secretary shall refer the application to the board for review.

(1.3) If the applicant does not remedy the deficiencies mentioned in clause (1.1)(b) to the satisfaction of the secretary within the specified period, the application is deemed to have been withdrawn by the applicant.

So that's a lot of power the secretary has there. It's a lot more than just saying, this is filled in and we're ready to go with it. Essentially that person is a real gatekeeper. And I'm not sure if that's been totally thought through. I would have some serious questions about that if . . . We sure hope every secretary is level-headed and fair and has all the good graces and will get all these forms filled out appropriately. But to me, it sure seems to create a situation where one person is the gatekeeper and the board may never hear of some. So that leaves me a little uneasy, the amount of power that person has, and so that we will definitely have some questions about.

So the second part that the minister has talked about is it ensures that the council . . . The bill will also ensure that councils undertake mediation to settle dispute if none has been attempted prior to the board's review and decision. That makes a lot of sense. The premise is of voluntary settlement, even with the assistance, but it is preferable to having the board impose a decision.

All right. And then it also talks about changes allow for the board to provide or approve portion or portions of the

application, and this change is from the all-or-nothing approach that was a problem before. Now you're allowed to have much more of a compromise solution where more parties are feeling . . . And so we'll stop for a minute here and . . . Anyways I won't take the phone call, Mr. Speaker. I'll continue with my . . . [inaudible interjections] . . . Mr. Speaker, we digress. And I will continue on to say that this is a good way to solve if you can have a compromise and not have a winner-take-all solution. That's very, very important. So that's good.

The other one, and I know my colleague from Regina Lakeview raised concerns about this, amendments are proposed to provide more flexibility in the appointment of alternate part-time members representing SARM or SUMA to sit on the panel that reviews and holds hearings regarding municipal boundary changes. Now it isn't so much that it's SARM or SUMA. I think that's fair enough. But what the question is, that if you're a full-time board member, you have to be appointed by the Executive Council and it would be advertised, whereas if you're a part-time board member, that is circumvented and you don't need to go through that kind of rigorous process. But it is the minister who has that power. So we have questions about that and whether that's appropriate or not. But that's one.

So other issues talk about the consultation process, as I said, the Executive Council. It talks a bit about the pension plan, that type of issue. But the real issues that are before us, and I think this is a real issue and I think that while this government may be trying to address this in this bill, the real issue becomes how do we deal with annexation in a logical, well-planned, -thought-out process here in Saskatchewan and how does that reflect our provincial interests.

And I've talked at length at other times when we've talked about municipal issues because we do have a stake in having strong, healthy, vibrant communities and strong, vibrant rural municipalities. I think that it's important that we can work together to get these issues ironed out and that when we know . . . And we do know that there will be annexation, and we do know our communities are growing. And if you have land and if RMs are close to cities and communities, then it's clear that at some point the resolution will have to be made that annexation will happen.

[21:00]

But there should be a process to make sure that's fair. And I think in many ways we try to do that prior to involving the Municipal Board, and if it does come to that, that there will be processes that are respectful and leave all parties feeling like they've had their day, that they've been able to make their case, and that the board has been able to hear them — that's only reasonable and fair — and that nobody's taking advantage of the situation either by unfair leverage of delay, delay, delay or just steamrolling ahead with it and not really taking into account the needs of all the parties involved.

And so I know that there's going to be lots of speeches on many of the bills tonight because we want to make sure we're getting to that point where we need to get to work on a lot of these things. And a few more of my colleagues will want to speak on Bill No. 76.

Those are my main concerns. We will be listening and paying close attention to this in committee because we think community planning is essential. It's not just as simple as annexing land and allowing cities to grow or communities to grow without any foresight or any kind of plan. We need to make sure that we have good community plans. And that all fits together, fits together to make a great province, and a great province that will attract people to come and stay and move here.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to move adjournment of Bill No. 76, *An Act to amend The Municipal Board Act and to make related amendments to other Acts*. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Centre has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 76, *The Municipal Board Amendment Act, 2012*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 77

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Harpauer that **Bill No. 77 — *The Horse Racing Regulation Amendment Act, 2012*** be now read a second time.]

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Lakeview.

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise tonight to speak to Bill No. 77, *An Act to amend The Horse Racing Regulation Act and to make consequential amendments to The Revenue and Financial Services Act and The Revenue Collection Administration Regulations*. Now, Mr. Speaker, this Bill 77 is quite a short bill. It's maybe just longer than one page. But as with a number of pieces of legislation that we have this session, there are bigger consequences to the bill than have been totally explained.

The minister indicated in her comments that she had announced that the provincial government would be eliminating the parimutuel tax it collects on horse racing wagers effective March 31st, 2013. That announcement was made last October. This was something that the horse racing industry had been lobbying for because effectively the money collected by the 10 per cent tax — parimutuel tax — was turned back to the industry to assist it. And the thinking was that if they didn't have to go through that mechanism of collecting the tax, remitting it to the government and then getting it back in the form of a grant, it might be simpler for everyone.

However it was not explained or indicated that that announcement meant that the government was going to choose a winner and two losers as it relates to horse racing. They didn't let these horses race against each other and let the best horse win. The minister, the government, the Premier chose to use the tax deduction and only give it to the thoroughbred racing crew and not to the harness racing or standardbred racing

community.

And so the net effect of this seemingly innocuous one-page bill is that it has effectively wiped out over 100 years of harness racing in Saskatchewan. This is something that has been an important part of many communities right . . . Last summer the harness racing took place in Regina, just west of Regina, in a new track that they'd built to replace the one that was formerly at Evraz Place. And it also will eliminate the harness racing in Yorkton. And so the net effect is that the racetrack in Saskatoon at the exhibition grounds will get all of the money from this particular decision and leaving out Yorkton and leaving out Regina. Now I'm not certain if the member of the legislature for Yorkton spoke up about this within the caucus period or if the members on the government side from Regina and area spoke up about this, but there doesn't seem to be any explanation of why one group was chosen over the other.

And how this works, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that this tax that's collected on the racing at the three venues in Saskatchewan last summer, the 10 per cent parimutuel tax, goes back then to those particular racetracks. But there's also the ability to have a market of allowing for online betting — betting basically watching televised races from Longacres or other racetracks around North America or probably around the world — and then allowing for bets to take place that then can collect this 10 per cent tax.

And so effectively what the minister and Premier did was to say, okay Saskatoon, in your operation you're going to get all of this, and Yorkton and Regina, you get nothing. The other side of that is that the people involved with the Saskatchewan Standardbred Horsemen's Association, the harness racing people, met with the minister, and they said, this is the effect of this. And they were hopeful that some solution may be there.

One of the solutions proposed was that there'd be a line drawn across the province at Davidson, and the betting north of that line would go to the Saskatoon thoroughbred group and that the money from people betting south of that line would go to the standardbred or the harness racing people. And that way they would be able to provide the subsidy to both Yorkton and to Regina from the south part, and then Saskatoon would get the subsidy or the licence to charge this fee for the northern part of the province.

But, Mr. Speaker, even as late as the later part of February when they thought maybe this would be resolved, it was announced I think on February the 20th that the Minister of Liquor and Gaming had made the decision, presumably in consultation with the Premier, that we're going to wipe out 100 years of history of harness racing in Saskatchewan. They're not going to get any of this subsidy that the thoroughbred industry at Prairieland Park in Saskatoon's going to get and so that there would not be any funding from this system for the harness racing in Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Speaker, once again it's a quite a . . . It's not a big community of people, but there are clearly many people involved. Now sometimes I don't think the public totally understands how many different aspects are involved in either standardbred racing or thoroughbred racing as it relates to the industries or the types of businesses that are involved. I mean

clearly we have the horse breeders, the horse people that are involved. But you also then have the financial agencies that allow for the purchase of horses. You end up having clearly the jockeys and the others who are involved. You have all of the stablehands and people who are involved in care of the horses. You have people throughout the province that maybe provide feed or pasture for the horses.

And you will then end up having a steady stable or a group — I guess a stable is the right word — of horses that are turned over through the industry. And if one hasn't been involved in this industry, they wouldn't understand about claiming races and the ability for very good horses to get claimed at certain prices in races that they participate in, and then eventually some of those horses will be taken outside of Saskatchewan, to probably Alberta or British Columbia or into the States or maybe Toronto to compete on a broader basis. And a number of Saskatchewan horses have been developed over the years through the work of these industries to become very fine racehorses on a broader basis.

So, Mr. Speaker, this decision which is summarized in this short one-page bill has broader implications for Saskatchewan, and it eliminates another area of jobs for young people who have great interest in working with horses. It eliminates also jobs relating to the actual races themselves, whether it's the concessions or other kinds of things. It probably involves jobs related to specific types of clothing that are used in some of these things. So it has a much broader aspect.

And, Mr. Speaker, it appears this decision has been made with little or no consultation with the harness racing people specifically. It's not clear whether there was some special arrangement with the people involved in the thoroughbred racing in Saskatoon or if there was some special favour or whatever that was there, but clearly they are the ones in Saskatoon that benefit from this decision. And, Mr. Speaker, when these kinds of decisions are made, there needs to be a better explanation of why it's been done.

Now I've looked at the announcement by the minister. I've looked at the comments by the minister, but I've also looked at the letters and the correspondence and the reports of the meetings that have taken place over the last number of months as it relates to this decision. And I can't find anywhere what the rationale is for this particular proposal.

And I think that it's still lots of snow on the ground. They're not going to be getting out racing any time soon. There's time for the minister, for the Premier to actually sit down and maybe change some of these decisions in a way that allows for the 100-year history of harness racing in Saskatchewan to continue. And when I describe that, I'm also describing all of the people involved with that on a whole number of levels who are looking forward to a summer where their traditional jobs do not exist. And I think that it's a sad commentary that the government makes this decision without a clear rationale.

So the request by both the standardbred group and the thoroughbred group to change this 10 per cent parimutuel tax into effectively a non-tax and allow for it to be shared by the two industries has been met with a response to remove it, but then a specific decision to give it all to one group to the

detriment of the harness-racing people. And that's not a fair way to treat people in this province. It's not a smart way to do it. And there is no explanation to all of the young people who probably have been part of family traditions around harness racing in Saskatchewan.

[21:15]

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that there are a whole number of questions around this very short bill that have not been answered. I know that some of my colleagues will want to comment on this as well because it does not appear to be fair, does not appear to be a decision that's been well thought through, does not appear to be a decision where there's been consultation. And for all of those reasons, I think it should be revisited by the minister and by the Premier with a much better explanation of why this bill is going forward. But at this time I will adjourn the debate on Bill No. 77. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Regina Lakeview has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 77, *The Horse Racing Regulation Amendment Act, 2012*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 78

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Draude that **Bill No. 78** — *The Social Workers Amendment Act, 2012* be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we go through adjourned debates this evening and looking at different pieces of legislation, it's a pleasure to have the opportunity to speak to *The Social Workers Amendment Act, 2012*.

Mr. Speaker, this piece of legislation is important because it obviously deals with a very important area with respect to the health and well-being of Saskatchewan people. This piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, has to do with what will be new powers given to registered social workers here within Saskatchewan.

We know within the province that there are many individuals who have had special training in social work through a Bachelor of Social Work in many instances, Mr. Speaker, which is a good degree and good training. But social workers also are a regulated profession where to call oneself a social worker requires that there be the necessary procedures in place and that necessary steps need to be followed in order for someone to call themselves a social worker. And there needs to be the appropriate amount of training which is important. There needs to be the right oversight and professional code of conduct, appropriate hours through the training process in order to call themselves a social worker.

And these are important steps because social workers deal with

some of the most vulnerable people that we have in our province, individuals who find themselves in a situation that many of us can't relate to, or maybe we can relate to because we've benefited from the help and assistance of a social worker. We think of some of the most vulnerable. We think of individuals going — children in many instances or minors — going through social circumstances or issues related to their family where they're not doing well or they're struggling or there's been family breakdown.

We think, Mr. Speaker, of young people who may be struggling with a variety of issues, whether it be depression or addictions or any variety of concerns that they may have as individuals operating within society, operating within their schools. And we know that social workers provide important care and important assistance to struggling individuals — not just struggling individuals, also those that are doing well but could benefit from the expertise of a social worker, Mr. Speaker. We know that they operate in schools or through health regions, through the ministry itself, Mr. Speaker, individuals who care about the vulnerable in our province and want the best for them.

So this particular piece of legislation is extending some of the ability and power, the scope of practice, I suppose, of social workers here in the province, allowing them to . . . not all of them, but certain ones who are registered and have met the proper requirements in order to diagnose some mental health disorders. It's important, Mr. Speaker, to recognize that this is a significant step and an area of practice that social workers have been working in and involved in, but which has traditionally been the domain of psychologists and other health professionals.

So it is a step, Mr. Speaker, that shouldn't be taken lightly and should be done with the proper examination of what the rules will be in order for this to occur safely and responsibly, how social workers who have this new authority or ability to provide a diagnosis of a mental health disorder, how they will interact and connect with health care professionals, whether that be a psychiatric nurse or whether that is a psychiatrist or a family physician, whether that's other . . . in the context of school divisions, perhaps other counsellors and teachers within the educational system. So it's important to clearly identify what are the roles, what are the expectations.

As the minister identifies in her remarks, it sounds as though a big push for this, Mr. Speaker, has been the increased need and demand for individuals, health professionals who can provide this type of service. It's identified that there are currently 78 psychologists and 36 psychiatrists working in Saskatchewan mental health and outpatient services. So we know that, Mr. Speaker, is not a great number. I mean those that are working are working very hard and diligently. But I know as an MLA, I can think of interactions with constituents who have required services to do with mental health, and I'm sure colleagues in the Assembly can think of their own experiences as an MLA in dealing with constituents who need assistance. Or maybe it's not in an MLA capacity, but maybe it's in their own capacity from their family or perhaps within friends or loved ones. There's nothing more frustrating and in some ways discouraging to have a need identified and not have the proper resources available for the individual to access in order to receive the help that he or she needs.

So according to the assessment by the minister, this would increase the number of individuals who could be providing this type of health care services by 50 individuals. So it's obviously not all social workers in the province. It will require high levels of training and certification to enter this level of service to Saskatchewan people. And the minister identifies that this is occurring in other jurisdictions, with Alberta and British Columbia and Ontario mentioned as some examples.

So it's important, Mr. Speaker, yes, to provide the individuals and to allow for individuals to provide a diagnosis when it is needed. It's important to have those services in place. But when we're talking about this type of service as it relates to mental health, it needs to go beyond the diagnosis. Also we need to ensure that the proper resources are there for the people needing the services, whether that means accessing a prescription or other counselling and assessment and training that is needed in order for the person to be well and to do as well as they need to do and to deal with the family situations as well.

And we know this is a priority, Mr. Speaker, not just in our urban centres but it's especially a priority in rural locations and in northern locations. And I know, Mr. Speaker, from my time in the legislature hearing of situations and stories, especially in the North, Mr. Speaker, where youth suicide is a real concern and something that affects northern communities at a very high level. And we hear of situations, Mr. Speaker, where young people are discouraged. Young people don't have hope. Young people are turning to suicide as what they see is a way out.

So I make these remarks because, yes, Mr. Speaker, it's important to have the individuals there who can provide the diagnosis, but it's also, and as importantly — and perhaps more importantly, Mr. Speaker — to have the right services in place so it can go beyond that so that health regions have the programs in place, school divisions are able to access the programs and run the programs that they need in order to make a difference in the lives of young people. So it can't simply be about increasing the pool of people who can deal with individuals at the early stages, but it's about continuing that care, taking it beyond that initial stage so that people can become well; people can be safe so that people can reach their full potential. So the issue of services can't be lost in this context.

It is important also, Mr. Speaker, with this new power being given to social workers as it is currently suggested by the minister, it's important to see how other professions and organizations and those with different credentials are responding to it as well. Because yes, while social workers have for many years been dealing with individuals who may be suffering with mental illness, this power is a new authority being given to them and a new responsibility given to them. So of course there's interaction with other health care professionals, whether it's psychologists as mentioned earlier on, or whether it is . . . a psychiatrist is another example, Mr. Speaker. But it's also psychiatric nurses who provide important care to patients and have a good understanding of how our health care system can help and maybe how our health care system can do a better job of meeting some of the needs of individuals who have mental illness.

In some feedback that was received from the Registered

Psychiatric Nurses Association of Saskatchewan, they highlight a number of issues with respect to this proposed change as it relates to social workers. A few points that they make . . . Because I think it does speak to some of the earlier remarks I made about how changes need to go beyond increasing the number of people who can provide a diagnosis, but that we also are doing more than that. We're helping individuals as they journey along in their process of recovery and their process of healing and of dealing with their situations.

So for example, one example here is social workers. One issue that they recognize is social workers diagnosing clients will not change the problems with access and lack of services. That's one point that psychiatric nurses make. Also, Mr. Speaker, that changes should be made as part of a comprehensive mental health strategy for the province involving all those providing the services.

So it's important, Mr. Speaker, that we're not just increasing the number, but we're looking at the overall picture. We're looking at the whole picture and doing our best to ensure that the necessary services are there down the road and that that is, in fact, we're taking the right steps to make sure that we are organizing and structuring the entire health care system and ways that we care for people through different . . . Whether it be through schools or other organizations, that we are in fact looking at the big picture and the complete individual.

So those are some remarks made on this issue, Mr. Speaker. Social workers do tremendous work in our province and have for many years. And the designation that a social worker has is an important one, because with that designation comes trust from the general public because we know that a high level of standards are there. There's professional accountability with colleagues within the profession and that there are the appropriate disciplinary mechanisms in place when individuals are not in tune with what needs to occur.

And so when we are changing the role, when we are expanding or adjusting the role, it's necessary to do it in a thoughtful way and in a way that looks at the total picture. And so while extending this additional scope of practice or this additional responsibility or privilege to these individuals, these certain social workers — about 50, as the minister's notes would identify — it is a significant step and one that needs to occur through proper consultation with all people working in the area of mental health and wellness.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I would conclude my remarks on the amendment related to *The Social Workers Act* and I would move to adjourn debate. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Leader of the Opposition has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 78, *The Social Workers Amendment Act, 2012*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

[21:30]

Bill No. 80

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

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

Mr. Broten: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Having just had the opportunity to speak to legislation related to social workers, we're switching gears now a bit and speaking about legislation as it relates to our Crown corporations and specifically *The Power Corporation Amendment Act, 2012*, Bill No. 80.

Mr. Speaker, while the topics are different, I suppose the issue with respect to how we organize ourselves as a province and the role of government, Mr. Speaker, in improving the lives of people, I suppose there is some overlap there. And while one issue, social workers, looks specifically at the issue of mental health and looking at how our health care system and those that work within it can best meet the needs of Saskatchewan people, here we're looking at how, Mr. Speaker, our Crown corporation is able to organize itself and how SaskPower can function in a way that best meets the needs of Saskatchewan people once again.

So while the content and the topic is in many ways different, there is — as with everything we do in the legislature as it relates to Saskatchewan people — the same mindset is required. And it's a mindset of asking ourselves how do the changes brought forward in the legislation improve the situation for Saskatchewan people.

And, Mr. Speaker, as we think of SaskPower and we think of *The Power Corporation Amendment Act*, we have to ask ourselves many of the same questions. Does this legislation, do the proposals brought forward in this amendment by the minister, Mr. Speaker, work in a way that strengthens the position of SaskPower in order to provide, one, services for Saskatchewan people in a way that it's able to do it in an environmentally sound way, in a responsible way, and a way that is also keeping in mind our financial reality, and how the well-being of Crown corporations in our province do in fact have a real bearing on the well-being of the provincial government, but most importantly the well-being of Saskatchewan people?

And whether it's a small customer, a customer purchasing power in a small amount, or whether it's for industry on a large amount, Mr. Speaker, it's necessary to ask ourselves the same question because fundamentally it comes down to the type of service and the role of Crown corporations and SaskPower operating within the province in order make life better for Saskatchewan people.

I made it very clear, Mr. Speaker, in my remarks that I think it's important to have a strong private sector as well as a strong Crown sector. And the two are needed, Mr. Speaker. And I think it's important to view those two hand in hand, looking at yes, the historical relationship and role that Crown corporations have played in the province, but as importantly or more

importantly, Mr. Speaker, as we look at the current role that Crowns play within the province in terms of providing services to Saskatchewan people and ensuring, Mr. Speaker, that we're making steps that are in the best interest for all Saskatchewan people.

It's important, Mr. Speaker, to ask ourselves that question because sadly on too many instances, in my opinion, in my view, we have seen an erosion and a weakening of the Crown sector which hasn't been in the best interests of Saskatchewan people. And based on some of those examples that we've seen and the steps that we have taken and some of the policies that have been put in place, it causes me and it causes the opposition and many people in Saskatchewan to look at changes in the legislation that are being brought forward here with a very keen eye and looking at what are the intended and unintended consequences that may be coming forward because of the division, the amendments that are being proposed.

On that topic or in that vein of thought, Mr. Speaker, we can look at some of the actions that the Sask Party government has made with respect to the Crowns, specifically around the issue of dividend rates and some of the constraints that have been put in place from preventing our Crowns from operating independently, as well as some of the increased contracting out of services and privatization approaches that we've seen, Mr. Speaker, that I don't think are based on common sense, but are more in tune with a predisposition that members opposite have with eroding Crowns and making the case that they are not in the best interest of Saskatchewan people. And I think that approach is one that we certainly have seen as it relates to SaskPower and the actions that the Sask Party government has taken in relation to SaskPower.

A key example that we saw, Mr. Speaker, in the last year for example was the special dividend that SaskPower took of \$120 million. So when we look at legislation that talks about the long-term well-being of SaskPower, the sustainability of SaskPower, the ability of SaskPower to invest in infrastructure and provide services to Saskatchewan people, we can't lose sight of that special dividend and how the \$120 million, Mr. Speaker, could be providing for the Crown corporation, but most importantly providing the services and allowing for the corporation to act in a long-term manner that is about looking towards the future and not the short term.

What we see in this legislation, Mr. Speaker, which I think is most crucial, is the aspect here where the borrowing power of SaskPower is being increased in order to cover substantial capital expenditures. So I just touched on and covered the point that we saw a large dividend being taken from SaskPower in order to assist with the provincial coffers, but then very shortly after we see the government coming forward wanting an increase to the borrowing limit of SaskPower. And to me, Mr. Speaker, and I think to most individuals who are looking at this, we see a connection here that isn't necessarily based on common sense or an approach that isn't based on the best interests of the Crown corporation and its ability to provide services to Saskatchewan people.

If we have legislation, Mr. Speaker, now asking for the borrowing limit to be increased, we must ask ourselves why, if this is needed, Mr. Speaker, why the Sask Party government

took the special dividend from SaskPower, thereby putting it in the position where it is more reliant on borrowing as opposed to investing its profits to meet the needs of Saskatchewan people, Saskatchewan consumers, whether they be individuals operating independently or part of the business community, Mr. Speaker.

And sadly we've seen this approach when it comes to the issue of debt, where the Sask Party government has been more than willing to make decisions that present their own financial picture in a rosier fashion than what reality would actually suggest. And I think of a parallel situation, Mr. Speaker, parallel in the sense where it's taking a decision and forcing it on another organization in order to make the provincial situation look better. And that, Mr. Speaker, that was very clear with respect to the Sask Party government's treatment of the University of Saskatchewan with relation to the Health Sciences Building, in forcing the University of Saskatchewan to take that debt and put it on its books, as opposed to providing the funding as it promised in the election.

And so if we take that sort of approach — though the details are different as it relates to SaskPower, but it's the same intent, Mr. Speaker — in this case taking additional resources from SaskPower and putting it in a position where it needs to borrow more so that those dollars, that debt is showing up in the Crown and not within the provincial context of the direct finances, and so I think that is, I know that is a concern.

And it's something, Mr. Speaker, that when we see that track record repeated in a variety of instances, whether it's within the context of the universities or whether it's punting and putting difficult decisions on our K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] system, Mr. Speaker, or pre-K to 12 [pre-kindergarten to grade 12], as one of my earlier remarks tonight in adjourned debates commented on, it's a track record that doesn't build a lot of confidence that members opposite are operating in a way that is as transparent and as open as it ought to be, and transparent in its motives for why it's making decisions and why it is bringing forward amendments through this type of legislation.

Other components that are being addressed in this legislation, Mr. Speaker, have to do with the issue of nuisance claims. And as the minister identifies and as identified in the legislation, or stated in the legislation I should say, we see additional protection here from SaskPower so that it is not needlessly occupied and spending dollars and time and resources on situations which may not have a sound basis. So addressing nuisance claims.

And while, Mr. Speaker, I would recognize that there ought to be a way for a Crown corporation to address and deal with such nuisance claims, we have to also be cautious on this topic in order to ensure that . . . I'm not saying this is necessarily the case in this situation, but one person's nuisance is another person's well-founded case and complaint that they may have. And so it's important that government and the Crown corporation in this instance is not being heavy-handed. But that being said, I do recognize the need and that it is appropriate from time to time to have the ability to deal with such nuisance claims.

Mr. Speaker, another component of the legislation has to do

with SaskPower's "ability to access newer technology such as fibre optic lines to ensure that SaskPower continues to be able to operate efficiently in a changing technological context." And that one sentence was lifted from the minister's second reading speech. And most certainly technology is important. That's been how we have been effective as a Crown corporation over the decades, is because our Crowns have been able to act in a way that we're accessing the newest technology, bringing it to customers, or allowing better delivery of services to customers. And that, Mr. Speaker, is most certainly an important step and one that we need to ensure that SaskPower is able to take the steps that it needs to do in embracing new technology.

And part of those steps, Mr. Speaker, means treating SaskPower in a way that is based in respect and based in the role, the very important role that it has and the ability that it needs to have in order to be able to invest the appropriate amount of profits that it obtains, in order to invest it into new services and better services and better infrastructure for its customers throughout the province, Mr. Speaker.

So technology is most certainly good, Mr. Speaker. And where there are areas where there can be increased conservation, I think those steps must also be taken. We know that SaskPower had a goal of investing at least 300 megawatts of electricity efficiency by 2017, and that goal was under the NDP [New Democratic Party] government, Mr. Speaker. We know the Sask Party cut that goal back to 100, and that was a change.

And so when we think of those types of changes and we think of the broader context of how the Sask Party government treats the Crown corporation with respect to taking special dividends and weakening its financial picture, to me it's concerning that they now come around, Mr. Speaker, asking for increased borrowing capacity for the Crown corporation when in fact they've taken actions that would not support the notion that they have the best financial interests of the Crown corporation at heart.

So, Mr. Speaker, having made these remarks and had the chance to speak about the value of Crown corporations, specifically SaskPower, to the people of Saskatchewan most importantly, we can't lose sight of that whenever we're having a discussion about services — whether it's the role of social workers or whether it is northern municipality changes, Mr. Speaker, or whether it is the borrowing capacity and some of the issues around dividend stripping that we've seen from the Sask Party government, Mr. Speaker, as it relates to Sask Power — we have to ask ourselves whether or not the steps and the decisions being taken are in fact in the best interests of Saskatchewan people.

So I've appreciated the opportunity to speak on this piece of legislation. With that, I would conclude my remarks and move to adjourn this bill, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Leader of the Opposition has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 80, *The Power Corporation Amendment Act, 2012*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 81

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

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Tonight I rise to enter into the debate about Bill No. 81, *An Act respecting the Global Transportation Hub Authority and the Transportation Logistics Hub and to make consequential amendments to The Municipal Board Act*.

It's been one that's created a lot of interest particularly here, down in the southern part of Saskatchewan. Clearly it's an initiative that has a lot of merit in many different ways. I mean clearly it's creating a lot of economic activity and, as the minister made the comment in his introductory remarks about how much of our economy really depends on export, and that's certainly the case.

[21:45]

But we really have some questions about how this particular piece of legislation and the work itself has been carried out. It seems to have created a lot of buzz, some of it, much of it not necessarily all that positive, whether you think about the Kal Tire situation that arose and how the minister responded to that or the Pinkie highway situation or the Pinkie land and the concern around that. And so clearly there's been questions about how this is all unfolding. And likewise we have questions about the bill itself, and of course we'll have a lot of questions when we go to committee with it.

It's one that has seen a lot of changes and a lot of growth. And we're not sure whether in many ways this is sort of the kind of planning that really . . . You know, when we were talking earlier about annexation and the relationships between different levels of government, how it's important that there really isn't bullying taking place, that there's a sense of fair play and people are involved and everybody knows what's happening as you move forward. And clearly this is one where we have a lot of questions. There is a lack of transparency around this and we have questions. And that causes a lot of concern because when you have some of the statements have been made about different ways that . . . why it needed to be an authority when local zoning bylaws could have probably dealt with the issues, we have questions about that.

We have questions about how the transfer or taxes in lieu or grants in lieu will be handled. Much of this probably could have been handled prior to this so all parties would have been excited to see this move forward, but that wasn't the case, and so we have questions. And of course different parts of local authority Acts will be used and others will not. And obviously maybe that makes some sense because when you're dealing with innovation and you want to make sure it's the most relevant that it can be, that makes some sense. But then it also gives rise to, has this been thought out as carefully as it might be?

And so we have concerns. We have concerns about the integrity of the project and the leadership around the project because when this kind of stuff happens, there gets to be some questions.

And I know why folks in Regina are watching this very carefully, the impact that it has, the impact it has on the RM of Sherwood, some of the local landowners out there, the impact it has on the city, the expectations of the new partners out at the Global Transportation Hub and what they expect from the city. So all of this causes us to have concern. And so this will be an interesting discussion in committee around the issues that we do have.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's one that I know that's very, very important that we get it right. It could be a model. And I know people across Canada are looking at it and saying, is this kind of thing, the planning, the appropriate way of doing it? We're not sure. We have a lot of questions and a lot of concerns, and we're not sure about how the different parties, the RM, the city, how they've been involved in planning that.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I know that many others will want to join into this debate on this bill. Myself, I'd like to move adjournment of this bill. Thank you.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 83

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

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

Mr. Forbes: — I'm pleased to rise and enter into the debate on Bill No. 83, *An Act respecting Foreign Worker Recruitment and Immigration Services*. And this is one that I am very interested in from a lot of different angles, and I do have some comments that I think that we need to get on the record here.

And it's one that as well that came out towards the end of the session just before Christmas. Again there was some consultations, but I know of groups who didn't hear about the consultations until the very end. In fact they had heard about the consultation on the bill and missed out on the actual development of the bill, and that was too bad.

And so it's a significant piece of legislation. And I think it's an important piece of legislation because when we have foreign workers who come to this province, we should be making sure that we are everything that we think we are in the international community — that we're fair, we don't exploit people, and that

when people come here to work, they'll be treated as we would treat our own; as I said earlier, there's a concept of decency — and we would have people work and be paid just as if they were nationals in our own country. And so that's a very important principle that we have.

But we have some questions about this bill. We know that in many ways it's driven by a new reality in Saskatchewan that we have many more new foreign temporary workers, and that's a reality, and particularly as well the rapid increase recently of new immigrants, new Canadians to our province as well. And so that makes for an interesting new economic force in our province. So there's a demand for services that we have to meet, and it's like a cycle that grows. And if it's managed well, it's a good cycle. But if it's not managed well, it can be a dangerous one. And so this is important that we get it right.

We have heard and we know of circumstances right across the country, and in fact just yesterday morning when we heard about the Royal Bank, RBC [Royal Bank of Canada] who were using temporary foreign workers and the unfortunate circumstance, as reported by the media, that the people who are actually going to be losing their jobs were training the new people. And one of the reporters talked about how the jobs in fact actually were going to be leaving and were going to be going offshore in the long run anyways. And so this is a new reality that we have to take the time to make sure, to make sure that we get it right.

And we saw stories. We heard stories here in Saskatchewan of temporary foreign workers from Mexico who were employed by a local coffee shop here, very tough circumstances, felt they were being exploited because of the rent that they were having to pay in terms of housing, challenges like that. So this is important that we get this right, that people have confidence that it is doing . . . that we are going to protect those who are vulnerable in our communities.

And so, Mr. Speaker, when I see this Act, first of all I just want to say that I found it odd that much of this would not be in the new employment Act. Why is it that temporary foreign workers are not covered by *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*?

Now some of this of course deals with recruiters and immigration consultants. And ironically, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if I take you back to about 4 o'clock this afternoon when I was reading the history and talking about Walter Scott and some of the things he was talking about, same issue 100 years ago with people being exploited, coming here and essentially having immigration consultants and their fees that they were charging. Isn't it interesting how some of these things never change over 100, 110 years?

So we have the issue of foreign worker recruiters and immigration consultants and all of their requirements and how that's important that it's carried out in a fair and appropriate manner; registration of employers of foreign nationals so we do know who is actually hiring foreign nationals here in Saskatchewan and to make sure we can keep track of that. And if things don't go well, that there can be refusal of registration and as well that the certificate of registration is not transferable.

Prohibited practices and standards of services talks about the

recruitment fee, the referral fee and that type of thing. So this is important, important to have right. Then the registry of records and sharing of information, and that's straightforward. Then it talks a bit about getting into inspections, investigations, and enforcement — part VII. And really that sounds like, to me, the part that would really make more sense if it was in the employment standards Act. And why is it not in that area? I'm not sure.

So if I look at section 33, that . . . And in fact, you know, ironically it talks about, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the director of labour standards, and in fact in just a few short months we will not have a director of labour standards. I believe he's going to be called the director, or she's going to be called the director of employment standards — that no longer will we have labour standards in this province; we'll have employment standards. And so I don't know whether right away that we're going to see an amendment in this legislation because it's not current with other pieces of legislation that's coming forward in this House.

So you have director of labour standards pursuant to labour standards Act which, you know, as the plan is, this government is, that it will cease to be on mid-May. But of course the question then is, and as I raised then, is this whole issue of implementation. We don't know what the implementation plan is of these Acts. And so they refer a lot to labour standards Act and the director of labour standards, but as I've said, that may cause some confusion because as of the end of two months, that will be no more.

Now the other interesting part, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the discussion around freedom of information and protection of privacy Act that is under that director of labour standards Act. Now I'm wondering and I'm curious to know and it's probably something that I probably should talk to the Commissioner of Privacy and Information, as he . . . what's his thoughts around this. It seems relatively straightforward. They are referring to the Act, the FOIP [freedom of information and protection of privacy] Act, but interestingly, I don't know if the employment standards Act refers to the FOIP Act. It is a deficiency. I know that the commissioner identified that there were a lot of issues around privacy, but I have to refer back to that and say . . . and find out if they are consistent between the two pieces of legislation.

So that is interesting to see. And it talks about the inspections and investigations and that type of thing. So again why this wasn't a part of the labour standards, I'm not sure. It seems to me part of this should have been and it's . . . or *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*, Mr. Speaker. I think that there's a real problem here in terms of trying to line up these two pieces of Acts.

And so I know that we have seen a real explosion on this. And one of the unions that's very interested in this of course is the United Food & Commercial Workers. This has become a real issue for them nationally, and they've issued a *Report on the Status of Migrant Workers in Canada 2011*, and it refers to a lot of issues that we have here in Canada when it comes to migrant or temporary foreigner workers. And of course every province has a different way of dealing with it. But I think that, you know, I really think that it's important that they talk about the big picture, the shift from nation building to indentured

servitude. You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are all immigrants except for the First Nations people, and it was just a matter of time or just the year that we came.

[22:00]

But there was a point in our history, and it was a very proud point, where we looked at immigration as a way to build a nation. And now we look at particularly temporary foreign workers in a different light. In many ways it often seems it's indentured servitude. They've come here, and they don't get very good housing, and their hours of work really are focused . . . Their lives are focused around their work. And they come here for a short period of time, and then they're gone again. And it's not really about building our country here.

And I think this is really, really unfortunate, that in fact we should be proud of all newcomers, all new Canadians and immigrants. And if there was a way that we could make sure particularly temporary foreign workers are more connected to our communities, that would be a good thing. That would be a very good thing. But often they are so tied to their sponsoring employer that it's impossible to see how they will get a chance to be part of our province.

And so they've talked about some real issues, some real concerns about the temporary foreign workers and how it's really grown. You know, when they were talking about the years, total entry of temporary foreign workers by province or territory from 2004 to 2008, in Saskatchewan we had about 4,400 — 4,378. And of course that is almost five years out of date. Ontario, 91,000, over 91,000 temporary foreign workers in that province. Alberta was 57,843. And BC, 58,456.

So you see that it's a real, real issue in how it's grown over the course of time. And it's one that we really have to think about how do we make sure that we get things right and that we're not exploiting our foreigner workers but that in fact they're coming here and we're treating them as we would treat Canadians, and not exploit them but in fact treating them based on the decency principle — one that ensures that they are paid fairly and it's a living wage; their housing is adequate and safe and they feel safe in our communities — as we would treat our own. So this is very, very important.

I also want to just take a minute, you know, to highlight . . . And it was interesting that, and it caused quite a bit of news, this report from the University of Calgary, the School of Public Policy, and this was J.C. Herbert Emery, the department of economics, University of Calgary. He was reflecting on labour shortages in Saskatchewan, and this was in January. And he was talking about some of the things that we should do and some of the things we shouldn't do when it comes to labour shortages. And of course he had five main ideas, specific policy advice for the Government of Saskatchewan.

The first is "Pick up the pace." And it talks about the slow pace of detailed planning for changes to the post-secondary system or for encouraging greater labour force participation for underrepresented groups. And so this is really important. And he says, "Finally, increasing labour-force participation rates of Aboriginal Canadians, the elderly, females and . . . [those with disabilities] have been major challenges for decades, and

finding cost-effective policy options remains an outstanding task."

So he really talks about picking up the pace, making sure that we encourage greater participation from underrepresented groups. And this is something that's really important. And I think that he reflects and he talks about how the government's largely produced targets, general directions, but not detailed plans on how to meet those targets. And I think this is really important.

He talks about developing cyclical infrastructure planning, and I think there's been a lot of discussion about that, whether that's a good idea or not. Do you have to build all the big projects all at the same time, or can you do it over a planned, cyclical process so that you can create a more sustainable infrastructure process? And I think that's interesting. And I think that's, you know, it reflects that the current process "creates headaches for employers in the peak periods and discourages workers from choosing Saskatchewan as a place to live and work."

And I think that, you know, the "To the extent that public sector capital spending . . . has been adding fuel to this fire . . ." So maybe what we need to do is think about how can we plan this out better so the work is more consistently available?

Make a greater effort . . . Another one is "Make a greater effort to leverage the human capital investments made to date." So that's really, really important. And also interestingly he talks about "Don't forget about the boys," the fact that we have a large group of underemployed males age 15 to 24. Many of them completed high school but we need to do more work to get them into post-secondary trades.

But the one that really is related to tonight, and this is one that may be controversial, he says:

Stay away from temporary foreign workers — [And he says] If the policy objective is to develop labour supply to meet longer-term growth targets, rather than distributing short-term rents to employers, then temporary foreign workers should not be part of the province's labour-market strategy. Temporary foreign workers undermine long-run labour-market adjustment and skills capacity by dampening the wage signals that would lead to higher numbers of permanent in-migrants and more Saskatchewan residents choosing to invest in skills that are in demand.

So that's a kind of a controversial statement to say, "Stay away from temporary foreign workers . . ." But I think what really, what is useful to say, let's have a good discussion about it. You know, make sure when we bring temporary foreign workers that there's a real need, that it's not solving a short-term problem that really should be thought of in a more long-term sustainable manner. And so I think that's worth some consideration.

So, Mr. Speaker, I do want to say that in many ways I do see that the bill has some merit, and it's one that we're going to have some interesting conversations in committee with. I think that it's important that we handle this well. As I said, that we worry too much when we see . . . And I think the minister even alluded to the fact that over a four-year period ending in

August, some 335 cases were filed with the province's program integrity unit which was tasked with investigating complaints and concerns about the mistreatment of foreign workers. Thirty per cent of those were not covered by federal or provincial legislation.

So hopefully this will solve that and stop the abuse and protect . . . and give them some protection. So we need to see the commitment for that. I'd be interested to know again what the problem with another bill, Bill 85, was the fact that there was not any support for implementation. This is a significant bill. Will there be support for the implementation of this bill?

You know, it's really important that we can really count on the fact that we can say one thing, but will we actually make sure that it's enforced? High compliance is something that we have to strive for in this area. And we can't just say we have a strong bill, a strong legislation, but we have to say we have strong compliance. And that's critical. It's very, very important that we have that.

So, Mr. Speaker, there has been a lot of work on this area, and I do think that, as I said, we'll have lots of questions about this. But it's an important area, and at this time I'd like to move adjournment of this Bill No. 83, *An Act respecting Foreign Worker Recruitment and Immigration Services*. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 83. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 86

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Boyd that **Bill No. 86** — *The Regulatory Modernization and Accountability Act* be now read a second time.]

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Lakeview.

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise to speak to Bill No. 86, *An Act respecting Regulatory Modernization and Accountability*.

Once again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is a very short piece of legislation. But I want to start off by saying that I think it breaches a fundamental point about legislative drafting, and that's the point that if you just read the bill, you have no clue what it's about. The only hint is the word of the title, regulatory modernization and accountability Act.

But then you go and look at the Act, and let's go to section 2. Sort of standard clauses. One, there's a minister who will be a member of Executive Council is supposed to administer it. Then the word prescribed, in other words there's things can be prescribed in regulations under the Act. Then you go to regulation and a regulation is "a regulation within the meaning of *The Regulations Act* . . ." That's kind of logical. And then . . .

or it's "any prescribed information or procedure that is administered . . ." Then it defines the term report as a report pursuant to section three point one of the legislation. And I'll get there in one second. Then it talks about the reporting period being the annual year of the government, which is from April 1st in one year to ending on March 31st in the following year.

So then you get to what is the heart of the bill, paragraph or section 3, and it says, "In accordance with *The Tabling of Documents Act, 1991*, the minister shall prepare a report . . ." And then we go up and see well what report is that? Well that's the one under the definition as a report prepared to pursuant to this section. And so then it goes on, ". . . a report that contains the prescribed information . . . [prescribing] the activities undertaken by the Government of Saskatchewan to modernize regulations during the reporting period."

So then it goes on to say like normal, the tabling of this, it should be delivered to the legislature. Then it goes on to say that the report should be, ". . . published in a manner that, in the minister's opinion, can reasonably be expected to bring the report to the attention of the public."

Then you go on to the final section or section 4, and it says:

The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations:

(a) defining, enlarging or restricting the meaning of any word or expression used in this Act . . .

And then it goes on to basically say everything is prescribed. And so practically, on the face of this, the only word that might give you a bit of a hint about what the whole Act is about is the word modernize. But everything else is going to be prescribed in the regulations, and we don't know exactly what that's going to be.

Now there's a bit of a hint in the comment from the minister where he talks about the word red tape. But practically what we have here, Mr. Speaker, is something that obviously was written fairly quickly to get it here into the legislature, but it doesn't actually have any of the terms of what it's trying to do set out in the Act. Everything is to be prescribed or it's to be some part of a regulation. And so, Mr. Speaker, this is not very helpful legislation for anybody.

I think what the minister was trying to do was to say, what we have done for generations of legislative counsel, legislative lawyers, legislative clerks who work in this legislation is to, on a regular basis, file a report about all the old laws that you've looked at to see whether or not they're still relevant.

[22:15]

Mr. Speaker, this is a long-standing tradition in this legislature. It's done and has been done over many, many decades. And we know you can just look at the legislation that's sitting in the, you know, shelves here in the legislature, that there are revisions and revised statutes of Saskatchewan where people go together and take a look and basically then get rid of pieces of legislation, or if it's the regulations, get rid of regulations that are no longer used.

What the only thing this legislation appears to add to the whole process is that, in the minister's discretion, he gets to put it up into a fancy book of some kind. And so it's going "... to be published in a manner that, in the minister's opinion, can reasonably be expected to bring the report to the attention of the public."

Now maybe it's going to have a red cover or a yellow cover or who knows what kind of cover, or maybe it's going to be television ads, so it's a report that way. But otherwise this is an attempt to bring some sort of political spin or public relations around a long-standing activity of the Department of Justice, of the people who work in that department who are continually working with civil servants from all of the other parts of government and with members of the public who say, this piece of legislation doesn't seem to have any effect anymore; why don't you get rid of it?

Now I think that this could have been prepared and drafted in a way that would give a much clearer perspective on what is intended and do it in a way that is complementary to the work that's been done. I think it was a little bit disingenuous of the minister to say, oh this is something new that was part of the October 2010 Throne Speech. Mr. Speaker, I think if you go back and look at throne speeches for decades, this concept of eliminating red tape in government bureaucracy has been a fundamental part of the civil service of Saskatchewan and primarily of the people who work within the Department of Justice in the legislative drafting, legislative review.

And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that this one could have been brought forward in a much clearer or much more defined way where you would actually understand what the legislation's about when you look at the legislation. The only way that I'm able to understand this legislation is based on the fact of many years of working in this particular area.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's unfortunate when there was an opportunity to have a much clearer piece of legislation that was not presented. It may be that this legislation, especially since it's been introduced quite late in the session, should go back and be reviewed and brought back next year. I don't think there's too much preventing the minister from filing the kind of report that she talks about here or from the Premier doing that. And it would be better for all of us if this legislation was in much better shape than it is.

So, Mr. Speaker, with that I move that we adjourn debate on this piece of legislation which I think should be sent back and redrafted. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Regina Lakeview has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 86, *The Regulatory Modernization and Accountability Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that this House do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 22:19.]

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