



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

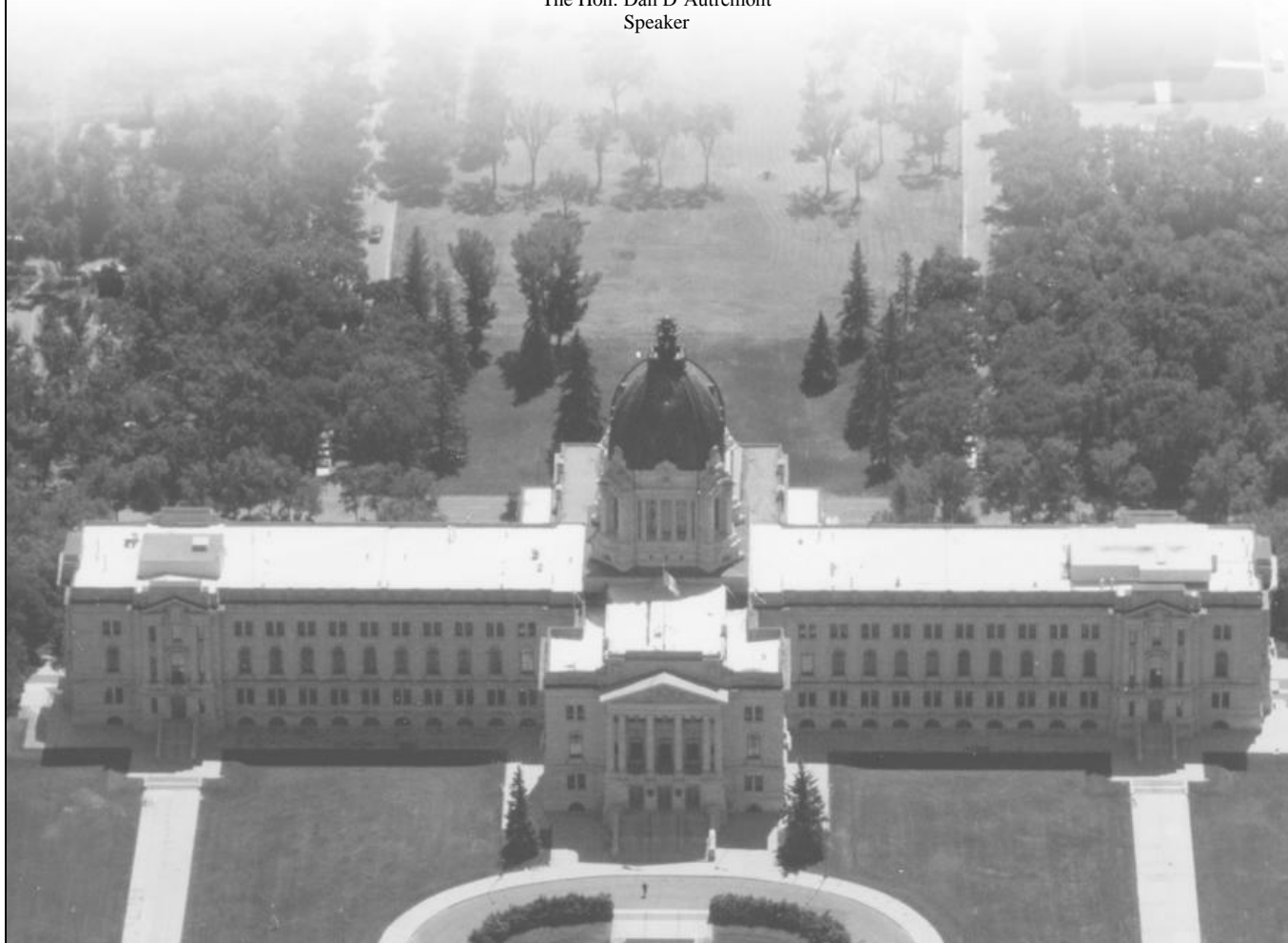
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

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



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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

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

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave of the Assembly for an extended introduction.

The Speaker: — The Premier has requested leave of the Assembly for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure today to introduce some very special guests seated in your gallery. His Excellency Tuncay Babali, the ambassador of the Republic of Turkey to Canada, has joined us. Ambassador Babali took up his posting in Canada last December and is making his first visit to Saskatchewan. His Excellency is accompanied today by Mr. Ali Reza Guney, Turkey's consul general in Toronto, and Mr. Omer Al-Katib, honorary consul general in Saskatoon.

Mr. Speaker, while in the province, the ambassador will meet with representatives from the government, from the business community, and from the University of Regina.

Mr. Speaker, Turkey is a flourishing democracy. As we well know, it boasts one of the world's fastest growing economies. And our province has very strong commercial ties, a strong commercial relationship with the republic, particularly in the area of agriculture. Over the last five years, Turkey has been Saskatchewan's number one market, number one market for lentils and chickpeas, and a very important market as well for Saskatchewan durum wheat. Between 2008 and 2012, Saskatchewan has on average exported more than \$168 million worth of goods annually to Turkey. And investment has flowed the other way, as I'll mention in a moment.

Mr. Speaker, our success in building strong economic ties with Turkey is due in no small part to the very entrepreneurial drive of Saskatchewan's Turkish community. That community is represented well by Omer Al-Katib today, the pride of Davidson, Saskatchewan. He is the director of investor relations with Alliance Grain Traders.

Mr. Speaker, Alliance Grain Traders is now the largest exporters of lentils and peas in the world. Alliance is a true Saskatchewan success story. The company has seen gross sales increase from 1 million to \$855 million in the last 12 years. The company now has 29 production facilities in six countries, including nine facilities in Turkey where it operates the largest pasta production line in the world.

Alliance is headed up of course by Mr. Al-Katib's brother

Murad, one of Saskatchewan's top entrepreneurs and a man who has been once dubbed Canada's prince of pulses, which would make Omer a prince too, I expect — part of that royal family.

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I didn't also mention that Turkey has been Canada's close NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] ally now for 60 years. Soldiers from our country, indeed soldiers from this province, more than likely were shoulder to shoulder with soldiers from Turkey during the conflict in Afghanistan, fighting to secure the protection and the freedom of the Afghan people.

So the connection between our countries goes beyond commerce. It goes beyond trade. It is about a partnership. It is about a friendship. We welcome the ambassador here today and look forward to meetings with him a little bit later on. And I ask all members to join me in welcoming the delegation to the Legislative Assembly today.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the Premier in welcoming Ambassador Babali and Mr. Al-Katib, echoing the Premier's comments about the importance of Turkey as a trading partner, recognizing that it is a destination for many of the things that are grown here in the province. We appreciate that relationship and look forward to it growing in the years ahead. So I'd join all members in welcoming this important delegation to the Assembly today. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Provincial Secretary.

Hon. Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce and welcome two very special guests to our House today: Mr. Hermann Sitz, the consul general of Germany based in Vancouver; and Mr. Harald Leibracht, a member of the German Bundestag and the coordinator for transatlantic intersocietal cooperation of the German government.

These two gentlemen are visiting Saskatchewan for a couple of days and our Legislative Building this afternoon. We'd like to welcome again, Mrs. Barbara Hoggard-Lulay the honorary consul of Germany located in Saskatoon. While in Saskatchewan, Mr. Sitz and Mr. Leibracht have met with the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership, with SaskPower, and with various representatives of our government. I would like to ask all members of the House to join me in welcoming Mr. Sitz and Mr. Leibracht and Ms. Hoggard-Lulay to the Legislative Assembly this afternoon. Please make them welcome.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to join with the member opposite in welcoming this important delegation: Mr. Sitz, Mr. Leibracht, and Ms. Barbara Hoggard-Lulay. As everyone knows, in Saskatchewan our historical roots with Germany run deep. And there are many people here in the province who trace our ancestry to Germany,

but we also know the contemporary relationship is also very important, especially when it comes to trade.

So we're happy to see you here today, and we're happy also to see Ms. Barbara Hoggard-Lulay who is very active around the province working for the republic and always representing the people of Germany very well. So I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming this delegation to the Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce and welcome a very special guest seated in your gallery, Ms. Marilyn Braun-Pollon, who is the vice-president of agri-business with the Canadian Federation of Independent Business.

Mr. Speaker, CFIB [Canadian Federation of Independent Business] in Saskatchewan is over 5,250 members and over 7,200 agri-business members across Canada. In Saskatchewan the CFIB has been instrumental in bringing ideas and solutions forward that build confidence in the provincial economy. Ms. Braun-Pollon was also very supportive and encouraged our government to implement pooled registered pension plans, which will be introduced later on this afternoon. Ms. Braun-Pollon is also joined by Ms. Shannon Lussier who is a business counsellor with CFIB here in Regina. So, Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all members to welcome Ms. Braun-Pollon and Ms. Lussier to their Assembly.

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

Mr. Docherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce six guests sitting in your gallery, all from First Nations University of Canada. They're students and staff, and I'll introduce them — if you can give us all a little wave when I say your name — Rena Littlepine, Annie Charles, Chasity Delorme, Roman Young, Janelle Mandes, and Cadmus Delorme.

I had the pleasure last Tuesday to go to First Nations University of Canada and celebrate with them the Awareness Day for World Autism Day. And they put together a fabulous, fabulous event, and it was my pleasure to be there. And we're hoping next year we can do something absolutely similar and maybe Light It Up Blue here. So thanks again and welcome to your legislature.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to rise and join the member opposite in welcoming these students and staff from First Nations University of Canada to their Legislative Assembly, to thank them for that great work they did on last Tuesday that the members referred to, but also to draw attention to the fact that I'd just joined some of these folks not minutes ago in honouring their friend and our friend Tony Cote as he received the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal, in attendance with the Minister of Advanced Education at that affair.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, the master of ceremonies for that event was one Cadmus Delorme, doing a great job as ever. But it's always good to see students and staff from First Nations University of Canada here at their Legislative Assembly. Ta wow.

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

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to introduce to you and through you, Mr. Patrick Boyle. He's sitting in your gallery. Thanks for giving us a wave there, Patrick.

Patrick is the manager of corporate communications for the Water Security Agency. Patrick juggles a hectic schedule, being a dad to three young children and he was recently elected to the Moose Jaw City Council. He was instrumental in the creation of the Water Security Agency's mobile website that provides news and advisories and will be very beneficial to Saskatchewan residents during the spring runoff.

Patrick was born and raised on a farm near Moose Jaw. He left our province to Alberta in 2001 but, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say that Patrick made the decision to move back to Moose Jaw in 2009 as he wanted to live, work, and raise his family in a prospering province. I ask all members to join me in welcoming Patrick to his Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Moosomin.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure today to introduce four young people and their mothers from the Moosomin and Cannington ridings. We have with us today Sharon Barbour and her daughter Sarah, and Bonnie Szakacs and her children Heidi and Meka and Alonzo. They're all home-schooled children, and their parents make an extra effort to bring their children to the Legislative Assembly just to learn about how our legislative process works.

And, Mr. Speaker, if you're looking for some entertainment, the Szakacs girls are just superb on their violins. So at any time, feel free to invite them to come and entertain you.

They're also joined today and have taken the time to meet with representatives of the House of Prayer. I'd invite members to join me in welcoming these guests.

The Speaker: — Ladies and gentlemen, it's my pleasure to introduce to you, seated in the Speaker's gallery, and to welcome to Saskatchewan and to our Legislative Building a delegation from the Free State of South Africa. Visiting us for this week are six members of their provincial legislature. And I would ask them to rise when I call out their name. Head of the delegation is Peter Maloka, Sibongile Makae, Jonas Ramokhoase, Sindiswa Magwandana, Casca Mokitlane, and Roy Jankielsohn. Also with us today is staff deputy secretary Leonard Mofokeng, and researcher Hein Viljoen.

Their main objective for being here in Saskatchewan is to gain insight into our committee structures. I would ask the members to welcome our guests to the Saskatchewan legislature.

And while I'm on my feet, as members so often say and

surprise me, I would like to also welcome the guests from Cannington.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

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

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

And, Mr. Speaker, the most impressive thing about this petition is people have signed the petition from all throughout Saskatchewan — great support from the people of Saskatchewan. And this particular page, Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed this petition are primarily from Dillon, Saskatchewan. And I so present.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling for the reconsideration of passing Bill 85, *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*. And we know the proposed Saskatchewan employment Act, introduced in December 2012, is a sweeping rewrite of our labour laws, including but not limited to *The Labour Standards Act*, *The Occupational Health and Safety Act*, *The Health Labour Relations Reorganization Act*, and *The Trade Union Act*. And since it was introduced, literally hundreds of hours of study and comparison have been carried out in the interest of due diligence. But we know there is no labour relations crisis to fix and no necessity to rush this omnibus through that will likely govern workplace relations for decades to come.

I'd like to read the prayer, Mr. Speaker:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: cause the Government of Saskatchewan to not pass Bill 85, *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* in this current session before the end of May and to place it on a much longer legislative track to ensure greater understanding and support for the new labour law.

Mr. Speaker, I do so present. Thank you.

[13:45]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Provincial Secretary.

Shaunavon Badgers Win Championship

Hon. Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, 2013 is proving to be a year for celebration in Shaunavon. During this summer, the town of Shaunavon is celebrating its 100th anniversary. However on a Sunday late in March, there was an early reason to celebrate. The Shaunavon Badgers men's hockey long-awaited effort to secure a provincial B senior championship was finally realized.

The final game was played in the Crescent Point Wickenheiser Centre which was packed to the rafters with excited fans cheering on the Badgers as the team won their first-ever senior provincial title in 100 years. After earning a birth to the SHA [Saskatchewan Hockey Association] finals for five straight years and winning silver in the past four, the Badgers emerged the victors against the Esterhazy Flyers 7 to 6. Although the Badgers found themselves trailing by three goals twice, the team was not to be denied again. During the final minute of the third period, Esterhazy scored to tie, which resulted in the battle being decided in overtime. And when the winning goal went in the net, the building erupted as players, coaches, and fans joined in the celebration.

Many of the current players have been with the team for all five championship appearances, and it seemed appropriate that the winning goal would be scored by the team's oldest player. Mr. Speaker and all colleagues, please join me in congratulating the Shaunavon Badgers, the coaches, and their fans on this history-making achievement.

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

2013 Global Citizen Award

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a particular pleasure for me to bring mention today to Denise Kouri, an extraordinary member of our Saskatchewan community and my constituency, Saskatoon Nutana.

Denise is the recipient of the 2013 Global Citizen Award. This award is sponsored by the Saskatchewan Council for International Cooperation, recognizing individuals who make a distinguished contribution to international development, co-operation, peace, and justice. Mr. Speaker, last week SCIC [Saskatchewan Council for International Cooperation] showcased their programs here, and we all had a chance to learn more about what they do.

Denise Kouri works as a public policy consultant, focusing on health, social policy, leadership, and governance. She's spent the better part of her life actively committed to social justice issues at home and internationally. Since 1999 she's been part of the training for health renewal program at the University of Saskatchewan, a partnership with the Mozambican Health ministry. In fact, Mr. Speaker, she's going to Mozambique this week to continue her work there. Hundreds of health care workers have been trained under this program, fanning out to rural areas to conduct vaccinations, malaria and HIV [human immunodeficiency virus] awareness programs, basic maternal

and infant care, and many other duties.

Denise is active in other international social justice work initiatives, including anti-apartheid and feminist movements. Denise knows that injustices occur everywhere and that the Canadian community cannot be isolated.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that my fellow members of the House join with me in congratulating Denise for this well-deserved recognition. Denise is an inspiration for me and a remarkable role model for all of us.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melfort.

Recognizing the Saskatchewan Fire Commissioner

Mr. Phillips: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I stand today to celebrate and congratulate a public servant who has done an incredible amount to keep the people, their property, and the communities of this province safe and secure. Mr. Speaker, I'm referring to Mr. Duane McKay, the commissioner responsible for emergency management and fire safety and the fire commissioner for the province of Saskatchewan.

His career in protective services and public safety has spanned 30 years. As a member of the Council of Canadian Fire Marshalls and Fire Commissioners, he has been a leader, a spokesman, and an unfaltering supporter of fire services. With 85 per cent of the fire services in Canada being volunteer positions, Mr. Speaker, it takes a special person to rally and motivate volunteer fire teams. And I'm proud to say that Commissioner McKay is such a person, standing as an example to others.

Commissioner McKay is a recipient of the Premier's Award for Excellence in the Public Service, and in recognition of all that Commissioner McKay has done for the people of this province, he has recently been awarded with Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal for his unwavering commitment, dedication, and service to the safety of Saskatchewan citizens.

Mr. Speaker, I invite all members of the House to join with me in thanking Commissioner McKay for all his great work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

National Poetry Month

Mr. Nilson: —

In mama's garden
Remember hiding in the peas
And the buzz of the sun
And how the wood fence
Crawled with little bugs
We sat and shelled peas
And hucked them at
Jane on the swing.

Mr. Speaker, that was an excerpt from "Fred, It's Still All Right" written by Saskatchewan's poet laureate, Don Kerr. It's from *Number One Northern*, an anthology of Saskatchewan

writing published in 1997.

Mr. Speaker, April is National Poetry Month in Canada. Poetry can transport us to a time and place. It can challenge us while bringing a sense of peace. Poetry can reference a shared experience. Very few of us would not remember playing outside in the summer while teasing an older neighbour, cousin, or sibling.

In honour of National Poetry Month, the Saskatchewan Writers' Guild will be hosting a reading this Wednesday, April 10th at Government House. There will be readings by Don Kerr, Glen Sorestad, and Robert Currie. The Saskatchewan Writers' Guild has fostered and supported writers in this province since 1969. It provides educational opportunities as well as promoting the work of Saskatchewan authors and writers.

Mr. Speaker, I would encourage each member to take advantage of National Poetry Month to explore Saskatchewan's poets and to search out the works of the poets that live in their ridings. The stories poets share strengthen our communities and contribute to the vibrancy and diversity of Saskatchewan.

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

Holocaust Memorial Day

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today marks Yom HaShoah or Holocaust Memorial Day. This is a day that the world remembers and reflects upon the atrocities of the Holocaust which will never be forgotten.

Mr. Speaker, it is critical that the world continues to remember and mourn the 6 million people who died at the hands of the Nazis during the Holocaust. It is also necessary that we resolve to never forget the pain, suffering, and strength of an entire people.

Mr. Speaker, although the horrific events at the concentration camps leading up to and during World War II are nearly unspeakable, the world cannot afford to not talk about the abhorrent consequences of hatred and anti-Semitism. The concentration camps at Auschwitz, Treblinka, and Dachau still stand as eerie reminders of the cruelty that humanity is capable of and the consequences of allowing hatred to guide human actions. It is imperative that we continue to consider what we can do and what we can teach our own children so that this never happens again.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members of this Assembly join me in remembering those who suffered and were lost during the extremely dark times of the Holocaust. And let us resolve to never forget. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Qu'Appelle Valley.

Paragon Business Excellence Awards

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Last Friday I had the pleasure of attending the annual Regina and District Chamber of Commerce Paragon Business Excellence Awards at

the Queensbury Convention Centre here in Regina. The Paragon Awards represents the recognition of members of the business community that have demonstrated exceptional performance in a number of specific areas.

The categories and their award recipients for this year are: Young Entrepreneur, Tyler Boyd. Community Involvement, MacPherson Leslie & Tyerman. Community Alliance, 25th annual Z99 radiothon and Hospitals of Regina Foundation. Export Achievement, Koenders Water Solutions. Customer Service Excellence, East Side Mario's. Marketing and Promotional Achievement, Fries Tallman Lumber Ltd. Diversity was Knight Archer Insurance. Environmental Excellence, the University of Regina. New Business Venture, Canadian Thermal Solutions. Business of the Year was awarded to Alliance Energy Ltd. Congratulations to all the nominees and recipients for their hard work and innovation.

Saskatchewan is currently enjoying unprecedented growth and success on a global scale, and these businesses are an essential part of this success. Their commitment to business excellence serves to strengthen not only Regina but all of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating the Regina and District Chamber of Commerce and all the deserving recipients of the 2013 Paragon Awards. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Job Numbers for March

Mr. Tochor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to rise in this Assembly today to speak about Saskatchewan's impressive March job numbers released by Stats Canada last Friday.

Mr. Speaker, there were 547,700 people working in Saskatchewan in March, an increase of over 25,000 people since March 2012, an increase of over 50,000 since March of 2007. That's the strongest rate of employment growth in all of Canada and the most people ever working in Saskatchewan in the month of March. Off-reserve Aboriginal employment was up by 2,200 and Aboriginal unemployment dropped by 1,600 people for the sixth month in a row of year-over-year declines.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan also has the lowest seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in Canada at 3.9 per cent, which is well below the 7.2 per cent national unemployment rate. Two of our fastest growing cities also had impressive job numbers, with Regina's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate of 3.5 per cent being the lowest among all major cities in Canada and Saskatoon's unemployment rate of 4 per cent being the second lowest.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members of this Assembly join me in recognizing these impressive job numbers which demonstrate that this great province is moving forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Payment to Contractor

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Phil Froese is a hard-working small-business person who owns Visionary Concepts Inc. His company did much of the demolition and boiler removal at the St. Mary's Villa project in Humboldt.

When a company does work on a public facility here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, under the Sask Party government's authority, they expect to be paid. This is only fair, Mr. Speaker, but it has not occurred for Phil Froese who is still owed about \$43,000 for his work. My question to the Premier: why has his government failed to ensure that Phil Froese has been treated fairly?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. I do not know the details around this particular case, Mr. Speaker, but I assure the member and the guest visiting today that we'll look into the matter.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While the Premier may not specifically know about this now, members of his front bench certainly do, Mr. Speaker. Phil was a subcontractor working for another company on the project, which is normal for big projects. And because it's common practice, the onus is on the health region to ensure that the subtrades have been paid prior to the final disbursement of payment. I'm told, Mr. Speaker, it's standard practice for a 10 per cent holdback of the contract until it is proven that the subtrades have in fact received payment. Contractors are also supposed to put a bond upfront, Mr. Speaker, in order to cover off situations like this where the subcontractors need to be paid. This obviously did not occur, Mr. Speaker, or else Phil Froese would not be here in the Assembly today bringing his concerns to the legislature.

My question to the Health minister: why did the Ministry of Health not ensure that Phil Froese, an honest, hard-working small-business person here in Saskatchewan, has been treated fairly while working on St. Mary's Villa?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My understanding is, from the Leader of the Opposition's question, is that this individual was a subcontractor underneath the general contractor. Those dollars that would have been paid out by Saskatoon Health Region would have been paid out to the general contractor, Mr. Speaker. But I would certainly be happy to follow up with the individual after question period.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, a promise to meet simply isn't enough because the minister has already received, the minister has already received correspondence on this issue, Mr. Speaker. The minister and the Sask Party government have already punted this problem on to the health region, even though they have a responsibility to ensure that due process has in fact been

followed here.

Mr. Froese has pursued many avenues to receive payment, Mr. Speaker. He has written to the Health minister. He has contacted the member from Humboldt, Mr. Speaker. And none of them have admitted, Mr. Speaker, that this is part of the Sask Party's track record of poorly managing the St. Mary's Villa renovation that occurred over the past year and a half. Mr. Speaker, Phil even placed a builder's lien on the project through ISC [Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan] so that he could receive payment, but the Sask Party government ordered that that lien be discharged.

My question to the minister: why has the Sask Party government, why has the Ministry of Health not ensured that Phil Froese has received payment for work done?

[14:00]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is a facility that is operated and owned by Saskatoon Health Region. It was certainly under their purview as how they would go about doing remediation work and how that work would be tendered out to contractors and subcontractors, Mr. Speaker. While I certainly won't comment specifically on the individual's concerns and why those weren't paid out here on the floor of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, I'd be certainly willing to meet with the individual after the proceedings end today.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, this issue's been brought to the minister's attention. It has been brought to the Sask Party government's attention at a much earlier date. They've had an opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that this small-business person is treated fairly, an individual who's owed over \$40,000.

And this the string of mismanagement, Mr. Speaker, when we look at the St. Mary's Villa issue. First we learned of seniors, some in their 90s, being forced to move out of St. Mary's Villa with just days notice. Then we learn, Mr. Speaker, while those seniors are packing their belongings, that the removal of asbestos began on the building. Now, Mr. Speaker, we learn that a contractor has done work on this project but has not received payment and is still owed \$40,000.

My question to the minister: why has the Sask Party government failed to ensure that the work done at St. Mary's has been done well, done properly, and that all individuals have been paid?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, it was this government that asked the Ombudsman to investigate how the St. Mary's Villa issue was handled. Mr. Speaker, the Ombudsman has reported back saying that the Saskatoon Health Region who is the operator of this facility did the correct thing in making the decision to relocate individuals, but does acknowledge that there were flaws in the process. And we acknowledge that, Mr.

Speaker.

In terms of a contractual arrangement between a subcontractor and a contractor on a project that has been tendered out by the health region, Mr. Speaker, that is certainly something that I would not insert myself. If the individual has a concern with how he was treated by the contractor, there certainly would be legal means that he would be able to avail himself to.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, Phil Froese has gone through the channels in order to try to receive payment. He has brought this attention to the Sask Party government, brought this issue to the Sask Party government's attention, and the members opposite have had the opportunity to deal with the health region and ensure that Phil Froese has been treated fairly, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, for a government that talks about lean management in health care, this situation does not sound efficient and it certainly doesn't sound like it's based on common sense.

My question to the minister: when he was alerted to this issue — we know he knows about it because a letter has been sent to Mr. Froese — what steps did this minister take in order to ensure that the situation would be solved?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What we want to make sure is that Saskatoon Health Region, as the owner and the operator of this facility, Mr. Speaker, and as the organization that is in charge of the construction and the remediation work that had taken place, that they followed all their due diligence, Mr. Speaker. Again I'm willing to meet with the individual after question period, but this appears to me to be a case of a difference of opinion between a subcontractor and a contractor. It doesn't involve the provincial government.

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

Standardized Testing and Student Achievement

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, people have been asking where the priorities are for this Saskatchewan Party government when it comes to education. Concerned parents, teachers, and educators have started a petition now against the Sask Party's plan to spend over \$5.9 million this year on standardized testing instead of the real pressures facing our classrooms and our students. The petition has gathered steam quickly, Mr. Speaker, and now there are well over 1,300 signatures already.

Professor Paul Orlowski of the University of Saskatchewan's faculty of Education says the plan for the province would bring about the longest period of standardized testing of any place in Canada. The minister has yet to articulate why his government is moving ahead with this extreme version of standardized testing. Mr. Speaker, why is the Sask Party government spending at least \$5.9 million on standardized testing?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Marchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member opposite for the question. You know, we announced this student achievement initiative last spring. And when we made the announcement, Mr. Speaker, we didn't announce a testing program, Mr. Speaker; we announced a student achievement initiative. This is a comprehensive, balanced approach to assessing where our students are in terms of their knowledge of the curriculum, their place in the classrooms, and their social well-being, Mr. Speaker. This is not the American, high-stakes model. This is not about ranking schools. This is not about ranking teachers. And it's certainly not tied to funding, Mr. Speaker. This is a program that's geared at student success.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Well, Mr. Speaker, it seems to have funding implications: \$5.9 million worth that could be used for other pressures in our classrooms. So, Mr. Speaker, parents and teachers do not know why the minister wants to divert precious educational resources away from teaching and into testing. They don't know what the minister means when he says it's going to be a made-in-Saskatchewan approach. And what educators know is that standardized testing is one-size-fits-all, and that doesn't help individual learning needs of our students.

Mr. Speaker, this province faces a low graduation rate for all students for all backgrounds, but especially low graduation rates for First Nations and Métis students. Surely the Sask Party government needs a better response to this situation than telling the teachers they must do more testing instead of teaching. Mr. Speaker, how could the Sask Party government get their priorities so mixed up when it comes to education?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Marchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and again thanks to the member opposite for the question. You know, when our government announced its budget, we announced a balanced budget. We didn't announce an either-or budget, Mr. Speaker. And that's why, and that's why for the first time in history, \$17 million for current year enrolment, Mr. Speaker; that's supports for the classroom. \$268 million for supports for learning; that's supports for the classroom, Mr. Speaker. \$5.9 million to drive a student achievement initiative which is all-encompassing, Mr. Speaker, not just the testing program. More First Nations and Métis initiatives, Mr. Speaker — \$3.8 million for the First Nations and Métis Achievement Fund and an additional \$3 million to help start the action for the recommendations that will come out of the joint task force, Mr. Speaker, and I could go on. 50 new pre-kindergarten programs that directly affect early learning. 500 more child care spaces, Mr. Speaker; that's supports for learning.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, Mr. Speaker, other jurisdictions are walking away from standardized testing. In fact, in Texas the architect of George W. Bush's education plan said, "I've looked at the evidence and I've concluded they're wrong." She went on to say, "Instead of raising standards, this actually lowered standards."

And, Mr. Speaker, here in Canada, Alberta is making the standardized testing they implemented a thing of the past. Their Minister of Education asked his ministry to look at other ways to gather data on student achievement instead of using these tests. They're looking to improve everyday assessment teachers already do. So, Mr. Speaker, my question: with other jurisdictions recognizing standardized testing isn't the right fit for 21st century education, why would the Sask Party government take us down the wrong path?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Marchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite is flat-out wrong. The province of Alberta is not moving away from their provincial achievement tests. In fact, if I may quote the Minister of Education, Mr. Johnson, "We don't want to abandon standardized testing; we just want to modernize it," Mr. Speaker, which is exactly what the province of Saskatchewan has embarked upon, Mr. Speaker.

We are embarking on modernizing our student achievement initiatives. We've had assessment for learning in this province for the last 20 years, Mr. Speaker. We intend to modernize it. We came up with a new program to deal with it, Mr. Speaker, and it's called the student achievement initiative for the province of Saskatchewan. Thank you.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well this is the minister that says the evidence is evident. So perhaps he should listen to some of the evidence about standardized testing. We know standardized testing diverts time and important education resources away from student supports and real learning. We know students become anxious when their standardized tests are looming, and this doesn't help them prepare for everyday learning they need to be ready for. And, Mr. Speaker, the evidence is clear. Other provinces and even the US [United States] states are walking away from standardized testing because it's just not the right way to help students achieve what they need to do in our schools today.

Mr. Speaker, people in Saskatchewan want the minister to reconsider his support for standardized testing. Why can't the Sask Party listen to people and do that?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Marchuk: — Again, Mr. Speaker, this isn't just a testing program. It is a student achievement initiative, Mr. Speaker. It involves many facets of a student's life.

But beyond that, Mr. Speaker, we have examples of success in our province. Chinook School Division, for example, is using a balanced literacy approach to help improve reading results and scores for their children — 21 per cent increase in reading scores over the course of four years. Mr. Speaker, Regina Public's using the early years evaluation tool to help assess students for readiness to enter the mainstream programming. Prairie Valley School Division, Mr. Speaker — 23 of 26 achievement initiatives showed an increase in student results.

Mr. Speaker, it's as simple as it's good for students. Mr.

Speaker, we're going to go down that road.

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

IPAC-CO2

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Sask Party's IPAC [International Performance Assessment Centre for geologic storage of CO₂] affair has many moving parts but it all goes back to the waste of taxpayers' dollars and the lack of accountability for those dollars. Mr. Speaker, that government has tried to blame their partners, but the evidence shows they haven't been straight with Saskatchewan people and that they failed to protect taxpayers' dollars from waste.

We've recently obtained a memo and a report on IPAC done by the Provincial Auditor and it was sent to that government in August of 2010, almost three years ago, directly to the Finance minister and to the former minister of Advanced Education. The auditor explained how the public dollars were not properly used. It raised large concerns about \$4.3 million of taxpayers' money. Mr. Speaker, why did neither the Finance minister nor the Advanced Education minister step in and turn off the tap and protect taxpayers' dollars in August of 2010 when the auditor let them know all of the problems with its IPAC affair?

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, in 2010 CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan] would not have expended 4-point-some million dollars to IPAC, so I'm not exactly sure what funding the member opposite is referencing.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — The minister should be more aware of the report that's coming in as it relates to the dollars that she's extending. This went directly to the Finance minister, to the minister of Advanced Education as well as many other senior officials, highlighting the risk with \$4.3 million.

Now that report's been in the government's hands since 2010, almost three years. It also highlighted significant financial and reputational risks, the lack of a signed contract as it related to \$4.3 million of taxpayers' money, and it highlighted at that point in time that already \$2.4 million had already flowed to CVI [Climate Ventures Inc.], something that the IPAC CEO [chief executive officer] later called mostly waste. But despite that report, the dollars kept flowing — another \$500,000 to CVI.

It could have been stopped. It could have been stopped by the Minister of Finance or the minister of Advanced Education. They could have stepped in and turned off the tap. Why did the Sask Party government allow another \$500,000 to flow to CVI in its IPAC affair even after the Provincial Auditor raised such clear concerns directly with senior officials and ministers, including that Finance minister?

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Again, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite continues to reference all funding that go to the U of R [University of Regina] as IPAC money, and that's not the case. And he doesn't seem to figure out that there's differences in different services that has been agreed upon with the U of R.

There was issues with a contract that was led into by the U of R personnel at the time that they were managing the IPAC file. When there was a board formed and CIC had members on that board, steps were immediately taken. There was a forensic audit done. Mr. Speaker, the contract with CVI was severed at that time. The funding control was taken away from the U of R and taken into the agency itself so that they were handling their money themselves. They also had the equipment that was purchased from CVI evaluated by a third party.

[14:15]

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, we see once again here today that no one in that government will take responsibility for their failed oversight, their failed management as it relates to its IPAC affair.

The Provincial Auditor sent this report to the Finance minister and to the minister of Advanced Education because it was so concerning. That government's own board members knew of the problems in 2009. I'm sure they had briefed that government. And yet, Mr. Speaker, every one of those ministers apparently sat on their hands and kept those taxpayers' dollars flowing and did nothing.

The minister told the House that there was a contract when there was none. The minister told committees that there was value for money when there clearly wasn't. And the minister has pointed fingers at everyone while accepting no responsibility. Why will no one in the Sask Party government simply admit that they knew of problems in its IPAC affair as it had its hands on the taps and were flowing dollars, and that they did nothing to correct it?

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Again I will have to repeat. He keeps saying they did nothing, they did nothing. They severed the contract with CVI, Mr. Speaker. They asked for . . . They got a third party forensic audit to be done to follow the money to see where the money had been spent. Mr. Speaker, they had a third party evaluate the equipment that had been purchased from CVI. Mr. Speaker, they took the funding, control of the money from the U of R into the newly incorporated agency.

Mr. Speaker, there was actions taken. I believe they were the appropriate actions. Going forward, after the agency had become incorporated and was managing its own money, a lot of good things were accomplished, Mr. Speaker. It was the things that this government was looking for to move forward our carbon capture and sequestration agenda.

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

Plans to Replace Saskatchewan Hospital

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, in The Battlefords, people are wondering what the Premier's commitment is to rebuilding the Saskatchewan Hospital. In a big, pre-election PR [public relations] event in 2011, the Premier invited the community to hear about replacing the hospital with a new \$100 million facility. He stated then, construction on the hospital would begin in the spring of 2013.

Mr. Speaker, it's now sort of spring, but it's spring, but the work to break ground has yet to happen because the Sask Party government has delayed once again. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Rural Health is from that area. Surely he knows how important the replacement of the Saskatchewan Hospital is to the city of North Battleford and area. Why has the Sask Party government broken its promise to start building the Saskatchewan Hospital this spring?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this government and this Premier's commitment to a new Saskatchewan Hospital at North Battleford couldn't be more clear. Mr. Speaker, we have forwarded to the health region \$450,000 for scoping a couple of years ago. We've also made a commitment of \$8 million for detailed planning for this new facility.

But we also know, Mr. Speaker, that the existing facility does serve other ministries, for instance, Corrections. We know that the power plant serves other facilities. And so that we know that the future of the existing facility, Mr. Speaker, has an impact on other ministries. That's why we are taking time to make sure that when we do get to the point where construction is ready to proceed on a new Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford, that, Mr. Speaker, it is a facility that will serve the people of this province very well for many years to come, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, this is starting to sound like the last Premier's \$100 million project, which was a pipeline to Montana. And it's disappeared into thin air.

Mr. Speaker, in 2011 the plan was for the Sask Hospital to be built at a cost of 100 million. Now the health region says the costs have risen by 10 more million dollars. So it's 110. One of the reasons for the delay is the so-called efficiency experts that the Sask Party government relies on can't seem to find the time to meet with the people in The Battlefords.

Mr. Speaker, the longer the planning takes, the higher the cost will be. This impacts the community and the health region, and it impacts the patients who are waiting for new facilities. Why has the Sask Party delayed the work on the Saskatchewan Hospital replacement and in doing so increased the cost by over 10 million already?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Well, Mr. Speaker, it would be incorrect for that member to say that work has stopped on this project,

Mr. Speaker, because that work does continue. And we are preparing 3P [production, preparation, process] lean work, Mr. Speaker, to be able to make sure that this is a facility that is state of the art when it is built, Mr. Speaker.

It is ironic though coming from that member who presided as minister of Health over a review in 2002 which stated that two wards needed to be closed because they were unfit for human habitation, Mr. Speaker. And then in 2006 they committed \$39 million to the health region but, you know what, Mr. Speaker, they never actually sent the money. So work was delayed by the previous government, Mr. Speaker. We've made a commitment that we will replace an over 100-year-old facility in North Battleford that will serve the people that suffer from mental illness, mental health illnesses, in our province for many years to come.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, if the New Democrats were still in government, the hospital would have been built by now. There's no question about that. There's absolutely no question.

Mr. Speaker, the premiers want to use their privatization approach of SaskBuilds to develop the Saskatchewan Hospital replacement. Instead of a more affordable option, they want to use this privatization scheme and it will drive up the costs rather than lowering them. This means that the people of Saskatchewan will be paying more upfront, and they'll be paying more later down the line, and it won't even be built in the timeline, the most recent timeline, of the Premier.

Mr. Speaker, the building of this hospital was promised by the Premier to be done, started this spring. It would cost 100 million. Now both of those promises have been broken. Can the minister say now when this project will be completed and what will be the cost to the people of Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely stunning that that member could stand in his place and say that if the NDP [New Democratic Party] had only been re-elected in 2007, that this hospital would've been finished, Mr. Speaker. It is absolutely laughable, and the people of this province know it, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the people of this province know that the members opposite made announcements on other facilities, Mr. Speaker, like the Academic Health Sciences. And we know what happened to that facility, Mr. Speaker — absolutely nothing, Mr. Speaker. And now this government's taking care of that.

We know about facilities like the children's hospital, Mr. Speaker, where the members opposite didn't get around to that one either, Mr. Speaker. And we know about 13 long-term care facilities all across this province, Mr. Speaker, that the members opposite didn't get to, Mr. Speaker. And they're being built as we speak, Mr. Speaker.

This government stands by its record, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to making commitments on capital infrastructure renewal in this province, Mr. Speaker, and we will, Mr. Speaker, when it

comes to the North Battleford hospital.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 91 — *The Saskatchewan Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2013 (No. 2)*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 91, *The Saskatchewan Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2013 (No. 2)* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Finance has moved Bill No. 91, *The Saskatchewan Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2013 (No. 2)* now be introduced and read the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be read a second time? I recognize the Minister of Finance.

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

Bill No. 92 — *The Pooled Registered Pension Plans (Saskatchewan) Act*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill 92, *The Pooled Registered Pension Plans (Saskatchewan) Act* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice and Attorney General that Bill No. 92, *The Pooled Registered Pension Plans (Saskatchewan) Act* be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be read a second time? I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

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

Bill No. 93 — *The Pooled Registered Pension Plans (Saskatchewan) Consequential Amendments Act, 2013/Loi de 2013 portant modifications corrélatives à la loi intitulée The Pooled Registered Pension Plans (Saskatchewan) Act*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 93, *The Pooled Registered Pension Plans (Saskatchewan) Consequential Amendments Act, 2013* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Justice and Attorney General has moved that Bill No. 93, *The Pooled Registered Pension Plans (Saskatchewan) Consequential Amendments Act, 2013* be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be read a second time? I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 89 — *The Creative Saskatchewan Act*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to rise today to speak about *The Creative Saskatchewan Act*. This new legislation enables the development of a new agency called Creative Saskatchewan. This new agent of the Crown is coming into being in order to assist the creative industry sector in getting their products to market. The creative industries are the businesses and people involved in the production, distribution, and marketing of commercially viable creative content and experiences such as music, publishing, craft, visual arts, film, and digital media, theatre, and dance.

The creative industries are represented by hundreds of Saskatchewan companies who for the most part are micro-enterprises. Creative Saskatchewan will boost the competitiveness of Saskatchewan's creative industries and help them to realize their economic potential within and outside of the province as well as to global markets, Mr. Speaker. Creative Saskatchewan, whose primary purpose will be commercial development and marketing, will enable better coordination of marketing activities and greater synergies among creative businesses. It will deliver an array of business and marketing supports and fund sector-specific industry associations such as the Saskatchewan publishing group, the Craft Council, SaskMusic and others.

The aim of Creative Saskatchewan is to cultivate an environment where Saskatchewan's creative industries grow and develop, where they can become more competitive and entrepreneurial. Once it is fully implemented, Mr. Speaker, we will have created an environment that will help to drive sales, revenue, investment, employment, and business development within that sector — the ingredients for a thriving creative economy.

We have a wealth of talent in the province, Mr. Speaker. We want to make sure our creative entrepreneurs build and grow their businesses right here in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, by way of example, a painter may have a tremendous collection of high quality work, and he or she might then wish to commercialize that work. That requires a business plan, learning how to run a small business, maybe incorporation, connection with commercial networks, and the marketing and touring of those works. Creative Saskatchewan will be available to assist this creative entrepreneur.

Mr. Speaker, our government has advanced commercial thinking through *Pride of Saskatchewan*, our culture policy, and through *The Arts Professions Act* which promotes effective business practices and focuses on the business side of making artistic endeavours lucrative. Now we are taking the next step and positioning the creative industries as part of this province's growth agenda. This agency will increase the recognition of the creative industries as a vital element of Saskatchewan's economy and cultural identity. Mr. Speaker, supporting the commercial objectives of the creative industries is one of the ways in which we will sustain our economic growth and continue to improve our quality of life, preparing for an even stronger Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan produces world-class music, movies, books, visual arts, and crafts that carry the provincial signature every time they are consumed and experienced, strengthening our identity and brand. Governments worldwide recognize creative industries as a significant force in the modern economy. As a result, many jurisdictions have issued national, regional, and local strategies targeting the creative economy. These strategies recognize that creativity fuels innovation and drives growth, prosperity, and sustainability.

The trend across the country is a movement toward a single product development and marketing agency targeting all of the creative industries, Mr. Speaker, including film. The trend was led by Ontario with the formation of the Ontario Media Development Corporation a number of years ago. Manitoba was quick to follow with a similar corporation. British Columbia last fall expanded the mandate of the BC [British Columbia] Film Commission to include all the creative industries in an effort to consolidate resources and streamline service offerings. Likewise the province of Nova Scotia introduced legislation and received Royal Assent to form a similar agency in December 2012.

[14:30]

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan creative industry leaders envision a product development and marketing agency which operates under statute. They expressed a desire for a cohesive commercial model to drive development and to deliver relevant

and responsive programs to support the sales of high-quality creative content. This agency will help ensure that all creative industries benefit, promoting a fair and common approach to industry development.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, it will address the concerns raised by the film industry and in doing so position all of the creative industries to grow their capacity and extend their markets. For the province's film- and screen-based media producers, Creative Saskatchewan will also provide funding for both market development and media production for Saskatchewan-based producers. Guided by this focus, Creative Saskatchewan will provide assistance to all creative industries while refraining from duplicating any programming opportunities provided by organizations such as the Saskatchewan Arts Board. The Saskatchewan Arts Board is celebrating its 65th anniversary this year, Mr. Speaker, and it continues to deliver relevant programs so Saskatchewan artists can pursue their creative works.

Creative Saskatchewan will provide the commercial resources needed to assist industry to become more entrepreneurial. They need access to national and international markets, which requires a high level of market development, marketing capability, and access to marketing capital. Creative industries look to digital technology to effectively compete. Technology affords new opportunities for the distribution of high quality content and the monetization of that content. It also gives rise to new forms of content, for example, social media and interactive digital media.

Creative Saskatchewan will enable a common approach to industry growth and development and is designed to reflect collaboration of information, innovation resources, both human and physical. It will help ensure that all creative industries benefit from the kinds of supports and services previously only available to the film industry in this province, Mr. Speaker, promoting a fair and common approach to industry development. At the same time, it will address the significant concerns raised by the film industry for a replacement program and in doing so, position all the creative industries to grow their capacity and extend their markets.

Mr. Speaker, consultations with Saskatchewan's creative businesses and industry associations has been extensive. We called the consultation process *Moving Saskatchewan's Creative Industries Forward*. Consultations commenced in June of 2012, starting with an online discussion paper followed by focus groups throughout the fall of 2012. The purpose of the consultations was to find ways to help the creative industries achieve greater commercialization and economic growth. This engagement with the creative industries has been of great benefit to this process. Mr. Speaker, my officials continue to engage industry leaders through weekly meetings. Discussions continue on the key attributes of this proposed agency, including its governance structure, organizational mandate, and funding.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan advantage growth plan is served well by addressing the creative industries. Creative businesses build sustainable, confident, and inclusive communities. These communities foster a desirable quality of life, and it is this quality of life that enables businesses and communities to grow.

To conclude, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of Bill 89, *The Creative Saskatchewan Act*. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport has moved second reading of Bill No. 89, *The Creative Saskatchewan Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion? I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to be able to give the official opposition's initial comments about this particular bill, Bill 89. There's no question from our perspective, Mr. Speaker, that this effort to try and stimulate some of the industries and some of the sectors that the minister made reference to is an effort to try and do something or at least appear to do something to replace the whole issue of the film employment tax credit, Mr. Speaker.

There's no question in our mind again, as I mentioned at the outset, that this effort should have been a complementary effort to what the film industry was all about, Mr. Speaker. We can see that there's incredible value in any Saskatchewan person, whether you're a potter, into pottery, or whether you're into music, whether you're into writing, and whether you're into acting, that Saskatchewan should be the venue. Saskatchewan should be the location in which we would attract people from all throughout our own land and of course people from across the country and people from other countries as well, Mr. Speaker.

So from our perspective as an official opposition, there's no question that we'd look at the Bill 89 as an effort that should have been complementary to what the film employment tax credit was all about, Mr. Speaker, as opposed to replacing that tax credit which really, really helped a lot of people in Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I do quite a bit of travelling as the MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] for Athabasca, and I bump into a lot of people and I talk to them about a lot of issues. And the whole notion of the film employment tax credit keeps coming up on a continual, consistent basis, Mr. Speaker. There are people being impacted by the decision by the Sask Party to terminate that tax credit program that really killed this particular industry, Mr. Speaker. And when you listen to some of those comments of the people that are impacted, it's really disheartening to see that many of them are now leaving Saskatchewan.

Now what I think that I would tell the people of Saskatchewan is, quite frankly, is the creative industry that the minister was speaking about, the people that do pottery, the people that do writing, the people that do music, we would encourage those people to continue their particular craft and their skill because that's really important that we send that message forward.

However what is happening, Mr. Speaker, is the Saskatchewan Party is using these people, the people that are creative in our province, to have them become the replacement effort by this government over the film employment tax credit value. And that's a real shame. That's a real shame, Mr. Speaker, because as you can see during our sittings here in the Assembly, people would come to the Assembly here and they would sit in the

visitors gallery. And these are people that are moving on. They're moving to Ontario. They're moving to Quebec, to BC. They're heading out of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And to lose those kind of valuable people, people that were involved in the film industry, Mr. Speaker, it is really, really a sad day for the people of Saskatchewan.

And all of a sudden in its haste to try and cover its tracks on a very poor choice, Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party has trotted out this Creative Saskatchewan bill, which really I think in the long run is something that we ought to be very, very wary of when it comes to trying to assess the value and the benefits for all those people that are trying to be creative in our province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as I said at the outset, that the film employment tax credit where we had production here in the province of Saskatchewan, where we had excitement, where we had a lot of economic spinoff, Mr. Speaker, this was a very, very exciting time to be in the film industry in the province of Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, since its inception in 1998, we had \$100 million invested in the film employment tax credit, Mr. Speaker, and what it generated was \$600 million of economic spinoff towards all the parts of our province.

And, Mr. Speaker, that was the incredible value and the incredible genius behind the film employment tax credit, Mr. Speaker. Not only was it a good, solid investment into the motion picture industry or into the film industry, Mr. Speaker, it is also a great value for the economy overall.

And what happens now, the Sask Party turns around without admitting that they made any mistake, in their own stubbornness trying to not tell the people of Saskatchewan the real truth, Mr. Speaker, and the fact that they made this choice to kill the film employment tax credit in a very hasty fashion. And, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan deserve more and better answers than that. And furthermore, Mr. Speaker, they now have replaced the film employment tax credit with a \$5 million fund.

Now what's really important from our perspective, as I mentioned, is we're not going to be critical of the people that are going to take advantage of some of the money. But I'll tell the people of Saskatchewan this: you had a film employment tax credit that was worth \$100 million and since 1998 it generated \$600 million in spinoff benefits for the people of Saskatchewan. The industry was located here, in Saskatoon, and Prince Albert, and all throughout the southern parts of our province, Mr. Speaker, and they were doing great work.

They were doing great work. There was a lot of effort put in the film industry, Mr. Speaker, and you'd bump into people every single day that were impacted by this industry. And some of the great examples is *Corner Gas*, as I mentioned a few times, in which Saskatchewan was really put on the map. Saskatchewan was really put on the map from some of those efforts. And that tax credit that the film industry got from the government of the day — the NDP government, Mr. Speaker — it really, really put Saskatchewan ahead of many, many other jurisdictions.

And it's an absolute crying shame that the Saskatchewan Party government came along and said, look, this thing is going too good, it's really working well, and so now it's time to end that

particular honeymoon. And, Mr. Speaker, they've done that. Now to add insult to injury, they have \$100 million in the film employment tax credit generating \$600 million, and now the minister comes along and saying, we're putting in \$5 million into Creative Saskatchewan's budget to help with those that are doing music, those that are doing pottery, and some of the other creative industries in our province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the point I would make to the people of Saskatchewan is this. This particular bill, Bill 89, it should have actually been a complementary effort to the money behind the film employment tax credit. Wouldn't it be advantageous for us as a province to not only have a burgeoning film industry, to have an exciting opportunity in film production and all the jobs attached to that, generating \$600 million of economic spinoff, and add to it this component, Creative Saskatchewan component, where not only our writers but the people that do pottery, the people that do music, that we had a second component, an even more important component added to make sure that Saskatchewan became the mecca of all kinds of creative industries, Mr. Speaker, that the minister had made reference to?

But what we see happening here is they made a decision to kill off the film employment tax credit which generated millions of dollars in benefits and salaries and millions more towards the economic well-being of our province, and they replaced it with a \$5 million fund that's going to help a few people in the creative sector, Mr. Speaker. And that is the problem with the Saskatchewan Party government is that they simply don't get it. They simply want to make a decision and they stubbornly refuse to admit that they have made a mistake, Mr. Speaker. And the film employment tax credit, the elimination of that program which had great value for the province, was a huge, huge mistake.

Now I want to talk a bit about the folks that used to come to the gallery, Mr. Speaker. And it is almost every second day we've seen somebody sit in the gallery that was moving on and they're going to leave Saskatchewan as a whole. And these are young, exciting, talented people, people that had made a mark in the film industry, people that had put Saskatchewan on the map in so many ways, Mr. Speaker. And for them to come to the Assembly here and say goodbye to us as a government and sit here and watch the Saskatchewan Party try and flub its way through an explanation as to why they kill that program with no solid explanation at all, all the people that done that would come here to watch the proceedings. They were just sitting in the galleries and they'd shake their head and they would be sad, Mr. Speaker. They would be sad. Some of them would be angry. Some of them would be angry but most of them were sad. And the reason that they're sad is they're forced to leave Saskatchewan, leave the province that they love, take their skills and ability and their youth and their strengths to another jurisdiction that would use them, Mr. Speaker.

Now how does that make sense from a growth perspective at all, Mr. Speaker? That's why we don't like to use that word, because the Saskatchewan Party throw it around like it doesn't mean anything. And, Mr. Speaker, to a lot of people that come to the Assembly, that were involved in the film industry, that whole message from the Sask Party government was exactly the point that I am raising today, that their effort didn't mean

anything to the Saskatchewan Party government. And that's a crying shame when you see that kind of a response of a government given to its own people.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to go a bit about the people again that came in to the Assembly. The bottom line is the Saskatchewan Party government has given the creative entrepreneurs — the people involved in the film industry and piles of local businesses, people that catered to the creative industries businesses and actually were part of the economic benefit that the province of Saskatchewan expect from all these investments, Mr. Speaker — they were given their pink slips by the Saskatchewan Party government. And now there'll be no more film production in Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, with the end of that credit, the Saskatchewan Party government made that decision to end film production in the province of Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, when — again I go back to sitting here in the Assembly — when we see the people in the galleries that are here to say goodbye, it's a really, really a sad day, Mr. Speaker.

[14:45]

And I look at some of those folks up there in the gallery and I go back to my comment that these were very exciting, dynamic, creative young people, men and women, that were involved in this industry. And all of a sudden the people of Saskatchewan, unbeknownst to them, the Saskatchewan Party said, we don't want you here in the province anymore; we'll see you later. Go ply your trade somewhere else because your value to the people of Saskatchewan is not of much use to us as a Saskatchewan Party government. That was the message that the film industry people got when they came to the Assembly hoping that the Saskatchewan Party was not stubborn and that they realized the error of their ways, Mr. Speaker. And that day did not come. That day did not come.

And the only thing I would tell the people of Saskatchewan, with this particular bill, it's a very feeble attempt by the Saskatchewan Party to try and deflect from their sorry handling of the film employment tax credit and from their stubbornness to turn around and admit that they made a mistake and to again reinvest in that important industry, Mr. Speaker. And again, as I pointed out at the outset, the people of Saskatchewan ought to know the errors and the mistakes that they made when it comes to the film employment tax credit.

And what they have done, Mr. Speaker, is replace that very valuable industry, a very proud industry, a noble industry, an industry that was supported for many, many years, and they replaced it with a \$5 million fund. Now on this side of the Assembly we sit and wonder, how does \$100 million since 1989, translate into \$600 million for the economy, how does that translate into a replacement program of \$5 million, that where it's very limited as to who gets this money? And, Mr. Speaker, that's kind of the Sask Party map on this whole front, that people out there are really confused as to why they would hurt an industry that was really putting Saskatchewan on the map, but more so earning its dollars and certainly justifying the investment that the province was making in their industry through the film employment tax credit.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the other thing that's, you know, kind of

amusing was the fact that after they made the decision, after the Sask Party decided to kill off the employment tax credit — they said, we had enough of those guys — you know what happened, Mr. Speaker, was they commissioned a person to tell the public in certain language, and I guess in an appropriate language, as to why they made that choice. Now that was what was absolutely stunning to us, is you make a decision and not only is that decision costing Saskatchewan people jobs, not only is that decision costing businesses dollars, but it's also hurting the industry. You have to go somewhere else as a government to get somebody else to explain it to you as to how you explain it to the people. Now that's another wasted \$5,000, you know, Mr. Speaker. And these are all taxpayers' money and we couldn't understand why they've done this, Mr. Speaker. And what was the really, really embarrassing part for the Saskatchewan Party, they've not only done this once, Mr. Speaker, they've done it twice.

So today now as the minister tries to gloss over the value of this document in the course of the bill, and saying that Creative Saskatchewan will be included, and he made a point, Mr. Speaker, that most of the industries . . . And the creative industries are micro industries. And really from our perspective as a government and as a party, and certainly I think the people in general, they wanted to see the creative industries become a macro business opportunity for the province of Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, again according to the Sask Party rule of conduct, we don't want to see any industry getting to a point where it's very, very strong, so let's keep them at the micro level. And this is why we see the \$5 million fund, going from \$100 million since 1989 to a \$5 million fund. No wonder some of these industries continue being micro, Mr. Speaker, because the Saskatchewan Party want to keep it that way and that's very, very sad to see.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I know that there was a lot of discussion on this particular bill from a lot of different folks. And we hear the comments. We hear the stories. We watch the news. And I say to the people of Saskatchewan that it is a very sad day, a sad day when the film employment tax credit was ended. I believe this year they're going to be saving \$3 million and next year it's \$8 million, Mr. Speaker. But think of the possibilities that, had they not done away with the film employment tax credit and actually brought Creative Saskatchewan alongside of it to mirror the success of the film employment tax credit, imagine what a burgeoning industry, a creative industry base that we would have here in the province. If you can imagine that for a moment, Mr. Speaker, it would really, really . . . It would send chills up a lot of people's spines as to what we could have accomplished had it not been for the Sask Party's short-sightedness. And, Mr. Speaker, this \$5 million meant to stimulate the creative sector in the province of Saskatchewan should have been used as a complementary measure, not as a replacement measure for the film employment tax credit.

So I say to the people out there that are involved with this Creative Saskatchewan opportunity: we would encourage you to take advantage of the dollars, the minimal amount of dollars that are being put in this particular fund, Mr. Speaker. And don't count on it because the Saskatchewan Party, through time, will eventually eliminate this. The moment that they have exhausted all the value that they have from this program and from the different industries' endorsement of this program, then

what they'll do is they'll cut the legs out from you in the same manner in which they cut the legs out from the film industry, Mr. Speaker. You should really expect that at a later date.

So my point to the creative industry people that may be getting involved: I would encourage you to hone your skill, to develop your craft, to strengthen your business, to become more and more independent because in the long run, if you count on any support from the Saskatchewan Party government, that's something that you should not count on, second to the first point I'd make.

And the second point I would make is that they have a history of doing this to the creative industries, and the biggest example that we've had in the last several years has been the outright cancellation of the film employment tax credit, Mr. Speaker. That was really a very sad day for the people of Saskatchewan when the Sask Party government done that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I know that there are, as I said at the outset, there are many film workers and production companies that are now leaving or that have plans to leave our province. Saskatchewan, once a mecca for a lot of that industry, they are now picking up and they're packing up and they're leaving, Mr. Speaker.

I read in the news a couple of months ago of how there was a plan to do a major production here in the province of Saskatchewan. And the moment the employment tax credit was eliminated, then the company that was going to locate here said, okay, well we're looking at other jurisdictions. Saskatchewan is out because there's no support for the film industry. And imagine what that particular production would have done for our province, Mr. Speaker. It's an amazing, amazing industry and to see it just thrown by, you know, by the wayside by the Saskatchewan government is . . . It angers me and it saddens me in many ways, Mr. Speaker.

And today now the minister tries to put a brave face, and we know that's all he's doing is putting on a brave face for a paltry \$5 million replacement program that's going to impact a few people in the creative industries. And those few people, if you can imagine, if they could imagine for a moment, Mr. Speaker, if they could have that complementary effort attached to their particular craft, if it all became part of a film employment tax credit along with this program, imagine how strong Saskatchewan would be when it came to the development, protection, and enhancement of the creative sector here in the province of Saskatchewan. That would've been an exciting time for us, Mr. Speaker. But alas, it is not to be, because quite frankly the Saskatchewan Party government can't see past their noses on this front and it's a sad, sad thing to see, Mr. Speaker.

Now some of the other comments I want to make on this particular bill is that obviously the fight is not over. I can remember one of the guests coming here and bidding farewell to the province and for his last time to watch the proceedings of the Assembly, and what his point was. He said, what is dead shall never die. That was his parting words, Mr. Speaker. And quite frankly a lot of people out in Saskatchewan ought to really pay attention to those particular words, as the Saskatchewan Party feebly attempt to try and deflect from their poor decision, their poor decision to eliminate the film

employment tax credit, to bring forward a \$5 million fund called Creative Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, what is dead shall never die.

And the people that are being displaced, the people that now have left the province, people have taken their skill level, their tax earning ability, their expertise, their youth. As they left the province to go ply their trade somewhere else, that is a direct loss to our people, to our province, and to our future. And I say today, shame on the Saskatchewan Party government. That was a very shorted-sighted decision. And what's even worse, Mr. Speaker, is they stubbornly refuse to see the value of that program simply because they made a mistake; they don't want to admit it, and now they do a feeble attempt to cover it all up with a \$5 million Creative Saskatchewan fund, Mr. Speaker. It's not enough. It took away a lot more than what was there before. And, Mr. Speaker, I think the people of Saskatchewan ought to know that's the case when it comes to bills of this sort.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have a great . . . My colleague, the critic for what is being attempted today to deflect from their sorry record when it comes to protecting the film industry, has got a lot of experience. Certainly from my perspective, I'm pleased that the member from Riversdale is on this particular file. I know that she has a lot of discussion with a lot of people impacted by the film industry. I know that she keeps in contact with many of those that have left our province, and she'll also keep in contact with those that may want to take advantage of this particular fund.

But I'm sure that she will be explaining to the people that the Saskatchewan Party is not to be trusted when it comes to the development of the creative industries overall, so to try to make sure that if they do have any value from this particular fund, that they take full advantage of it. And don't ever, don't ever, ever let them use you. Don't let the Saskatchewan Party use you to justify the killing of the employment tax credit because that's what they'll try and do. And that's not what the intent of developing your industry should be about, Mr. Speaker — the politics of the Saskatchewan Party versus the camaraderie of those people that are involved not only in music but they're involved in production, in drama, in poetry, in pottery, and the list goes on, Mr. Speaker.

So I would say to the people out there in Saskatchewan, again another feeble attempt of the Saskatchewan Party to try and cover up their very ill-advised choice to end the film employment tax credit. It's not enough in any way, shape, form — \$5 million versus \$100 million. It's only for specific sectors of the creative sections of our province and doesn't include any of the film industry or the film production, as those people have since left our province.

And, Mr. Speaker, that anger nowadays is more towards sadness because the Saskatchewan Party's vision for this particular sector is lacking. And there's no way that anybody in Saskatchewan that knew the full and whole truth about how they handled this particular file and the creative file overall . . . that one of these days, Mr. Speaker, history will judge what the Sask Party government has done, and the people of Saskatchewan will soon learn about that.

So on that note, Mr. Speaker, I have other folks that are going

to be making comments on Bill 89. I hereby move that we adjourn debate on Bill 89.

The Speaker: — The member has moved debate on Bill No. 89, *The Creative Saskatchewan Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. Why is the member on his feet?

Hon. Mr. McMillan: — To ask for leave to make a statement.

The Speaker: — The minister has asked for leave to make a statement. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to agree?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. I recognize the Minister of Energy.

STATEMENT BY A MEMBER

SaskEnergy Annual Report

Hon. Mr. McMillan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to my colleagues. I have just been made aware that today we tabled the annual report for SaskEnergy, and I've just been made aware that it inadvertently was put on SaskEnergy's website about an hour and a half before it was tabled here in the House. That hasn't been the practice of our government. It hasn't been the practice of this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. It should have been in front of the members before it was made public. For that I apologize to the members and to the Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 90 — *The Planning and Development Amendment Act, 2013*

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

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 90, *An Act to amend The Planning and Development Act, 2007*. This bill will introduce amendments designed to facilitate the implementation of the Saskatchewan plan for growth, particularly where it's important to have effective regional and infrastructure planning to enable economic development opportunities.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, the provincial growth plan speaks to the need for municipalities to work together and overcome the challenges of growth. The municipal sector has a key role to play in sustaining growth in Saskatchewan and provides most of the services and infrastructure needed to support commercial, industrial, and residential development. However, continued strong growth, particularly after decades of limited or no growth in many municipalities, has created challenges. None of these challenges is more significant than the need for intermunicipal coordination to provide infrastructure and manage growth on a regional basis in high-growth areas.

In most cases, Mr. Speaker, local councils find ways to co-operate with their neighbours and solve the issues and problems they encounter in a collaborative manner. However, in some cases this sort of intermunicipal co-operation does not occur, and we see this most often in high-growth areas and in particular around our cities where the challenges of economic growth are felt most acutely.

[15:00]

Years ago, when growth was more moderate or didn't exist at all, there wasn't as much at stake as there is now. We cannot afford to let problems with intermunicipal co-operation endanger the province's economic growth agenda. Saskatchewan needs the ability to put in place collaborative regional partnerships between cities and rural municipalities that will build capacity, address urgent infrastructure and service delivery needs, and create certainty for investment in our growing communities and regions.

The intent of Bill 90 is to facilitate planning for growth and to overcome difficulties which can arise from growth and infrastructure pressures between some cities and rural municipalities. To address these areas, these issues specifically then, Mr. Speaker, Bill 90 introduces amendments to *The Planning and Development Act, 2007* that will enable the province to respond when required in instances where relations between municipalities have deteriorated to the point that growth and planning for growth is being seriously compromised.

These new authorities will include the authority for the Minister of Government Relations to direct cities and surrounding rural municipalities by order to establish and participate in a regional planning authority and specify its powers, duties, procedures, and composition to include both municipal and provincial government representatives; direct by order the regional planning authority to undertake studies and analysis; prepare land use, development, infrastructure and other plans; prepare reports or other documents; draft servicing agreements or bylaw amendments; and report back to the minister and municipal councils within a specified time period; to direct municipal councils to adopt or to adopt on their behalf plans and bylaws prepared by the regional planning authority; and direct municipalities to pay for the costs . . . [inaudible] . . . provincial financial assistance.

Mr. Speaker, I don't want to give you the impression that the situation with respect to intermunicipal co-operation is dire. In fact there are great examples of voluntary regional planning all around Saskatchewan: 158 municipalities, both urban and rural, participating in 22 groups, previously received funding through the planning for growth program, showing how municipalities see the importance of working together. In these cases, Mr. Speaker, where things are working well, the best thing the province can do is let the municipalities get on with their work. And that, Mr. Speaker, is exactly what we will do.

We understand that for the province to become this involved in local planning is a serious matter. And we don't intend to use the new authorities indiscriminately. However the fact that our government is going to introduce these new powers is an indication of how seriously we're taking the issues we see

around intermunicipal co-operation. Open and respectful communication and collaboration between municipalities is encouraged through the municipal capacity development program, *The Planning and Development Act, 2007*, and the voluntary planning district processes.

However where such communication and collaboration fails, this bill provides a mechanism to overcome the challenges and build a regional plan for the affected municipalities to work within, so that the job of facilitating planning and service development is achieved.

Mr. Speaker, creating investment certainty in our growth regions requires commitment from our cities and surrounding rural municipalities to work together in advancing essential infrastructure, services, and development decisions in a timely and efficient manner. This is something we have been hearing from industry. We're looking to municipalities to establish a coordinated approach to development.

And, Mr. Speaker, in the few cases where it may be necessary, we're prepared to act to ensure the success of the plan for growth by providing direction to cities and surrounding rural municipalities to work together and build capacity for supporting business investment in their region.

From a practical perspective, when we determine the need to form a regional planning authority, it will be done by minister's order. The order will set out the membership of the authority along with the terms and conditions of its operation. The majority of the proposed provisions relating to regional planning authorities are based on existing legislation for voluntary district planning. Key similarities are regional planning authorities or corporate bodies authorized by their member councils to make planning decisions on official community plans and zoning bylaws, administer the planning process, and issue development permits.

A regional planning authority with approving authority status would have expanded authority for planning and zoning under *The Planning and Development Act, 2007* and would have the ability to offer expanded centralized and professional planning and development services.

Regional planning authorities have the authority to, among other things, establish procedures for the conduct of its business and administration, the appointment of any consultants or employees, and the appointment of any technical advisory committees. A regional planning authority must follow the provisions of *The Planning and Development Act, 2007* when preparing a regional plan. And most importantly, Mr. Speaker, a regional planning authority is responsible for preparing a regional plan for the included municipalities.

The composition of a regional planning authority will be similar to that of a district planning authority. The minister will have the authority to determine the number of people that will make up the regional planning authority. Flexibility is provided to allow for individual circumstances, but generally we expect the membership of a regional planning authority would include representation from each affected municipality and one or more representatives from the Government of Saskatchewan. This will ensure the interests of the province are considered by the

regional planning authority.

Another difference between Bill 90 and existing legislation is once a regional plan is approved, all municipalities included in a regional planning area will be required to confirm its local official community plan and zoning bylaw are in compliance with the regional plan. Included municipalities will be responsible for adjusting their official community plans and zoning bylaws to be consistent with the regional plan as necessary.

Mr. Speaker, the 2013-14 budget also establishes the regional planning authority program that will provide \$250,000 in new funding to support the creation of regional planning authorities and the preparation of land use and infrastructure plans for the regional planning area. Matching funds from the municipalities will be required, and it will be up to the municipalities involved to determine how the costs will be distributed.

Mr. Speaker, the amendments will include the authority to compel participation and also the implementation of the results of the regional planning authority's work. While some consultation on the development of the minister's order will likely be necessary, we do not intend to let that drag on for weeks and months. In those cases where it's necessary, we want the regional planning authority to be formed, do its job, report, and then let the municipalities get on with their work.

Implementing regional planning in this manner will build local government capacity to advance the economic, social, environmental, infrastructure, and cultural priorities of communities, respond to growing development and infrastructure pressures, and include provincial priorities with local and regional decisions. I would urge each and every member of this House to review and support this bill, and therefore, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 90. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — The minister has moved second reading of Bill No. 90, *The Planning and Development Amendment Act, 2013*. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There's no question . . . Again as we give our initial look at this particular bill, we thank the minister for his comments.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to say at the outset on Bill 90, there's no question that when we hear, in the opposition, when we hear the Saskatchewan Party members speak about the supposed Saskatchewan plan for growth, Mr. Speaker, we know those are just words that they use, that there is no coherent plan that they have. It's just a bunch of buzzwords they throw about and bandy about. And they try and convince the people of Saskatchewan that they really do have a plan when in fact, Mr. Speaker, they do not have a plan. They simply throw out these words.

And this is exactly the example that we make reference of when we say the Saskatchewan Party government simply don't have a clue as to what they're doing when it comes to economic building of our province. And they throw in buzzwords like a Saskatchewan plan for growth, Mr. Speaker, when we know

that there isn't any particular plan they have. Those are just words that they use. And we hear the Premier bandying about these words and backbenchers using these words when in fact when you really ask the question of the Sask Party, where is your plan? Show us your plan. Show us that these are not just buzzwords that you use conveniently whenever you choose to do so. And, Mr. Speaker, we are seeing every day more and more evidence that this particular government does not have a clue.

They don't have a plan as they make reference to, and they're simply going out from crisis to crisis to try and figure out how we can build the future of the people of Saskatchewan in a very intelligent manner, Mr. Speaker. And after six years they still haven't got it figured out, Mr. Speaker.

Now what I would say on this particular bill at the outset, at our first comment and our first look at this particular bill, Bill 90 . . . You hear the minister talk about buzzwords like collaborative partnerships. He's talking about zoning bylaws. He's talking about minister's orders. He's talking about a regional planning committee. He's talking about, let's plan it out amongst ourselves. And he's talking about how these regional planning committees can make a significant difference in benefit for the people of Saskatchewan. Then he talked about minister's orders again, Mr. Speaker. And then he talked about consultation not being weeks or months, that it has to happen very quickly.

And then, Mr. Speaker, he let it out. For the entire regional planning committee effort that they have under their supposed Saskatchewan plan for growth, Mr. Speaker, what are they committing to all the people of Saskatchewan, the entire area, the entire province of Saskatchewan? Well the minister said \$250,000, is what he said, Mr. Speaker. And that's exactly my point, Mr. Speaker, on this particular bill. Is \$250,000 to work toward regional planning committees that will help sustain the economy and plan for growth, as they say, for the entire province? Come on. Give me a break, Mr. Speaker. Because the people of Saskatchewan are not that silly. Two hundred and fifty grand for all the regional planning committee work being done right across the province of Saskatchewan, it's an absolute joke, Mr. Speaker. In fact, it's laughable in a sense that the minister figures that's what it's going to take to get all these regional plans in place, Mr. Speaker.

Now I know, I know, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to buzzwords, when they say collaborative partnership, zoning bylaws, and I said, minister's orders, that's the language that he was using. And I will tell the people that this is our first step, the Saskatchewan Party's first step towards amalgamation.

And there's no question in my mind, Mr. Speaker, that SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] ought to be concerned and worried about what the Sask Party have in plan for them because obviously when you look at who they get advice from, who the Sask Party gets advice from, they get advice from SARM and they get advice from the chamber of commerce. And the chamber of commerce is saying that we're over-governed. We have too many rules and regulations. We have overlap in jurisdictions. And all these rules and regulations made from one RM [rural municipality] to another, from one town to another town, it's very confusing. It's perplexing. It has

in the industry as a whole in a conundrum because they know they want to work in the area, and they want to work with local people, but there are too many confusing signals. There's too many overlapping jurisdictions. There's too many rules and regulations.

So at the end of the day, the chamber of commerce is telling the Saskatchewan Party government, we need to look at a uniform approach to try and figure out how we can be attracting more investment and more business opportunities to our province. And one of the uniform approaches that I think the chamber would like to see happen is a lot more amalgamation of some of the RMs and some of the communities that are out there. But, Mr. Speaker, the worry that the Saskatchewan Party has, you start talking amalgamation with SARM, then all of a sudden they're going to be up in arms and the Sask Party's got to be very careful on this particular front because their supposed plan for growth, which doesn't exist, is trying to address exactly what the chamber of commerce is saying: that there is some overlap, duplication, needless regulation, and confusing signals from different players and different partners and that doesn't do no good for attracting investment.

So what I think Bill 90 is about, Mr. Speaker, under the guise of regional planning, I think the Sask Party is taking their first step towards amalgamation. I really, truly believe that, Mr. Speaker. And the only word that the minister didn't say too much out there was the word efficiency, but I'm sure that word will come up somewhere in the sense of this particular bill, that efficiency will come up somewhere, Mr. Speaker. And it's an amazing effort I think on their part to simply try again, once again, to hide their agenda of amalgamation. And I don't know why they just don't come out to SARM and say, this is what our plan is, this is what our vision is, and these are the problems, and this is how we're going fix it.

[15:15]

Instead, Mr. Speaker, they're going to pick apart these little areas and they're going to say, okay we're going to have a regional planning committee here, but not over there. We're going to have a regional planning committee that involves all these guys, but we're going to change the rules on who is going to be involved with the regional planning committee for this area.

So you can see, Mr. Speaker, that there is confusion, that there is conflict, and that there is no such plan that the Saskatchewan Party members keep making reference to, because to do all that work, to do all the work that's necessary to begin to address what the chamber of commerce's concerns are, Mr. Speaker, he's going to commit to this exercise how much? 250,000 province-wide. Now, Mr. Speaker, we know that's a paltry amount for what is necessary when it comes to regional planning committee work. It is not significant in any way and I can almost guarantee you one regional planning committee may need that entire fund. It's a lot of work that is necessary.

Now what I would also point out, Mr. Speaker, is the manner in which the minister is also saying that as a part of this particular bill, Bill 90, we would like you guys to plan it out amongst yourselves in how we could stimulate the economy and, as he said, to adopt our plan for growth or their supposed plan for

growth, Mr. Speaker. I can tell the people and the players out there, whether it's chamber of commerce or whether it's SARM delegates or people out there that are thinking about this, don't buy into that because there is no such plan, Mr. Speaker. We see the Saskatchewan Party jumping from crisis to crisis. They try and use different activities and functions to try and change the channel and distract from their poor performance. We've seen it happen time and time again, Mr. Speaker.

And the thing that's really impressive overall is the fact that they blame others. They don't take any responsibility for themselves; they say it's all somebody else's fault. And when they make a mistake, they won't admit it. They stubbornly, they stubbornly stick to their lines and, Mr. Speaker, that's not good government. That's not government at all. Then when all the crises start to mount up, they would say, oh we have this plan for growth. Mr. Speaker, they don't have a plan for growth. They're just jumping from crisis to crisis and from a PR spin and to media announcements on a continual basis.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would say this. If the Saskatchewan Party was serious about growth overall, if they were serious about growth overall, Mr. Speaker, would they, would they not have a situation figured out? Would they have the P.A. [Prince Albert] bridge issue figured out? Would that have been resolved for a plan for growth? That's a solid investment for the future of the economy of the P.A. area, which is all part of our province. Right, Mr. Speaker?

You look at the Estevan bypass, look at the Estevan routes right now that are being threatened to be shut down from four lanes to one lane. In Estevan where there's a booming economy, people are working, the city themselves are now considering shutting down one of the major roads from a four-lane highway to one lane. And what's the reason on that, Mr. Speaker? Potholes, potholes galore on that particular road. It's hurting the economy of Estevan. Well isn't that a good avenue to begin this whole plan for growth buzzword that the Sask Party is actually using, Mr. Speaker? That's my point. If there's no P.A. bridge, Mr. Speaker, if there is no work to help Estevan fix their highways so they wouldn't have all these potholes hurting their economy . . . Mr. Speaker, that is a good plan for growth. And the reason they won't do any of that, Mr. Speaker? Because they don't understand it. That's the bottom line, Mr. Speaker.

And you look at some of the . . . In North Battleford as an example, there is 300 workers laid off at Maple Leaf, 300 workers. Not a peep from this particular government as to how they're going to help that city cope with that huge job loss at Maple Leaf. Not a peep, Mr. Speaker. So I go back to my earlier point: well isn't that part of your economic plan for growth, to address these matters and these issues? Well none of that is in their budget, none of that is in their thinking, and none of that is in their words, Mr. Speaker.

And you look at the prosperity this government has wasted, the tons of money that they have wasted in places that they should have thought everything through, Mr. Speaker. And the opportunity lost, the opportunities lost, whether it's the film employment tax credit or whether it's working with the Aboriginal sector, Mr. Speaker, or whether it's really, really starting to work with the oil and gas and the mining industries, Mr. Speaker. You can't just say you have this plan. Because all

it is to the NDP, all it is to the people of Saskatchewan are just silly words that the Saskatchewan Party uses and bandies about when they have no answers for things like the Estevan bypass, for things like the P.A. bridge, for addressing the 300 jobs lost in North Battleford, Mr. Speaker. This list goes on and on and on as to how this government has not met their obligations, Mr. Speaker.

And once again under Bill 90, under Bill 90, Mr. Speaker, the buzzword — I'll tell the people right now — is amalgamation. It looks like amalgamation, it smells like amalgamation and, Mr. Speaker, I bet you a bottom dollar that is it amalgamation that the Government of Saskatchewan has planned for RMs and for villages and towns.

Now I say the words again to anybody out there who might be listening, the words of collaborative partnership, zoning bylaws, minister's orders, all under the title of regional planning committees. And, Mr. Speaker, that would suggest, that would suggest to me that amalgamation is being planned by the Saskatchewan Party government because there are people out there, the chamber of commerce being one of them, that are making arguments as to why amalgamation would be good for the economy.

And here's where the Saskatchewan Party has to make a decision. They have to make a choice, Mr. Speaker. They can either portray themselves as champions of the economy — which we don't buy at all on this side of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker — by listening to the chamber of commerce. Or they can listen to SARM, Mr. Speaker, tell them, no, there should be no effort to try and amalgamate.

Mr. Speaker, where do they go? Who does the Sask Party listen to, Mr. Speaker? And that's the message I have today, is there's massive confusion on that side because their priorities are all mixed up and they're not certain. They have been playing this game for a while now where they pretend to listen to both groups, but sooner or later both those groups will meet and the discussion will happen. And the Saskatchewan Party had better make a decision at that time on what side of the bed they're getting out of on that particular issue, Mr. Speaker, because you can't keep that particular marriage happy when you have two partners that have differing views on how we can build this economy together, Mr. Speaker.

So again I would look at the wording. That is really problematic to me. And what's really problematic, Mr. Speaker, is \$250,000 for all of Saskatchewan to put regional planning committees in place. Like, come on. How silly is that? How silly is that, Mr. Speaker? So I tell the people of Saskatchewan this, Saskatchewan Party plan for growth are just buzzwords that the Premier, the entire cabinet, and the backbenchers use to try and convince the people of Saskatchewan that there is a plan, and there is no plan, Mr. Speaker. There's absolutely no plan. Because if there was a plan then the P.A. bridge would be on that list, Mr. Speaker, the Estevan bypass would be on that bridge, addressing the 300 workers that lost their jobs in North Battleford would be on that list, Mr. Speaker. And not one of those important issues that are a direct threat to the economy are on that list.

What's on that list is Bill 90, Bill 90 here talking about regional

planning committees and giving them 250,000 measly dollars to that particular work on a provincial, on a province-wide basis, Mr. Speaker. It's insulting. It's not intelligent. And, Mr. Speaker, it lends credence to our argument, on the opposition side, that there was never a plan. It's all simply buzzwords. And they're bumbling along and fumbling through this crisis, Mr. Speaker, and sooner or later that is going to cost the people of Saskatchewan dearly.

It's going to hurt our economy for years to come, Mr. Speaker. And that work, Mr. Speaker, that the Sask Party has undertaken now to hurt our economy and hurt our future, has began five years ago. And it'll continue going unless the people of Saskatchewan stand up and tell these guys to wake up, smell the coffee, and figure out that there's a lot more challenging issues out there that are threatening our economy than simply pushing through a regional planning committee and doing this at \$250,000 province-wide. It's insulting. It's not worth the time of day to put any kind of effort in trying to understand this bill, Mr. Speaker. And I tell the people of Saskatchewan and all the people out there that are looking at this particular bill, take the time to study it, see what effect, what impact, what value it may have to your region. Is there any merit to what is being proposed here?

And the word that just keeps jumping out at me under Bill 90, Mr. Speaker, is the words minister's orders, minister's orders, minister's orders. Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that the people of Saskatchewan don't put minister's orders on how to build your regional economy as a tool that this government could use because they have made a mess out of things, Mr. Speaker.

The economy of Saskatchewan is strong, and we want to continue seeing that growth happen and that opportunity happen. The people of Saskatchewan know this is important. The NDP know it's important. We're going to continue building on that particular work, Mr. Speaker, and that's the important message I would share with all the people of Saskatchewan. We want to see Saskatchewan be number one, but we want to see them make . . . to ensure that while we have the opportunity and the monetary resources now, while we have the money to make some strategic investments, some solid investments that'll build that economy for years and sustain the economy for as long as possible . . . Because rest assured, sooner or later the economy will cool down, and how you manage the economy now is really important for that future, Mr. Speaker. It's really important for that future . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Now I hear the member from Kindersley chirp from his seat, Mr. Speaker.

Now is he the architect of that planned growth for Saskatchewan? I can tell you he probably picked the words. But if I challenge him today to say you put a document on my desk here that shows that you architected the business plan for Saskatchewan's economy, Mr. Speaker, if he does not produce that document, Mr. Speaker . . . I'll give him a day. Because if they say they have it, I'll give them a day. Guaranteed, Mr. Speaker, there'll not be a document on my desk today because that plan doesn't exist. And the member from Kindersley knows very well it doesn't exist, and he simply uses buzzwords to try and confuse the people and pretend that they're on track to keep this economy hot and strong, Mr. Speaker. They're simply chugging along at the best of their ability hoping not to make

mistakes. And that's a crying shame when it comes to the future development of our economy overall, Mr. Speaker.

So again I will say this: that when it comes to Bill 90, when it reeks of the word amalgamation, it reeks of amalgamation, Mr. Speaker. And you look at what they're trying to do with the Bill 90. He's talking about regional planning committee, and they're going to offer \$250,000 province wide for this regional planning committee. Mr. Speaker, this bill is not worth the paper it's written on primarily because all it is is simply buzzwords to qualify their particular facade that they're working on the economy and have a great plan for the economy, Mr. Speaker.

To us it is just words, hollow words that simply don't address the issues like the P.A. bridge, like the Estevan bypass, like protecting the working people, taking care of the environment, addressing 300 job losses in North Battleford. Those are the issues, Mr. Speaker. Those are the issues that should be on an economic plan, not silly little bills like Bill 90 that talks about putting regional planning committees all throughout the province. And the grand cost of that scheme? 250,000 measly dollars. Like come on, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan are a lot more intelligent than that.

So on that point, Mr. Speaker, we have a lot more we want to say on this particular bill. I hope to be back on this bill to talk about what they're not doing right, Mr. Speaker, and what ought to be done to strengthen this economy for years and years and years and years, Mr. Speaker. And this bill simply doesn't merit any kind of attention that the minister says it's going to merit when it comes to planning. Because, Mr. Speaker, \$250,000 province wide to develop regional planning committees? Like give us a break, just give us a break, Mr. Speaker.

Bill 90 is a complete waste of time from my perspective. It's a waste of time because it's based on the premise that the Saskatchewan Party have a grand plan called the Saskatchewan plan for growth. Mr. Speaker, that plan doesn't exist. It never has existed. The only premise, purpose they have with this particular bill, Bill 90, is the word amalgamation. And, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan are going to find that out very soon. So on that note, I make a motion that we adjourn debate on Bill 90.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Athabasca has moved to adjourn debate on Bill 90, *The Planning and Development Amendment Act, 2013*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion? Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 85

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed

motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 85** — *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* 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. Today I rise to enter into the debate on Bill No. 85. I usually say it's an honour, but today I feel that this is a sad occasion in the sense that we're probably going to be talking for the last time about a bill called labour standards, a bill called *The Trade Union Act*, a bill called . . . an Act called *The Occupational Health and Safety Act* — legislation that served this province very well, very well over the past many, many years as labour law evolved.

[15:30]

So I'll just stand and enter into the debate my thoughts on this, as I've been very involved with this over the last less than a year. And I do want to make that point because this has been one of the quickest, quickest pieces of legislation that's gone from an idea on May 2nd last year to the point that we're at today, and we have some real concerns about it.

And so I do have some thoughts on it, and I want to talk about our main concerns. And I do want to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that there's a phrase that I'll repeat several times today, is that if we don't learn from history, we are doomed to repeat it. And we have seen this with this government in terms of labour legislation. And whether it's essential services legislation that we saw that was rushed right after the 2007 election, became law, was challenged, and now it's in the courts, mired in the courts. And here we are some five and a half years, six years later, and we have not got any further.

And you know, I find it of passing interest that this year of all the storms we've had, we still talk about that storm of January 10th, 2007, where the blizzard in this province was so bad that the highway workers came out even though they were on strike just a few days prior to that . . . the impetus to that legislation, essential services bill, and the problems when we don't get it right, when we don't take the time to get it right. And we've seen that. And I do have some severe, severe concerns about this piece of legislation, and so we don't support this bill.

We would hope though that in the interest . . . that we understand the government has the power and authority to make legislation as they see fit, that at least they take the time to get it right. And we would hope that they would delay it and take the summer to make sure that they get it right. But we do believe it is fatally flawed, and I'll get into those reasons why in a few minutes. But I do want to make sure that over the course of this afternoon that there is no misunderstanding, that we do not support this bill as it is. We think it is fatally flawed, but we encourage the government that if they can do nothing else with this bill, that they do take the time to get it right and delay the passage of it until the fall.

I want to set the stage, Mr. Speaker. I want to take some time further on to talk about the history of labour law in this province. I think it's a fascinating area. It's one that is so hugely important because, as we all know, the world of work gives us

meaning to our lives. And whatever it is that we do, it's the regulations, the laws that protect us from exploitation, protect us from danger, and we must make sure we get those laws, those regulations right. So I want to talk a little bit about that.

I want to talk about what seems to be a much better way of approaching changes to labour legislation because we're not against improvements to labour legislation. And I'll talk in more details about why that is. But we are not against improvements, and we're not against taking a look at labour legislation and how it might fit a modern-day Saskatchewan.

But we are against doing it in a rushed, hurried way that causes all sorts of problems, unintended consequences. Because we know, we know in our economy, it is just so critical that we get the workforce right and that they feel safe and that they're treated fairly in the workplace. And if we don't do that, then we can create a lot of problems immediately and also further down the road. So I want to talk a little bit about that. I want to talk about the Arthurs report, and I also want to talk about what's happening across North America.

We are deeply concerned and deeply worried about the trends that we see with right to work, and we did see the idea that we might, the unions might have lost the Rand formula. And that wasn't the case though, and so that's a good thing, and we think that is a good thing. But there are some real challenges across this country, right across North America, and so we want to make sure that that's on the record too because we can get it right. And we need to get it right and that's really important.

I'll talk a little bit about some of the things within the bill. But I mean the bill is so, is so huge. It really truly is an omnibus bill. And we've seen a trend, particularly at the federal, the national level of omnibus legislation. And it becomes a bit of an awe-and-shock method of legislation where it's so big, where do you start? Where do you start? And it's too much to get into the detail because it has taken so long to evolve to that stage and when it's all wrapped up like this — now we see 12 pieces of legislation — that we clearly worry about this. And some people can't believe some of the implications of what the changes really are. They go, that can't be true. And we say, well it seems to be the case in here.

But of course the other part of an omnibus bill when you have legislation of this size, this quantity, that the implementation becomes a real challenge. It becomes a real challenge. So how will this be implemented? So we have some real concerns about that. And we do want to make sure we will raise this.

Now it's not the current minister's doing, the essential services fiasco that started six years ago, but he was part of the government that saw that. And so we think that all members on the opposite side would have learned a lesson from that when Justice Ball emphasized how important consultation is, how important it is to get it right, how important the balance of power between the employer and the employee is critical to make sure that it's respected, that you don't have unintended consequences.

And so we have some real concerns about not learning the lessons from history. So once again I'll repeat that. If we do not learn from history, we are doomed to repeat it. And it seemed to

be . . . This is way too soon, way too soon for a government that it's in the sixth year of its mandate, that they're already falling into a trap of not learning from history, their own history, their own history, their own mistakes. And we often on this side — and we do this because we think it's important — we raise concerns about the quality of consultation.

And clearly this government needs to think, rethink how they do consultation and how important it is, how important it is to get it right. I do want make sure that we highlight some of the union concerns, some of the labour concerns because they are representing not only their members — and whether it be members who are in the health sector or whether it be members that are in the public sector or members who are in the private sector — but also they recognize their role of how important it is to give a voice to those who are vulnerable, those who are not organized, those who are transient in their workplace, those who are even temporary workers, that there are rights. And we do look to organized labour to be that voice at the table to make sure their concerns of whether it's fairness, fairness in wages, fairness in hours of work, but also making sure that the workplace is safe. And that it's important that if a person is trained appropriately, that the important . . . the equipment is in safe running fashion and that all of that is in place.

And so we have some real concerns, and I do want to make sure that we talk a little bit about that. And at the same time, I'll be raising some concerns that we think is important in terms of even agriculture because we see how important agriculture is to our economy, and we want to make sure that we recognize the critical nature of farm workers and how critical it is. It's important that they're treated in a safe fashion. That's very, very important.

And we'll also be talking about . . . I want to make sure we raise some concerns that the Privacy Commissioner raised. He wrote a letter, and it's very thorough, very thoughtful. And it's always one . . . I think of all the five legislative officers, we should listen to each one of those when they have their points of view on legislation. We should make sure that their voice is heard. Now clearly it's up to the government to decide whether or not they give any weight to it. We sure hope they do because these folks, we have them as officers because they bring an expertise and a thoughtfulness to the issues before us through their own particular perspective, their own particular lens. And when you have people like the officer of . . . Privacy Commissioner talking about his concerns, I think we need to take a look at that . . . and interestingly some business thoughts. You know, the one thing . . . And it is interesting that the minister has placed on the website the feedback that he has received.

And it's been an interesting, it has been an interesting process where at one point I know he received over 3,000 responses. Two thousand were identical. They were faxed-in forms. It's a concern that we have about how authentic consultation is. I mean it's one thing to say we consulted, but it's a real other thing to say we went out and we met with people, both employers, employees, and we had a good, productive conversation about what we needed to do and making sure people had the capacity to have that conversation. And I'll talk a little bit about that when we talk about students and some of the challenges that they face.

And I also want to reflect and thank my eight colleagues here and the speeches that they gave. They were very thoughtful. And I do want to, if I can, if I have enough time before the end of the day, reflect on some of the things they said because each one of them brought some very interesting perspectives to this floor. And I think it's important that in summary we think about the work that they have done.

And so I think that's the thing that we want to talk about today. And I just want to lay that all out because I think it's very important that we have a plan of what I really want to make sure is covered in my remarks.

I want to start by saying that it was a real surprise on May 2nd, 2012, about four, five, six months after the November election of 2011, that we saw ourselves faced with this kind of review. When the minister said he launched a consultation paper, and he said he's going to allow 90 days on the review of labour legislation in Saskatchewan, I think people were aghast at 90 days to review 15 pieces of legislation that took over 100 years of law and parliamentary discussion here in our legislature and that it was all going to be done in 90 days.

But not only was it going to be in 90 days, but it was not going to be in person. There were not going to be any face-to-face consultations. They were going to be all mail-in papers. And so clearly that was going to not only cut out a significant part of our population, that it really meant that people's voices were not going to be heard.

Now the minister did set up a minister's advisory committee, and that's fair enough. I mean I think that's good to have at any time. That's a good process to have. But to give them this kind of role when . . . I mean they did not have a role in saying 90 days and only written consultations. That became a real problem. And then it really became an issue of what was going to be fair, what was going to be . . . How was this going to move forward? Some of the questions seemed pretty inflammatory. And the minister was not saying, you know. . . When we're talking about reviewing stat holidays, we're not really talking about that. We have questions in the House. And it really became a real problem because we weren't sure what was going to come out of this and what this was going to look like.

But the minister has kept his timeline. He said it was going to be 90 days, and they closed it off on July 31st. And then they released all the papers on the website. And of course that was quite a thing because obviously when you saw thousands of the same fact sheet . . . really raised the credibility, the integrity of the consultation paper. But the number was used over and over again as if it was some sort of licence to say we did consult, when really it added more fuel to the flame because really, did you really consult when you had that kind of response in 90 days, 90 days over the summer, over what we could consider holidays?

And then we saw the bill in its true form in the dying days of the Christmas . . . just before Christmas in December 2012. And of course then we were left with only two or three months then over of course a big part of that would be the Christmas holidays. So we were really worried about that, and we had some real concerns.

But not only did we have some concerns but also the folks who were on this advisory committee because on one hand they felt, fair enough, we will participate in this. And they had some real concerns. I know from the employee side that there was some real concerns, what they felt, and I agree with them that they felt they should participate. Then when the opportunity is to have the ear of the minister and the ministry, a person and a group should do that. It would only be the reasonable thing to do. But they realized the size of the work that was before them and the impact, the potential impact of this was going to be very significant.

[15:45]

And so when this all came about, many of the . . . In fact it was the labour side or members who represented labour who then went and had a press conference and asked the minister to reconsider the timeline — not to reconsider passing the bill, not to reconsider whether or not he had the authority to do the bill, but reconsider the timeline so that people could fully appreciate what was before us.

And I think this was only fair and only reasonable. And there appeared a commentary in the daily papers here in Saskatoon and in Regina, and it was very thoughtful. I thought it was the reasonable thing to put out there and the reasons why. And I'd like to quote from that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The headline is "New Sask. labour law: why the rush?" *Leader-Post*, March 6th, 2013 on page 8. And I'll read the first part, and I quote:

As labour leaders, business leaders and government we have a responsibility to work together to maintain a stable, balanced and fair work environment for all people in Saskatchewan. We have been charged to preserve the rights and freedoms of choice we all enjoy resulting from the solid foundation of labour legislation we have built together over the past 70 years.

We challenge ourselves to be thorough in our review of any major legislative changes so that we may reduce the risk of unexpected and unintended outcomes that could harm the livelihoods of the people we serve and the community we seek to enhance.

And so he goes on to say:

Saskatchewan stands at a precipice of labour instability with the introduction of a sweeping and rushed overhaul of the province's labour laws in Bill 85 — the new Saskatchewan Employment Act.

And so he really sets the stage and says we should be really concerned about this. We're really at a crossroads of doing the right thing and making sure that we're thorough, that we know it's the best piece of work we can do and not be held hostage to a false deadline that really, really doesn't matter. It doesn't really matter whether it's May 16th or December 31st just as long as we get it right. There's too much at risk.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, we had a good debate the other day about the economy of Saskatchewan and how well it's doing, and I was disappointed that the other side did not mention the role of working men and women in making that

economy as strong as it is. Clearly business has a role and has done so much, and we appreciate that, but you've got to admit that it's the working men and women who've made this province what it is. And when we put what we have at risk, it's a dangerous, dangerous thing.

And so let's get it right. Let's get it right, you know. And he goes on to say, and I quote:

It raises a question: what is driving the government's rushed efforts to pass Bill 85 in the spring sitting of the legislature? There is always a danger that far-reaching legislative changes, when driven by undue haste, can create unplanned consequences, as seems to be the case in this instance.

What is of equal concern is if the people of Saskatchewan understand how these changes will impact them, their families and their businesses.

And what they're concerned about, and I quote:

For individual workers, the balance of current legislation will shift dramatically in favour of employers.

Under Bill 85, employers will have the discretionary power to limit whether employees are able to access the traditional two consecutive days off in a work week. Scheduled lunch and rest breaks may no longer be the common standard . . .

And he goes on and on and describes this. And he says, and I want to close with this:

We are all part of the "Saskatchewan advantage" and the biggest economic boom in our province's history. We have the lowest unemployment rate today in the country and more people are moving to our province than ever before.

All of this has been achieved under our current labour legislation — there clearly is no crisis requiring a hasty fix.

Modernization of laws is a good thing, but it requires thoughtful and inclusive review and that will take time.

There is no harm in taking time, but there is a worrying potential for real damage if passage of this new legislation is rushed.

So, Mr. Speaker, end of quote. I think that's an important, important piece of advice for us. Let's take the time to get it right. Now on this side of the House, we think there's some fatal flaws that are hard to get past. But the government is the government, and they've been working with an advisory committee that's reasonably saying, let's take some time and get this right. This is a real problem. This is a real problem.

You know, and we see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this government is quite okay, quite okay about taking some time to get it right on some other issues. We see the lobbyists' registry that we understand, after the election, was a key piece of

legislation. That was a priority for this government. This Premier was very concerned about how we stood out across the country because we did not have strong legislation in this area, and we needed to do something about it as soon as we could. So we even responded. We thought that was very important.

And so where is it now? We heard from the Minister of Justice when asked about it a few weeks ago that he wants to make sure he gets it right. Well that's a good thing. That's a very good thing. And I think that we applaud that. We applaud taking the time to get it right. But it shouldn't be inconsistent, that one minister thinks it's the right thing to get it right, and the other minister says, we've got to live to our timelines no matter what, no matter what people are saying. And so, Mr. Speaker — I want to make sure that I get a good glass of water here — but I think we want to make sure we get it right.

And when we see that . . . And we saw that with the people who ride motorcycles and raised a lot of concerns about the fact of the increased rates. And they were able to say, hey maybe we should take the time to get that right. And of course there's a lot of debate on that, what's right and what's appropriate, but they are taking the time to get it right.

So we see examples of this. We see examples of taking the time to get it right. So we have a lot of questions about why. Why the rush? And so, Mr. Speaker, I think this will be something that this government needs to wrestle with. And why is it for one case that they will not do the right thing and on the other hand they seem quite open to it?

The other question I have and, Mr. Speaker, we saw this in the budget debate last week that we raised questions about, I raised questions in my speech about the implementation of this bill. We did this a year ago actually as well. When this was announced as an initiative on May 2nd we asked, what are the extra costs that are provided for in the Ministry of Labour's budget? And at the time the minister said not to worry, that in fact he would be able to absorb it in the existing budget, that there was not going to be any extra costs, that in fact everything was going to be quite fine. And we were a bit surprised at that time when he said that because we know when you're overhauling 15 pieces of legislation clearly there were going to be costs. Clearly there were going to be costs.

We did raise concerns. We were worried about the impact, especially in terms of were there the resources within the ministry, particularly because of the lean initiative. Who was going to be writing this legislation? And of course we were assured that not to worry, that everything was going to be all right. They had the resources and the capacity to do this thing.

And then we found out in December that in fact that was not the case, that in fact we had to have supplementary estimates where they needed an extra \$700,000. They had spent between May and the end of November \$700,000 on the consultation process. Part of that was the fact that they had spent \$200,000 on consultants to actually write the bill. And so now we're at that same stage where . . . So the bill is out and we had four months left in the year. And now we're in a new year, and there did not seem to be any new resources set aside for the work that . . . implementing this bill.

So we have some real concerns about this because we know that there's so much more to this bill that needs to be done, so much more that needs to be done. We're waiting and we've heard that there will be a need for between 350 and 1,000 regulations and a significant numbers of regulations that will have to be written before parts of this piece of legislation can come into force.

And we're not sure exactly even how this bill will come into force. Will it come into force as a complete package? Will only sections of it come into force? I mean, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it kind of negates the hope and promise of having one big code if you're only implementing parts of it at a time. And we know for sure there is one big gap when it comes to the section around essential services. That is still there and so we have some real concerns about that. So there's some real questions.

And then you set this against the backdrop, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when there was no promise, no forewarning, particularly during the campaign, that this kind of omnibus, this kind of labour legislation overhaul was going to be happening and that was part of their legislative agenda, in their legislative agenda. I mean it wasn't even part of the Throne Speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we got back after the election. So we have some real worries.

But, Mr. Speaker, were there . . . Are there other concerns that this government should be addressing? Well for sure there is. Absolutely there is. You have this kind of work being done when we have one of the worst safety records in Canada, and it's been for many, many years, Mr. Speaker. And it's something that we all should get behind and say, what can we do? What can we do about our safety record here in Saskatchewan when it comes to our workplaces? And again we've got to have more than words. We've got to have more than fancy slogans. We've got to have more than that.

And I think that if there was a priority that when you see the kind of the things that are happening in Saskatchewan in terms of our economy, we clearly need to act in a much more comprehensive manner when it comes to workplace safety. That would have been something I think should have been a priority for this government. It still should be a priority. And that's where we think we should . . . where the government should put its efforts. When they're saying we need to do an omnibus bill, we're saying, why? And that answer has not been asked and we can say, these are the things you should be doing.

Mr. Speaker, we can talk about the worker shortage too. Clearly we see that, and that's an issue that keeps coming up in the media and the papers. And whether it's the government sponsoring junkets to Nevada or Ireland to hire workers, we should be doing a lot more to make sure our own people have the skills and the things that are needed to participate in the workplace. And we know that's a real issue. That's a real issue. And we could be doing much more in terms of addressing the labour shortage in this province. And that's something that, again, priorities. Isn't it? It's all about priorities. What are your priorities? And we think these are real priorities and employers are saying and employees are saying.

You know, we know that there's many trades and we've heard about electricians and in fact . . . And we did have a member statement earlier today about the unemployment rate here in

Saskatchewan and the good things that are happening here. It's not so good in the rest of Canada. Why aren't we doing more to connect with the electricians, those types of trades and saying, come out to Saskatchewan here. And so this is something that we're wondering about. Why, why is it that this seems to be the labour priority?

[16:00]

Then again though, as I said, it's a priority and not a priority. It all depends. For example when we had the budget debates over the past few weeks and not mentioned at all about the government. So on one hand, it's a key piece of their ideology that they're putting forward and they're stubborn about doing it. And on the other hand, it's just not an issue that they want to really address in terms of considering the fullness of the work that they've got to do both in terms of being thorough, complete, thinking about all the unintended consequences, but also the fact . . . improving our workplaces, improving our workplaces so they're safer and they're fairer. That's really critical.

And of course we were all . . . The other issue that I just want to highlight because I think it's so important, and while there's been some gains made in this area, just clearly not enough in terms of Aboriginal employment. We need to do so much more there. We were disappointed on this side when they cancelled the Aboriginal employment development program, clearly a program that was working. We are waiting and waiting for the work that the government has put out there in terms of a report, in terms of how the education part can be addressed in a more appropriate way. But we really are concerned that this should have been, it should have been a bigger priority for the Government of Saskatchewan.

And so we have those. Those are real, real issues. And I think that as we move forward, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as you know, every day I read a petition calling for a delay of this bill. It's very important that we consider that. And I'm not just doing that to stand up every day. I think it's really important that we do think about the impact of getting this bill right, and it's hugely important that we do.

And so what I'd like to do, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if I could talk about this petition that we have. Because every day I read parts of it but I haven't read the whole thing, and maybe people at home would want to know more about this petition who are tuning in right now.

But I take this bill and it talks about the 12 pieces of legislation that have been rolled in together. But as I said earlier, the proposed Saskatchewan employment Act introduced in December of 2012 is a sweeping rewrite of our labour laws, including but not limited to *The Labour Standards Act*, *The Occupational Health and Safety Act*, the health labour relations reorganization, and *The Trade Union Act*.

And since *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* was introduced in December, literally hundreds of hours of study in comparison have been carried out in the interests of due diligence. But there is no labour relations crisis to fix, and no necessity to rush this omnibus bill through that will likely govern workplace relations for decades to come.

If Bill 85 becomes the new consolidation of labour laws in this province, working people — particularly the young workers, immigrant workers, and other vulnerable workers — will suffer from a hasty watering down of our current labour standards which set the mandatory minimum for all Saskatchewan workers. Stable labour relations in all sectors run the risk of being thrown into turmoil as a result of Bill 85's sweeping changes. Thousands of represented workers stand to lose their rights to bargain collectively and be represented by the union of their choice.

And so there is a prayer that goes with this petition:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: cause the Government of Saskatchewan to not pass Bill 85, *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* in this current session before the end of May and to place it on a much longer legislative track to ensure greater understanding and support for the new labour law.

And many hundreds of people have signed this bill, and it may be into thousands. But I know, I know and I've seen the Minister of Labour actually receive postcards from CUPE [Canadian Union of Public Employees]. And we know as well that there are many letters being sent to the Premier and to the minister urging them to step back, take some time, and think about, is this the most appropriate way to do this?

And you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do want to read one letter. You know, it seems like I'll be talking, I will largely be talking from the workers' side. It's interesting how in some ways this hasn't really caught fire. There are some people within the business community that are quite supportive of this, and I appreciate that. But it's not caught on as much as I thought it might have. And here is an example. This one, actually this is a letter that's from the Ministry of Labour's own website. And it's submission no. 341(0), and it's from Ray A. Graves, president of Saskatoon Boiler Mfg. Co. Ltd.

Now it is addressed to the Sask Party, Saskatoon Silver Springs, attention the MLA for Silver Springs. And this is what he says. This is what he says. So it's not just labour saying this, but this what a business person has said:

The proposed new Labour Legislation is an absolute disaster for our firm. It will cause us to spend enormous amounts of money for no improvement in safety of our firm, because our firm's safety history is so good. The legislation will penalize the good firms in hopes of improving the bad ones. Our already precarious competitive position will be further damaged. Our immediate problem is that no one is listening to us.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's not just unions who are saying this but just generally everybody is saying, let's get this, let's get this right. And I think that the onus is on the government to get it right. It's taken several decades for us to get to this stage, and let's get it right.

So, Mr. Speaker, as I said from our side here, I want to take a minute and I want to step back and talk a bit about the history

of labour in Saskatchewan. And I do find this very interesting, and I know that a few people over on the other side find the history of our province fascinating. And it's always a good thing if we can take a look and say, so how did we end up where we are? How did we evolve to this? And there is an excellent book out there called *On the Side of the People, a History of Labour in Saskatchewan*. And this was written by Jim Warren and Kathleen Carlisle, and it was written in 2005 as part of the centennial projects — so many centennial projects that were done across Saskatchewan and from different perspectives. And it was a way to reflect back on what was our collective history. How did we achieve so much in our first 100 years as a province?

And of course it would be misleading to think it was just 100 years. Obviously we need to honour and respect and think about the contributions of the First Nations and the Métis people. And in fact, as I've said to many people, our first labour dispute in many ways was something, and I believe it was in the late 1700s, 1777, when the first organized labour dispute happened in Saskatchewan, in the Saskatchewan territories. And it was actually in Cumberland House where the First Nations and the Scots organized against the Hudson Bay Company because they felt that they were being treated unfairly. And so that was our first workplace action. It was a stoppage where people thought that they weren't going to work for their bosses until they got treated fairly. And of course it was very brave to do because it's not an easy, it was not an easy lifestyle working in the fur trade industry.

And so that was interesting. Of course then the book goes on and talks more about some of the things in the early 1800s, the mid-1800s, and of course the railroaders of course were the first, were among the first organized workers to come. And it's a fascinating history. And of course, and John A. Macdonald introducing the first trade union Act recognizing the right of workers to organize. And ironically, Mr. Deputy Speaker, *The Trade Union Act* that he called for I believe took out the offence, that it was no longer a criminal offence to belong to a union. But it still had problems if you belonged to a union. So it was really quite interesting.

But the section that I want to focus on if I may, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that this government seems to be quite infatuated, and I know this Premier is quite infatuated with Premier Walter Scott. And it really came to be a bit of a neat thing when I learned that Walter Scott of course was a strong trade unionist in his own way. He belonged to the international typesetters union. And so for Walter Scott, unions were very, very important. Labour was very, very important. And it was important because it meant that working people could make ends meet, and in fact there was a way of creating a middle class.

And we've seen that particularly over the course of the 20th century, and it's kind of lost its way in the last decade or so, but governments realized that you need to do something to protect the middle class — the people who earn the basic income so they can meet their basic needs, but yet have something more for their families so their kids can go to school or participate in their communities, make their communities a much better, healthy, vibrant place to be.

But I just want to talk about this because you know, Mr. Deputy

Speaker, we just celebrated the centennial of this building last fall. And it's interesting that in fact we'll see a statue be raised in the near future, I'm not sure, about Walter Scott. And I think it's interesting to reflect a little bit about Walter Scott. So I'm just going to read this section, and I think you will find it interesting. And the subtitle is "A Friend in the Premier's Office."

One 1908 liberal election ad read, "Vote for Scott and Boost the Union Label." Nor was this just an empty slogan. The Scott Liberals met a number of labour's legislative demands during the boom. These included a prohibition on the use of prison labour, the fair wage clause in the legislative building contract [so that's very important because when we were building this there had to be a fair wage contract clause], and the creation of the Bureau of Labour.

So as Walter Scott, who created the first Bureau of Labour here, that's very important.

As well, *The Mechanics' Lien Act*, *The Woodsmen's Lien Act*, *The Thresher Employees' Act* were all designed to give some assurance that owed wages would be a first obligation on employers.

And in fact, it was interesting, during question period today we had somebody come here with that very same issue because he wasn't being paid by an agent of the government. Here we are 106 years later dealing with that same issue, making sure people get paid — get paid. Very interesting.

There were other gains. In 1909, the unionists got their Act for the protection of persons employed in factories (which applied only to women and children). The Act limited the work day for women to ten hours [it's interesting that we're going up to 10 hours now but limited to 10 hours] and prohibited the hiring of children under fourteen years of age. [And of course it was this government who lowered the age of employment pending passing of certain tests.] Safety regulations were developed for electrical workers, as well as a law requiring proper scaffolding on construction jobs. The union label was required on government printing.

Which I find very interesting, Mr. Speaker, because we often refer to that union label as the union bug. And I think it's really critical. It's very interesting that Walter Scott was the one who put that forward.

The fair wage system was extended to railway construction and other operations where provincial financing was involved. Employment agencies were required to be licensed and fee splitting between such agents and company managers was prohibited. The labour councils were also on-side with the government decision to take an ownership stake in the provincial telephone system.

So there I see the idea of our Crown systems. But:

Not all the victories were so laudable. In response to labour's antipathy towards Asian immigrants and the

racism common at the time, it became illegal under a provincial statute for a white woman to work in any business owned or managed by any "Japanese, Chinaman or other oriental person." This piece of legislation [formally was] known as *The Female Employment Act*, odious by today's standards, was actually in force during the first decades of the 20th century. Surprisingly, it survived in statute books until 1969, when the Thatcher government got rid of it in conjunction with the creation of *The Labour Standards Act*.

As well, Mr. Deputy Speaker:

In 1911, the Scott government created one of Canada's earliest workers' compensation schemes. The new Workman's Compensation Act didn't eliminate civil action suits. An employee could still take a chance, hire a lawyer, and sue an employer for damages. If, as was usually the case, the employee couldn't prove the financial loss due to the accident was entirely due to employer negligence, he or she could ask for compensation under the Act.

[16:15]

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just want to put that out there because I think it's interesting to see where we've come since 1908 when the first Bureau of Labour was created, and this building was being built. And the idea of people being able to get their wages that they were owed, whether they were on a threshing crew, or a crew, a construction crew, as we were dealing with today during question period. So it's very interesting that we have this kind of situation.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think it's also interesting to take a look at what's happening federally. You know, we've all heard about the private members bills, particularly Bill C-377. And it's very interesting because this is essentially the one that talks about how trade unions spend their money and the role that Canada Revenue Agency will have in following that. And there's a whole mix of opinions, but of course the Harper government seems bent on making that happen. And they're doing it in unusual ways, typical ways that you would not see done in parliament. And now we see that it's coming out as private member bills. And we see that there will be even more of this kind of thing happening.

But I do want to talk about this because I think it's interesting that the other side realizes this is not just an NDP or a liberal idea, that there's concerns about this, as I've said with Walter Scott that in fact he was a strong liberal and thought it was the right thing to do to support labour.

This one talks about Hugh Segal and his view about Bill C-377 and how he speaks out against the Bill:

Hugh Segal, Conservative Senator and former advisor to Premier Bill Davis and Prime Minister Mulroney, has spoken out in defence of trade union rights and against Bill C-377 . . .

Senator Segal explained that Bill C-377 is "bad legislation, bad public policy and a diminution of both the

order and the freedom that should exist in any democratic, pluralist and mixed-market society.”

He goes on to say that he believes that “society prospers when different views about the public agenda, on the left and right, are advanced by different groups, individuals and interests. Debate between opposing groups in this chamber, in the other place and in broader society is the essence of democracy. Limiting that debate as to scope and breadth is never in the long-term interest of a free and orderly society.”

He goes on to say:

At one point Segal says that [and I quote] “this bill is about a nanny state; it has an anti-labour bias running rampant; and it diminishes the imperative of free speech, freedom of assembly, and free collective bargaining.”

He goes on to say:

The bill before us today, as well as right-to-work legislation that is being proposed in the other place as a private member’s bill, is not who we are as Canadians. It is time this chamber said so.

And he was of course referring to the Senate. And I think it’s great that he can stand up and say that and support labour. So it’s not just a New Democratic value — but it is a strong value of ours — that we support many of the labour ideals and values. But it’s also one that Liberals — in fact, Conservatives — have. And we know that because it really does coincide. It really runs deep with what we believe our community should be in terms of our core values.

And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think with all of that being said, it really adds more intrigue to, so why are we doing this? What is the rush? Why not get it right? Why not take the time and do a piece of legislation that we feel will stand the test of time, that will have integrity, that can survive scrutiny, that we won’t see in the courts like we have with the essential services piece of legislation and other pieces of legislation?

But we are particularly concerned that, as I’ve said, that if we do not learn from history, we are doomed to repeat it. And I am very worried that in many ways that is what’s going to happen with this piece of legislation, that there’s just too many problems with it. Simply put, there’s just too many problems, and we’re going to see it come back to the House or we’re going to see it ended up in the court. And we have some real, real concerns about it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to take a minute and share with you some other ideas of how this should have been done. There was a review done of the federal labour standards. This is a report called *Fairness at Work: Federal Labour Standards for the 21st Century*. And it was the review . . . And you can see this, even by the book, it’s a quality piece of work.

And it was interesting, the minister and I had a chance to talk about Bill 85 at the U of S [University of Saskatchewan], the law forum there. And we found it very interesting. And one of the people who got up and actually was also on the forum was

one of the people who participated in the writing of this. And I think it was very . . . she was quite proud that many of us still look at this piece of work and think of it as something that we should all take some time and do it right.

Now her name is Daphne Taras. And she was one of the expert advisors; there was four. But the thing is what you do is — four advisors to Harry Arthurs and his work as commissioner on the Federal Labour Standards Review — you do take the time to get it right. You do make sure that you’re proud of the work and that it will stand the test of time. In 10 or 20 or 40 years you look back and say, that was a good piece of work. That was very thoughtful. It was very thorough. It anticipated some of the issues that we’ll see into the future and it solved some of the problems that we had in the past, but it preserved the balance of power that we have in Saskatchewan because that’s what’s got us to where we are today. That’s what’s got us . . . And so one of the, I won’t go through the whole book, but I do want to talk about a couple of the principles.

He started out by saying, I want to set the stage by having key principles about what really matters. What are our principles? We’re going to take a principled approach to this and there is a way of doing that. Now this may be foreign to this government to have a principled approach to the kind of work that they do, but this was something that was very important to Harry Arthurs and was well-received. And I think that it’s something that we should take a minute to reflect on before we go too far further with this. And the first fundamental principle he had was principle one, decency at work, and I quote:

Labour standards should ensure that no matter how limited his or her bargaining power, no worker in the federal jurisdiction is offered, accepts or works under conditions that Canadians would not regard as “decent.” No worker should therefore receive a wage that is insufficient to live on; be deprived of the payment of wages or benefits to which they are entitled; be subject to coercion, discrimination, indignity or unwarranted danger in the workplace; or be required to work so many hours that he or she is effectively denied a personal or civic life.

Isn’t that a worthwhile goal or principle that we should really strive to do our legislation on? I think that’s just a fundamental principle of who we are as Canadians. Now we could talk about that and translate it into, from labour standards to labour, our workplace, that type of thing, but I think it’s something that we should really reflect on. What is the principle or principles that were driving the consultation paper that caused us to overhaul 12 pieces of legislation like that? I think that’s really important.

Interestingly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the second principle that he talked about was the market economy. So he reflects on the fact that this is a kind of economy we have in Canada. And I’ll quote that: principle two, the market economy:

Labour standards ought — so far as possible — to advance the decency principle in ways that allow workers to contribute to, and benefit from, the success of Canada’s market economy. Because successful enterprises are better able to treat workers decently, labour standards should support and, if possible enhance, the competitiveness and adaptability of enterprises.

So here you have I think a very important one, I think that most businesses would say makes sense. We want to create an environment where workers are treated in a decent fashion, safety, and fairness but we don't want to impede our market economy because that's where jobs are created, and that's very, very important. So this can be a balance. This can be achieved. And it's an important area that we think more about.

And so he goes on. It talks about flexicurity, a level playing field, the workplace bargain, and inclusion and integration which really talks about human rights. And I think that's a key, key aspect of it because as we know in our communities today, human rights, the meaning of human rights is expanding to honour and respect more diversity and the challenges that people face in our communities. And I think this is important.

In fact I'll read . . . This is principle no. 6:

The decency principle requires that labour standards be inclusive, in the sense that all workers should enjoy in the workplace the full benefits accorded them by human rights legislation. The inclusion principle, in turn, requires that all workers enjoy like opportunities to integrate their working lives with their personal, family, cultural and civic lives in a balanced fashion.

I think that's huge, Mr. Speaker, that we think in those terms. And that really speaks to a higher level of thinking that I think we should be aiming for when we talk about this kind of legislation.

And principle 7, respect for international obligations, and we saw that. We saw huge problems with essential services that did not respect the International Labour Organization and its standards for consultation. And that was where things started going off the rails around essential services legislation — when it was clear that we were not in accordance with international labour law.

So when we talk about appropriate uses of public resources, high level of compliance, how we want to make sure . . . And this is a question that I've had about the budget part. When we want to ensure high level of compliance, how is it that there doesn't seem to be — and we will dig into this — any extra funds or resources to ensure such a bill like this size is actually implemented? Can it be implemented with the resources that the ministry has set aside for it?

Now we know last year when it said it could do everything and didn't have to have any extra resources, it actually spent 700,000 more dollars. How is it that we're going to see this implemented and that there's actually going to be a high level of compliance?

And regulatory . . . There's some flexibility, talking about . . . You know, we have to deal with the realities of employment in diverse circumstances.

And clarity: "Labour [laws] . . . should be clearly stated, and workers and employers should have easy access to accurate and understandable information concerning their rights and responsibilities."

And I want to end this part with principle 12, circumspection, which I think is huge. The last principle he says is, and I quote:

Labour standards should be designed and implemented so as to avoid unintended harm to workers who are the intended beneficiaries of the legislation, and to avoid unnecessary costs and inconvenience for employers who are intended to be regulated by it.

Where standards seek to alter established practices, expectations or cost structures in a significant way, it may sometimes be appropriate to introduce changes gradually so as to permit necessary adjustments in management personnel practices, and to minimize negative impacts on firms and workers.

So they're talking about being realistic, but making sure that if you're changing the legislation here, that you are actually changing it in a positive way but respecting the idea of the balance of power, that you don't upset the balance of power. We've created a province, a provincial economy that's so strong, but yet I think that there is a real risk, a real risk that we may have some unintended consequences and we will see this piece of legislation either being challenged or bringing back with several pieces of amendments or in the courts. The implementation plan is unclear. Is there resources? How will it be implemented when regulations aren't even clear? So we have some real problems with this, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

[16:30]

Now and as I said, you know, I do want to just talk briefly about some of the concerns that we have, but it is not the exhaustive list. It is clearly not the exhaustive list because it's impossible to have that exhaustive list because of the shortness, how tight this reference and examination of this bill over the short three months, that we got it in December and it began again in March. And we're seeing more and as we speak, we get more and more information about concerns that we should have or the meaning of this, the meaning of that, and so . . . But I do want to highlight some of the concerns we have and some of the other concerns that we've raised.

So first of all, we are really concerned about the overtime and the end of the eight-hour workday as we know. And the minister will assure us that it's not really the end, that in fact people can work eight hours, and I suppose they could work six hours as well. But we do now make it a lot easier to have a four times 10-hour day, and that's our workweek now. The 10-hour day is back, and it's much easier to do and that's a real problem. And we see that there are those employers who are celebrating that as a victory, that they now see it is a 10-hour workday and that there's no overtime for that. There's simply no overtime for that unless you get over the 40 hour. But then we're not clear about the 44-hour implication. We'll have to wait to ask questions on that. So we have some real concerns about the overtime and the end of the eight-hour day. We think this is really, really sad that this has happened in this way.

As well, Mr. Speaker, we have deep concerns, we have deep concerns about the minimum wage. Now the minister has said that he will index it. Three months has passed. We have not seen any indication of any of the regulations that show that it

will actually be indexed. We believe the indexing should be in the legislation because it's there that it will be solid, it will be fixed, and we can count on raises every year. When it's in regulation that can be changed, and we won't see those regulations. In fact the regulations won't be debatable in this House because we don't debate regulations. They are passed by cabinet, advertised in the *Gazette*.

Now they may, and I do hope the minister does, take the time to get some feedback on the minimum wage regulations. But we have some concerns about that. First of all, I want to say that I think that the indexing should be in the legislation, not in the regulation.

But the other issue that I am very worried about is the minimum call-out. And I raise that as a flag because I think that it's one that many people don't really understand, that there's a minimum number of hours that you can be called out for and whether . . . Right now it's the equivalent of three times the minimum wage. So if you are paid \$15 an hour, then you essentially get paid for two hours, because that's the equivalent to three hours at minimum wage. But I am very interested to see what happens around minimum call-out.

And the other issue about minimum call-out is around university students and whether they will be disqualified for being . . . qualifying for minimum call-out. Up to 2007, the regulations were unclear about whether university students were high school students and fell in that category because they don't qualify for minimum call-out, or were they in the category that did qualify? So we're waiting to see. We saw the letter from the University of Saskatchewan that said that they think the minimum call-out should be cancelled for university students. We were very, very, very disappointed about that because we think that's important for university students who are trying to make ends meet. And when they go to a restaurant for their call and they should expect to get three hours, and they may only get one hour, I don't know. It'll be interesting to see what happens with the regulation. This could have a huge impact, that instead of . . . You think you're going to get your \$30 for going to work; you find out you get \$10. Not only that, then your tips may be based on your hours as well, and you get two-thirds less, ending up getting one-third. So there's some real changes in that.

Mr. Speaker, I am very, very concerned about the end of the weekend. I have to say that the disappearance of the word Sunday in the legislation is worrisome. The minister has said that this tends to be the way in other provinces. We found that's not the case, and in fact it's split, that many provinces have retained Sunday within their labour standards. And so now we can potentially have, you get two days off if you meet certain criteria, but it doesn't have to be Sunday. And the old Act said, Sunday wherever possible. We think that upsets the work-life balance. We know kids are at home on the weekend. This could have huge implications. And we're disappointed that this is an erosion of benefits for those people who are working and just expect to have Saturday and Sunday off. And I think that we could have a much more proactive response to this, and I'm deeply concerned about that, Mr. Speaker.

I'm concerned about some of the issues around the impact that this has on labour, organized labour, particularly around

supervisory employee and the splitting of bargaining units and the impact this will have not only in the workplace itself, where you start . . . when people who had . . . You know, they identify. I think of myself as a teacher but I was an administrator. I would have hated to have been pulled out of my staff. I think that's really unfair to have that circumstance happen. And so I worry about that, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And this is something that they're talking about in a lot of public sector offices, and the impact that will have. The impact that will have actually on the cost of bargaining will be huge too. And I think this is a slippery slope. And it's one of those things, be careful what you wish for because this could cost a lot more money because you're bargaining twice as much and with smaller unions. I think this could be much more complicated than this government has thought through. So we have some real, real concerns about that.

And of course the accountability piece. I've always felt that unions were accountable to their members and had processes in place that worked and that there were ways of addressing concerns within unions with the Labour Relations Board, that if you had a problem you could . . . Your needs could be met. And I just think that it's unfortunate that these kind of heavy-handed strategies of this government to put these in this omnibus bill gets to be a real problem.

And so we have real specific concerns about this, the public holiday swaps. As I said, the 44 . . . Now the 44-hour workweek, what does that mean? Meal breaks, layoffs, a new director of employment standards, a new position created there. We have some real concerns about that. So, Mr. Speaker, this is a real problem.

And you know, the other issue, and when I talked about the Arthurs report, talked about clarity. And you know, when you look at this bill and you try to read through it and, you know, we've had people try to read through it and they've tried to use the concordance that the government has, but you know, when I look at this, you know how many times employee is defined? There are at least four different definitions of employee in this bill.

Now interestingly an employee in the employment standards are called employees, but in occupational health and safety, they're called workers. So how does this work that the bill adds clarity to the discussion? And so in the sense what you're really ending to have to do and this is, you know, one hand they say it's great to have this all together. In this day of technology, you could have it all together. You have it on your tablet or your iPad or whatever. You could have it in the same binder, just have dividers, and then you have them pretty much like what you have now. So we're not sure what the game is here to have one big Act. And of course the issue will be when it needs to be opened up, because then you actually open up the whole bill.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have some real concerns about this. And I did want to raise . . . You know, in one hand, I talk about those big picture ones, and many of the unions and other organizations have identified their top 10 or top 20, but the real issue is . . . The devil's in the details. The devil's in the details, because we don't know what the implications are until they're tested in court or in Labour Relations Board, and lawyers have

to push this, this scrutiny, and it becomes a real problem. What does it really mean? And what does it mean when the language has changed? And what does it mean when you're called an employee under the employee standards Act but a worker under occupational health and safety? Why the different terminology? What's the implication there? So we have some real concerns and I think this is very, very important. But the devil's going to be in the details.

But I do want to talk just briefly about one group that was left out from the discussion. That was farmers. You know and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when you were . . . If I may say you were critic of Labour at one point, and you know that on April 28th we'll be reading the names of the people who were injured or who died at work and unfortunately . . . There are some groups who are not part of that group. The two groups that I'm referring to is, one is teachers. Teachers will not be listed. And of course we don't know how many teachers have died at work, whether, you know, whether through heart attack or different things that happened at work. But also through, particularly what we've seen in the States but it's happened here in Canada, where you have violence in our schools. And I think about what happened in Massachusetts last December with the shootings, and teachers have died there. I think that we need to think more about this.

The other group that we need to talk a little bit about are farm workers. What's happening with farm workers? When I was Minister of Labour — but I probably would think this has been raised many times before — that actually farm workers weren't recognized on the Day of Mourning. And that was really unfortunate because I think farm workers who have died in their workplace should be recognized, and for some reason they're not. And the reason given is because the day . . . The people who are, whose names are honoured on April 28th are provided by Workers' Compensation Board and it's those people. But it could be expanded. And I can't see why not, why we couldn't expand it to farm workers.

But what's interesting — and you would see this more than I would because you have a rural riding and I have an urban riding — but the nature, the change of the workplace in our farms and what's happening there. Are we doing all that we can to make sure that they're safe? And as well, as we see new employees, to make sure that they're treated as fairly as they can be. Now this is a question I can't really answer very well, but I do think it's a question worth exploring. And I think it's very important that we take some time to think about that. So I find it really disappointing actually that we didn't have that discussion, that we didn't have that consultation around farm workers. And I think that this is an important one.

And the other group that we didn't really talk a lot about was temporary foreign workers. Now there is another bill before the House, I believe it is Bill 53 or 83 . . . I believe 83, the temporary . . . Yes, it talks about temporary or foreign workers, a big factor in our workplaces today. And we want to make sure they're treated fairly and with respect and that safety . . . That when they come to our country that in fact that we live up to our reputation of being a fair and safe place to come and work. That they're not coming here to be exploited, and they're not coming here to do things that others would not do. And I think, Mr. Speaker, we have a huge responsibility there.

So I'm curious about why temporary or foreign workers are not included in this. In fact we have a separate bill that deals with their concerns. I would think that they would be part of this omnibus legislation, but clearly they are a glaring omission and I think that they should have been considered part of this.

So, Mr. Speaker, I know that before I wrap up, I want to acknowledge the kind of work that my colleagues have done on this, that they've worked very hard to make sure that all the points of view have been brought forward concerning this piece of legislation.

[16:45]

We're looking forward to having more questions about this. But as I said we clearly think this is a fatally flawed bill, that there should be more time taken before it moves to committee to deal with some of the issues that we've identified, that there is just too many problems with this. It's being rushed forward. There is no need for it to be as rushed as it is. It's causing a lot of concern in the workplace, and as I've read into the record not only from labour, but for business as well, the great unknown is worrisome. And so the fact that it's not very transparent is also very worrisome. And so, Mr. Speaker, we have a lot of, a lot of concerns about this.

We see that this government has been able to step back and do the right thing. When we think about the lobbyist registry, that they're taking some time to get it right. We are a little concerned about the fact that we thought they'd be much quicker, but if they're going to get it right, then that's a reasonable thing. We are concerned about the implementation of this bill, that there's not the resources in the budget for it. We have some real, real grave concerns that when we think that a bill like this will have an impact in a positive way, that in fact we will see nothing positive, that in fact that we will only see the negative of it. And that's really a problem.

And it doesn't make a lot of common sense, does it, Mr. Speaker? The fact that the middle class will be hit by this, our young people could be hurt by this when it comes to minimum wage. We have some real concerns about older folks within their workplaces, that they're used to being treated in a certain way and now the laws are being changed that they may be expected to work a 10-hour day. There's no negotiation on that. That just happens. So, Mr. Speaker, we have some real concerns about this.

You know, the minister's advisory committee has asked, I think, a very important question. What is the rush? What is the rush, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Let's take the time. Hundreds have communicated with this government over the last several weeks to say, let's take the time. Get it right. Let's do it right. And clearly this government is digging in its heels and saying, no, we've got an agenda; we're going to get it done. And we think that's just unfortunate that they're blinding attached to an ideological problem. When you see the pendulum swing too much either way, either way you create problems. And it's important that we preserve, that we preserve this piece of . . . this power balance, that we preserve this power balance, that as we move forward we want to make sure the economy is strong and performs even better that we have the balance. But we don't want to have unintended consequences.

So, Mr. Speaker, those are my points that I have, and clearly we think this bill is fatally flawed. Every day I will call for this bill to be delayed. We think it's important, but our best hope is actually that the bill be withdrawn. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — Is the Assembly ready for the question? The question before the Assembly is the motion by the Minister of Advanced Education that *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* 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.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — 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. Speaker. To the Standing Committee on Human Services.

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

Bill No. 79

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

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise this afternoon and speak to Bill No. 79, *An Act respecting Representation in the Legislative Assembly Act*. Now normally the government likes to put political names on bills, and the political name for this bill would have been the three more MLA Act. And, Mr. Speaker, they didn't put that on there because they know that the public of Saskatchewan are surprised that something like this was brought forward by the government after not a mention of it in the 2011 election.

So, Mr. Speaker, what we have is effectively the description by name of the 61 legislative constituencies and also effectively the adoption of the Constituency Boundaries Commission final report around those particular constituencies. At this stage I want to say thank you to that committee, chaired by Mr. Justice Neil Gabrielson. They took the information and the job that they had, and I think they did a good job with that. But as you can tell from my initial comments, they could have done probably even a better job with reorganizing the boundaries, keeping 58 seats and basically leaving us still in the same position as having the fewest number of constituents per member in Western Canada.

And so, Mr. Speaker, we have this legislation and it spells out all of the constituencies that are here. We know that the net

effect of the report from the Constituency Boundaries Commission was to add two urban ridings and one rural riding. And I think that's been done with a fair bit of discussion and done in a way that is responsible to the legislation that they were working with.

But it still doesn't answer the fundamental question about where did this idea come from. And we know from questions asked in the previous session that it really wasn't on the radar screen of the government until pretty well right at the week or so after the election, and that was the response we got. It's a bit hard to believe that that's what was going on, but that was the response that we got.

And so what is it that requires us to have more legislators in Saskatchewan? We know that it will cost the people of Saskatchewan more money to have more legislators because we all know the kinds of issues that arise. And so I think that the issue of surprise from the Premier on this one is one that he will wear as we move towards the next election.

Now normally when something of this magnitude is introduced to change the rules around how the legislature is elected, normally it would be introduced and maybe even discussed through not just one election but two elections because it gives the people of the province time to give their opinions on how this would work. Obviously we don't have that in this particular situation, and so we will end up probably having that discussion in the next election, and we will see what kind of perspective there is on the particular issue.

Now the other point in the legislation is that some of the traditional names have been changed. And that's not necessarily an issue, but it is always interesting to see how historic names are included in the creation of the boundaries and how the boundaries are changed and actually move people around. I know that in a number of the urban constituencies people have been moved to a new constituency each time that legislation is passed. I think this will have that effect as well. It also takes names and moves them slightly so that people aren't always sure how they connect with the community that they're in. But on that particular issue, I think the commission itself has been very careful about the kinds of names that they've put forward.

The other members of the Boundaries Commission, Mr. Stuart Pollon and Mr. Harry Van Mulligen, were I think quite cognizant of the concerns of individuals across the province. And so I don't have a particular issue with the final report that they ended up with. I do have an issue with the increase in numbers and with the rationale or lack of rationale for doing that.

Mr. Speaker, there are some questions that will probably arise as the matter goes to committee. We know that the previous legislation changed how the population is counted. In creating the constituencies, we think that the method that's been used is fundamentally wrong. We're assuming that at some point we will have a chance as a legislature to correct that. But obviously it probably won't be corrected before the next election, but we'll have a chance to ask a number of those questions as this matter proceeds. And I have no further comments.

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is

a motion by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 79, *The Representation 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.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — 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 on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

Bill No. 53

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

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This is of course a very important piece of legislation, and I think it's important that we take the time to . . . Were you going to adjourn this? . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . What's that? . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . No, I'm not. Okay another minute, okay.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think this is a very important piece of legislation that we have in front of us, and it's important to . . . This is one that I think we need to take some time to think about and make sure we do due diligence with it. And you know, with all these kind of pieces of legislation that we do, it's a matter of age. And so I think . . . that we get this right.

And I know there's various parts of this piece of legislation that are . . . The government is taking some time and thinking it's time to cancel or withdraw pieces of legislation or cancelling . . . the age or relevance anymore. And so there's several pieces of legislation that are part of this. And I think it's important that we get this right. Of course, you know, you often hear me talking about unintended consequences, and I think this may be an example of one of these when we have things that we need to say. But of course the time is just not there for you, so I know we've got other . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . There we go.

The Deputy Speaker: — It now being past the hour of 5 o'clock, thankfully this House will recess till 7 p.m. tonight.

[The Assembly recessed from 17:00 until 19:00.]

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