



FOURTH 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 — Cam Brotén

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
Brotén, Cam	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Campeau, Hon. 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, Hon. Mark	SP	Regina Coronation Park
Doherty, Hon. Kevin	SP	Regina Northeast
Doke, Larry	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
Draude, June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Duncan, Hon. Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
Harpauer, Hon. Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harrison, Hon. Jeremy	SP	Meadow Lake
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Hon. Nancy	SP	Martensville
Hickie, Darryl	SP	Prince Albert Carlton
Hutchinson, Bill	SP	Regina South
Huyghebaert, D.F. (Yogi)	SP	Wood River
Jurgens, Victoria	SP	Prince Albert Northcote
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Krawetz, Hon. Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
Lawrence, Greg	SP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Makowsky, Gene	SP	Regina Dewdney
Marchuk, Russ	SP	Regina Douglas Park
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMorris, Hon. Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Merriman, Paul	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Michelson, Warren	SP	Moose Jaw North
Moe, Hon. Scott	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Morgan, Hon. Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Norris, Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
Ottenbreit, Hon. 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, Randy	SP	Biggar
Wilson, Hon. Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Wyant, Hon. Gordon	SP	Saskatoon Northwest
Vacant		Lloydminster

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the Assembly and to guests, it's an honour to introduce some very special people who have joined us in your gallery. Earlier this day the Minister Responsible for SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] announced the advent of Memorial Cross plates, licence plates with that designation for those that are eligible for this great honour, Mr. Speaker. And we have some that have joined us today in the House who are among the first recipients.

I want to introduce to you and through you, someone that's no stranger to the Assembly, again. The Usher of the Black Rod for all of us, Ben Walsh, is here. Susan and Charles Shipway, Janet Mould, I believe are here, and then Kathleen, Terry, and Sharon Callaghan are here, Mr. Speaker. They are here honouring respectively Master Corporal Jeffrey Walsh, killed in 2006; Sergeant Scott Shipway or Prescott Shipway, killed in 2008; and also Rifleman John Callaghan who served in World War II, Mr. Speaker. Not present are the family, the Memorial Cross recipients for Corporal David Braun who was killed in 2006 in Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, it is a very grateful province that presents this small designation, these licence plates along with what is already the Memorial Cross for these individuals that have joined us today. And if I may just very briefly quote from the famous Bixby letter that the US [United States] President Lincoln wrote to a mother that had lost much in terms of members of her family, sons, to battle. He wrote, and I offer it today through you and through members of the House:

I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.

I ask all members to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly today.

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

Mr. Brotin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the official opposition, I would like to join with the Premier in welcoming these families, Mr. Speaker, who have given so much, who have experienced pain that few of us could relate to or will experience, but who have gone through a great amount of suffering and a great amount of mourning, but also, Mr. Speaker, families who have, and rightfully so, a huge amount of pride for what their children and their loved ones have done and what they have sacrificed.

So on behalf of the official opposition, we once again want to say thank you to these families. And with the advent of the licence plate brought today, Mr. Speaker, when it's looked upon, may it bring a smile to the families' faces and remember the good memories that were shared with their beloved children. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all the members of the legislature, it is my privilege to introduce some guests up in your gallery. Today we have four incredible special athletes: Kelly McRuvie, Jillian Kulpida, Ryan Darmokid, and Tammi Stevens. They're joined by Special Olympics volunteer Barb Fredrickson and Special Olympics staff Jennifer, Chelsea, and Faye.

The Special Olympics movement is a tremendous example of how sport can enhance lives, change attitude, and strengthen communities. It is truly an honour to introduce these athletes and all the volunteers and staff that are in behind them. I ask all the members to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and on behalf of the official opposition, I too would like to welcome these amazing athletes and the coaches and staff that are with them here today.

What you do and the value of the sports program that you're involved in is something that's important to everybody in Saskatchewan. We want to congratulate you for the hard work and would like to welcome you to your Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since 2007 the population of Saskatchewan has risen by more than 120,000. It's my privilege today to introduce one of the newest Saskatchewanians who is with us today: Jacob Dallas Graham. He is the son of Chad Glascock and Jenn Graham who, Mr. Speaker, is well known to all of us as a reporter for Canadian Press.

To Jacob, I would like to say this about your mother. She reads things thoroughly. She remembers them forever, and she can cross-examine like a fine courtroom lawyer. To you, young man, I would suggest that you toe the line, obey curfews. And if she treats you as she treats us, you will not get away with anything.

Seriously, Mr. Speaker, Jenn is a highly regarded, superb reporter, somebody who is very much valued in our province. And I would like to on behalf of all MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly], welcome Jacob and Jenn to their legislature and wish them the very best.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I would like to join with the minister in welcoming Jacob Dallas Graham to the Legislative Assembly.

You know, Mr. Speaker, we each have our individual families that do so much for us and that we love dearly. But for those of us that work in this building, whether we're on government side or opposition side, whether we're at the Clerk's Table or the staff or the press gallery, there is also a larger legislative family. And so it's appropriate that we welcome and recognize an important event like the birth of Jacob. And we want to simply wish Jennifer and Chad all the best as they settle in, and as Jennifer is at home during this year of leave that it would be a wonderful time with her son. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the official opposition, we welcome this new arrival to the province. Thank you.

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

Hon. Mr. Docherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sitting in the west gallery are three representatives that I've met with a little earlier today from the Western Development Museum. And give us a little wave here when I say your name: Ken Azzopardi, the board Chair; Joan Champ, the CEO [chief executive officer]; and Cal Glasman, the CFO [chief financial officer] for the Western Development Museum.

They've got some pretty exciting things on the horizon, and they've done some great work in not only promoting this province but a lot of our histories. And on behalf of this government I thank you for that, and welcome to the legislature today.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Oh there, I can see you now. Want to welcome these individuals from the Western Development Museum to the Legislative Assembly, and in particular Joan Champ who is the head of the Saskatoon Western Development Museum, which is in my riding of Saskatoon Nutana.

And I had the pleasure this summer of going to the threshing demonstration that they host every year at the Western Development Museum. It was a fascinating display of the history of combining in our province, and the grade fours of Saskatoon were very fortunate to be there that day.

The Western Development Museum plays an integral role in the preservation of our history in Saskatchewan, and I congratulate these folks and all their staff for the hard work they do and would like to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the legislature, 25 grade 5 students who are seated in the east gallery. These students are from Ethel Milliken Elementary School in Regina Lakeview, and they're accompanied by their teacher, Ms. Chantel Sebastian as well as chaperones, Ms. Eden

Sampson and Ms. Kailyn Smith. So I would ask all members to welcome them to the legislature. Thank you.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition that calls for greater protection for Saskatchewan citizens from developers defaulting on fixed-price contracts with the Saskatchewan government.

When asked to explain how the government could allow the private developer to back out of a fixed-price contract without any penalties, the Minister of Social Services said, and I quote, "You are assuming that there's these desperate homeless people," showing how disconnected this government is from the realities within our communities.

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

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: cause the government to recognize that there are indeed desperate homeless people in our province and to immediately reverse its policy of now allowing private developers with whom the government has close relationships to default on fixed-price contracts for affordable housing projects.

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

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present petitions on behalf of concerned residents as it relates to the unsafe conditions created by that government on Dewdney Avenue as it relates to heavy-haul truck traffic and their failure to plan appropriately. We call on the government, the petitioners call on the government to immediately take action to ensure safety. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly call on the provincial government to immediately take action as it relates to the unacceptable danger, disturbance, and infrastructure damage caused by the heavy-haul truck traffic on Dewdney Avenue west of the city centre, to ensure the safety and well-being of communities, families, residents, and users; and that those actions and plans should include rerouting the heavy-haul truck traffic, receive provincial funding, and be developed through consultation with the city of Regina, communities, and residents.

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

These petitions today are signed by concerned residents of Regina. I so submit.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to present a

petition condemning this government's dangerous smart meter program. And the people who signed this wish to bring to the attention of the Legislative Assembly the following:

Whereas the government knew about major safety concerns related to its smart meter project; whereas the government ignored those safety concerns and plowed ahead with its program; and whereas the safety of Saskatchewan families was put at significant risk; we, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the provincial government to take responsibility for its failure to act on readily available information about safety concerns with its smart meter program, including through the immediate resignation of the Minister Responsible for SaskPower, and a fully independent inquiry into the concerning chain of events that severely compromised the safety of Saskatchewan families.

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by individuals from Regina and Kelvington, Saskatchewan. I so submit.

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

Mr. Makowsky: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to present a petition for a private bill on behalf of petitioners from Mohyla Institute. The prayer of the petition requests to amend an Act to Mohyla Institute to amend the requirements upon the winding up of the affairs of the corporation. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your honourable Assembly may be pleased to amend an Act respecting Mohyla Institute, being chapter 106 of the Statutes of Saskatchewan 1958, accordingly.

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

The petition is signed by the Chair, Vice-Chair, and executive member of the board of directors of Mohyla Institute, and I'm pleased to present it on their behalf.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Anniversary of Landmark Ruling

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Ten years ago today, Saskatchewan's Court of Queen's Bench declared that marriage is the "lawful union of two persons to the exclusion of all others." This landmark ruling, brought on behalf of five couples who challenged the law, finally allowed the legal marriage of same-sex partners in this province. It was an exciting day that showed Saskatchewan is a place where equal rights are valued.

Unfortunately, six years later this government felt that the marriage commissioner should be able to refuse a same-sex marriage on religious grounds and referred their draft legislation to the courts. The Court of Appeal disagreed and had this to say about the government's draft bill:

The potential for psychological harm . . . to individual same-sex couples . . . is . . . significant.

More important, however, is the affront to dignity, and the perpetuation of social and political prejudice and negative stereo-typing that such refusals would cause. Furthermore, even if the risk of actual refusal were minimal, knowing that legislation would legitimize such discrimination is itself an affront to the dignity and worth of homosexual individuals. History has established and jurisprudence has confirmed the extreme vulnerability of this group to discrimination and even hatred.

There is more work to be done. We still need changes to the Human Rights Code in order to provide better protection for all Saskatchewan residents through the inclusion of the terms gender identity and gender expression as prohibited grounds for discrimination. But, Mr. Speaker, today we celebrate this landmark ruling 10 years ago and vow to continue the equality struggles for the LGBT [lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender] community.

[13:45]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Wood River.

Memorial Cross Recipients Receive Commemorative Licence Plates

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today, along with the Minister Responsible for SGI and a number of our MLAs, I had the honour of presenting special commemorative licence plates to some very deserving recipients. Our government unveiled and presented the very first of these special plates designed to honour recipients of the Memorial Cross. This licence plate is available to Memorial Cross recipients by contacting SGI.

Mr. Speaker, the Memorial Cross is an award that has been granted since 1919 to the loved ones of Canadian Armed Forces personnel who died in service, or whose death was a result of their service. Ben and Margaret Walsh of Regina each received a Memorial Cross in honour of their son, Master Corporal Jeffrey Walsh, who was killed on August 9, 2006, while serving in Afghanistan.

Susan Shipway from Churchbridge, Saskatchewan was awarded the Memorial Cross after her son, Sergeant Prescott Shipway, was killed in the line of duty on September the 7th, 2008 while on a second tour in Afghanistan.

Mrs. Patty Braun received the Memorial Cross when her son, Corporal David Braun, was killed by a suicide bomber in Kandahar in 2006.

Kathleen Callaghan and her son Terry from Regina each received the Memorial Cross when they lost Rifleman John Callaghan, Kathleen's husband and Terry's father. Rifleman Callaghan served as a medic during World War II. He contracted an illness during his service and later passed away from that illness in July of 2010.

To Mr. and Mrs. Walsh, Mrs. Shipway, Mrs. Braun, and the

Callaghans, our government offers its sincere and heartfelt gratitude to your family members for their ultimate sacrifice in protecting our great nation. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

North Central Lakers in City Finals

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to rise in the House to bring attention to the remarkable achievements of the North Central Lakers, a local team in the Regina Minor Football League.

On Thursday, October 30th, the Lakers played in their first city championship since they were founded eight years ago. Though they lost the game to the Renegades — and my compliments to them — the Lakers have many reasons to celebrate.

The Lakers' coach, Brandon Brooks, spoke about their unique team with the CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] news, saying, "This team is about different guys coming from different parts of the city and establishing a brotherhood. That's what we accomplished this year more than anything, even if we didn't win a trophy." And "I've got guys from all across North Central of different ethnicities. And you know what? We're a beautiful team."

The Lakers represent Saskatchewan at its best, teammates from all different backgrounds coming together to pursue a common goal. They're the embodiment of our province's motto, "from many peoples, strength."

I'm proud to represent the constituency of Regina Elphinstone-Centre where many of these players live, and I'm sure that they are proud of their achievements as well. I hope that all members will join me in congratulating them on their success and wishing them all the best next season. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Special Olympics Saskatchewan

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Later today I, along with several other colleagues, will have the great pleasure of taking part in a soccer match with the members of the Special Olympics Saskatchewan at Mosaic Stadium in Regina.

As a father of a special Olympian, my connection to the athletes, volunteers, coaches, and staff has grown over the years. Mr. Speaker, Special Olympics Saskatchewan has been enriching the lives of people with intellectual disabilities in our province by delivering world-class sport programs in communities across Saskatchewan for over 40 years. They offer programs to children, youth, adults of all ages and abilities. Sport and physical activity programs range from daily training and local competition to high-performance competition on an international stage.

Mr. Speaker, beyond improving and expanding the quality and accessibility of sport to individuals with intellectual disabilities, Special Olympics Saskatchewan strives to change attitudes to

create more inclusive society and strengthen our communities.

Trained coaches and dedicated volunteers help to deliver these programs to our athletes throughout the province. These athletes benefit greatly from the programs, which instill confidence, self-esteem, and other life skills.

Mr. Speaker, I ask members to join me in acknowledging the great work of Special Olympics Saskatchewan, thanking all the dedicated coaches and volunteers, and wishing the Special Olympic athletes continued success. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister.

Achievement in Business Excellence Awards

Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This past Saturday, Yorkton Plumbing & Heating was awarded the Business of the Year award at the 31st annual Achievement in Business Excellence Awards, or ABEX Awards gala. I'm happy to announce that N.L. Construction Inc., also of Yorkton, took home the 2014 ABEX Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce Growth and Expansion Award. The ABEX awards are organized by the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce. Seven hundred and fifty people attended this year's award ceremony which was held at the Delta in Regina.

Justin Yawney, president of Yorkton Plumbing & Heating, accepted his award. The company has experienced continuous growth since it started by Mr. Yawney in 2007. Beginning with just one employee, the company now employs 62 people, who also play a large role in the success of the business. In 2011 Justin Yawney received the ABEX award for Young Entrepreneur of the Year.

N.L. Construction and Yorkton Plumbing & Heating are great examples of the success and growth the people and businesses of Saskatchewan have.

Mr. Speaker, Justin moved to Alberta in the '90s because he could not find work in Saskatchewan, but returned to Saskatchewan in 2007, opened Yorkton Plumbing & Heating, and has been successful ever since. At first the company mainly served the residential market, but has since expanded to the commercial market which now makes up over 70 per cent of his business. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating Yorkton Plumbing & Heating and N.L. Construction Inc. on receiving the ABEX Awards. I wish them both continued success.

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

Family Medicine Residents to Train in Moose Jaw

Mr. Michelson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, in July of this year, four young doctors became the first family medical residents to train in Moose Jaw. Dr. Rob Haver, Heather Konkin, Brenton Janzen, and Amanda Waldner will live in Moose Jaw for the next two years, training in clinics and rotating through a number of specialists including obstetrics, general surgery, and geriatrics.

The University of Saskatchewan College of Medicine recently

expanded the family medical residents training program to allow physicians to train in smaller centres as part of Saskatchewan's distributed medical education initiative. The expanded family medicine residents program is now offered in Saskatoon and Regina as well as Prince Albert, Swift Current, North Battleford, La Ronge, and now in Moose Jaw. More than 430 U of S [University of Saskatchewan] medical residents are currently being trained across the province.

Mr. Speaker, this initiative will help with physician recruitment and retention in smaller and rural communities as doctors are more likely to set up their practices in locations where they've received their training. Residents in smaller centres will benefit from greater opportunities for hands-on experience and one-on-one training than that may be available in larger centres.

It's my pleasure to acknowledge the College of Medicine for their commitment to supporting the health needs of our growing province and to congratulate Moose Jaw's newest doctors in beginning their residency. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Saskatchewan Construction Association Gala

Mr. Parent: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Thursday, October 23rd, I had the privilege to attend the Saskatchewan Construction Association 50th Anniversary and Member Awards Gala. In 1964 representatives from the Saskatoon, Regina, Prince Albert, and Moose Jaw construction associations and members from the Road Builders Association came together to discuss the formation of a provincial association. In 1965 the Federation of Construction Associations was formed with the goal of advocating on behalf of the industry.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Construction Association has been instrumental in acting as a compassionate and integral voice for the industry. Its commitments to its members can only be matched by their fortitude and dedication to growing our province. Mr. Speaker, it has been a pleasure working closely with the Saskatchewan Construction Association, and our government continues to look forward to building upon what has been to date a successful relationship.

Mr. Speaker, honoured at the event for the Lifetime Achievement Award was Mr. Darrell Kincaid, president of Kincaid Interiors Ltd. The Lifetime Achievement Award recognizes an individual whose significant efforts have enhanced growth and development of the association and industry while keeping in focus association priorities and its members. Mr. Kincaid has over 40 years of experience in the construction industry. Kincaid Interiors began in 1974 working in the residential drywalling. Today it focuses mainly in the commercial sphere, offering many interior services.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and all members of this Assembly please join me in congratulating Mr. Kincaid for his Lifetime Achievement Award as well as the Construction Association industry for 50 years of building Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Costs and Benefits of the Lean Initiative

Mr. Brotin: — Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier: does he know what the lean go-team is and how much Saskatchewan people are paying for it?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, it won't be a surprise to any members in the House or anyone that has been watching the Throne Speech debate that our government intends to continue with lean, not just with respect to the health care system, but throughout government where we've seen significant results in terms of reduced times for permitting efficiencies in the Ministry of the Economy with respect to that, Mr. Speaker, where we've seen almost \$60 million saved with respect to the actual leaning out of the health care system and, Mr. Speaker, improved patient experiences, including the elimination of cancellations for certain appointments, Mr. Speaker, the reduction in wait times for emergent care, Mr. Speaker.

We've already saved more than the contract will cost when it comes to an end, which is a total of \$35 million, Mr. Speaker. And it is something we're going to continue with on this side of the House.

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

Mr. Brotin: — Mr. Speaker, the question was whether or not the Premier knows what the lean go-team is, and whether or not he knows how much Saskatchewan people are paying for it.

This government's Health Quality Council has an internal newsletter called *Nemawashi News*. Now, Mr. Speaker, we didn't know what nemawashi meant so we looked it up. It's apparently — surprise — a Japanese term, and it means quietly laying the foundation for a project by gathering support.

This newsletter, Mr. Speaker, is for the kaizen network, and we've obtained a copy of an issue that was sent out just yesterday. It says this, Mr. Speaker: "Fall session of the legislature has begun. Opposition came out swinging. Go-team has not been used yet to address criticisms. This is because the politicians have been speaking to issues."

But the email, Mr. Speaker, doesn't specify what the go-team is, and the audio from the kaizen network conference call that was included with the email also doesn't specify, Mr. Speaker, what the go-team is. So my question, specific question to the Premier: who is on this secretive lean go-team, and what exactly is its mandate?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I do not have at my fingertips the membership of the go-team. And as soon as I have that, I'll certainly provide it to the member who has asked the question, along with an invitation to him.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's very important that the Leader of the Opposition, who has obviously ... who opposes the lean initiative in health care, who opposes the contract — and that's absolutely a fair point of debate in this House; it should be debated — he opposes the specifics around the JBA [John Black and Associates]. I invite him, and I'll go along with him to experience what is experienced by front-line workers in terms of lean, to follow through a project to see what results come, to see how the front-line staff are engaged and hear from them directly, both what they like and what they may not like. Mr. Speaker, I think it is a reasonable, it's a reasonable offer.

We have different positions here in the House. We've pointed to the savings from lean, almost \$60 million. He doesn't believe they're there. We've pointed to improvements in the health care system from the patients' perspective. He doesn't believe they're there, Mr. Speaker. I think one good way perhaps to come together on this, to find out exactly how we can improve it further or who might be right in all of this, is for us to tour together, to experience it together. Will he do that? Will he join me and have an upfront look at what lean is doing in the health care system today?

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

[14:00]

Mr. Brotен: — Mr. Speaker, will the go-team plan it? And will I get my own translator along the way is the question.

Mr. Speaker, I was invited by front-line health care workers to go to lean exercises and guess what, Mr. Speaker. Guess what? Senior health officials didn't allow it to happen because they don't want to see the truth exposed, Mr. Speaker.

Here we know this lean go-team, Mr. Speaker, this government, has spent \$40 million on one US consultant. And a huge amount of that, Mr. Speaker, as we see in the Premier's responses, is about being consumed with and about the optics. We know by John Black's own email to senior health officials that he says he spends 25 per cent of his time dealing with the optics and the politics of this toxic and wasteful contract, Mr. Speaker. But now we know, Mr. Speaker, that this government has a secret, internal go-team team that is waiting to be deployed in order to deal with the optics for this Premier and for this government.

My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the Premier: how much time, how many staff members are devoted, how many dollars are devoted to this lean go-team?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. With respect to the lean initiative in the health system and the contract with JBA, we've seen, Mr. Speaker, improvements in inventory management with respect to vaccine products — 1.3 million in savings. Savings from a range of other initiatives around inventory — 4.8 million saved in lean events. Sixty million saved on the long-term care centre that's going to be built in Swift Current alone. Millions more because of the leaning out of the new hospital in Moose Jaw. Millions more because of the leaning out of the children's hospital. At the

emergency room at RUH [Royal University Hospital] in Saskatoon, we've reduced to zero the number of patients that have been left without being treated, frankly, Mr. Speaker. Mental health addictions appointments had been cancelled.

Mr. Speaker, we obviously don't agree with respect to lean, the Opposition Leader and myself, the Minister of Health. I invite him again, I invite him again to look at lean up close. The health care quality council, the health care quality council has invited the Leader of the Opposition to come check out lean first-hand. He's refused. I'm not sure he's even responded to their letter. Maybe he has; I don't know.

Will he accept their invitation to have a look at lean? We can maybe even go meet the go-team if he wants to do that, Mr. Speaker. I'll accompany him. We'll find out together in terms of the improvements lean is affording, and continue the discussion, having had an upfront look at lean as per the invitation of the health care quality council.

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

Mr. Brotен: — Mr. Speaker, we're getting more of these Premier's notorious go-forward answers here. I was invited by health care workers to go on lean stuff, and guess what? This government didn't allow it to happen, Mr. Speaker, because they want to control, they want to handle everything. For them, Mr. Speaker, it's all about the optics.

There's so much about this government's lean pet project with John Black that does not pass the smell test for Saskatchewan people. It is toxic, Mr. Speaker, and it is wasteful. And the immense amount of time and resources being poured into the optics of this JBA contract are absolutely appalling. The email, Mr. Speaker, talks about the outcomes, talks about the outcomes of John Black workshops, how we can make them sound extra special.

Well, Mr. Speaker, according to John Black's pay schedule, each of these workshops cost \$47,000. My question to the Premier: for \$47,000 a pop, doesn't he think every workshop should be extra special?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding what happened on his previous attempts to tour health care facilities in the province, I make the invitation now to him. Will he come and see lean upfront in the health care system? Yes or no?

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

Mr. Brotен: — Mr. Speaker, I have heard the truth from front-line workers. I have heard the truth, Mr. Speaker, from senior health administrators. I have heard the truth from the Minister of Health who says that the John Black contract isn't even tailored for Saskatchewan's needs, Mr. Speaker.

What we see from this Premier is an attempt at deflection. What we see is his ongoing pursuit about optics and damage control, Mr. Speaker. We know that all they're concerned about with the John Black contract are the optics. They had the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to get out of the contract, but they chose not to,

Mr. Speaker, because they were concerned about the optics. Internal documents have shown that clearly.

Now we have in this email from the go-team, Mr. Speaker, the lean go-team, they are actually hiring, this government is actually hiring a freelance reporter to go around and to try to document and drum up support for their lean pet project. Do you know why? Because for them, Mr. Speaker, there's no cheque that they won't sign when it comes to the optics of lean. They're happy to shovel the millions out the door and we see that today.

My question, Mr. Speaker, is for the Premier: if John Black spends 25 per cent of his time and budget just dealing with the optics, if we have the lean go-team devoting so many internal resources and dollars to this PR [public relations] exercise, why is this Premier plowing ahead with it when all the evidence says it should be scrapped?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like the member to calm down. We know the NDP [New Democratic Party] . . . We've made a lot of mistakes this week when they get a little too ramped up, Mr. Speaker. We saw that from the Leader of the Opposition. We saw that from the member for Nutana. The bottom line is all the evidence shows that lean is delivering results in the health care system. It's providing savings in the health care system. That's what the evidence shows.

With respect to the go-team, the most recent obsession of the Leader of the Opposition, I can offer this information. This is an informal group, I'm told, I'm advised, pulled together by the Health Quality Council — those are the same folks that invited the member to come and have a look at lean and he wouldn't do it — to coordinate opportunities to profile stories of lean progress and successes. Mr. Speaker, there is no cost associated with the group. It's composed of a half a dozen existing staff members from across the province. So now that we know what the go-team is, does he want to come and meet them? Does he want to come and look at lean upfront to find out for himself? Will he take a tour with me? Yes or no?

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

Mr. Brotin: — Mr. Speaker, if the invitation was allowed, Mr. Speaker, if the invitation was allowed from the nurses who asked me to attend their lean events; if, Mr. Speaker, it wasn't filtered through the PR optics, the PR machine of this government, of this Premier; if the exercise was listening to front-line workers, Mr. Speaker, like the nurses who have been told to go into time out rooms, Mr. Speaker, I would go to that event. But we have seen with the track record of this Premier, it's about control. It's about PR, and it's about suppressing the truth. It's not about allowing it to come out.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, technically there wasn't a question in all of that. There was no question. But I'll provide, so I don't know what I should answer, except I'd provide this observation. Based on what we've seen in this House, I would probably advise the Leader of the Opposition to actually let the

deputy leader ask the questions next time when his set is complete, Mr. Speaker.

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

Smart Meter Program

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, even after Sensus 3.2 meters had catastrophic failures, Sensus denied that there was any problems with those meters. Then came along the Sensus 3.3 meters which we learned were physically identical to 3.2 meters. When those meters had catastrophic failures, Sensus again denied there were any problems with those meters. The only thing worse than the pathetic track record of Sensus is this government continuing to trust that manufacturer, Mr. Speaker.

To the Premier: how many times do we need to get burned by this American manufacturer before this government will finally stop trusting Sensus?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, it's true that the minister and I would expect that the accusations were true of me yesterday, that we couldn't upon looking at them, I couldn't tell the difference between the meters, version 3.2 and 3.3. Mr. Speaker, I couldn't do that. But neither, based on what we've seen, could we tell the difference between Lingenfelter 1.0 and 2.0 because, Mr. Speaker, this particular line of questions follows on conduct in question period, Mr. Speaker, where the member for Nutana, supported by the Leader of the Opposition, inferred that the minister said something in committee that he never said, that was said by the officials in answer to a question she never asked.

So the deputy leader and the leader and the member for Nutana will, I think, excuse us on this side of the House if we check all of the facts, Mr. Speaker, before we take them as read by members opposite.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — And I guess it doesn't make an ounce of difference to that Premier that that minister was sitting in committee knowing full well there were safety issues and not clarifying any record, Mr. Speaker. Act like a Premier.

It's interesting because the Philadelphia electrical company PECO learned lessons pretty darn quickly. After Sensus smart meters were lighting on fire on the sides of people's homes in Philadelphia, PECO pulled the meters, ended their contract with Sensus, and switched to a Swiss-made meter instead. But this government took the manufacturer's word, its sales pitch, at its word, and plowed ahead. And even though we've had over 359 failures with these Sensus meters, including at least 18 meters that have burned, this government is proceeding with Sensus.

Again to the Premier: after at least 359 failures, including 18 meters that have burned, why would this government not follow the lead of other jurisdictions and end its relationship with Sensus?

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with respect to all of the technical questions around 3.2 or 3.3 or any of those technical questions, I would just remind the member opposite when he was asked about those kinds of things he said, those are technical questions that politicians wouldn't be in a position to be directing, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we've asked SaskPower officials to be available to take any of those types of questions that are around the whole 3.2, 3.3, the meter socket device that detects whether there's heat in them or not, all of those kinds of things, Mr. Speaker. They can better explain it than anybody in this Assembly possibly can, Mr. Speaker. And we would allow the SaskPower people to do just that if the media has any questions around that.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, nothing more than more hiding from accountability from that minister. This government isn't just continuing its relationship with this failed manufacturing, but this government is actually giving them \$5 million of ratepayers' money for supposed research and development.

So Sensus has delivered us 3.2 version meters. And they ended up being dangerous fire-prone duds, and they had to be ripped off Saskatchewan homes. Then Sensus delivered 3.3 version meters, and not surprisingly those meters also turned out to be dangerous fire-prone duds. And they are now in the process of being ripped off 105,000 Saskatchewan homes.

And now after repeatedly being burned by this American manufacturer, this government is going to give \$5 million to Sensus to help it improve its meters. How on earth is this acceptable to the Premier?

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, here's how this has unfolded right from the very outset. The meters were ordered by the Government of Saskatchewan to be removed back in July. In addition to that, we took steps to immediately start negotiations through SaskPower officials with Sensus to recover all of the money around this, Mr. Speaker.

There was \$24 million that was going to be immediately refunded. There was another amount of money that was going to be refunded to SaskPower if the meters that were developed in the future wouldn't be used. And yes, there was \$5 million that was going to be used for research and development into meters here in Saskatchewan to test this meter and any other meter that we may use in the future with respect to smart meters in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. That is the responsible thing to do to ensure that meters meet the rigorous standards that Saskatchewan has in terms of weather, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, here's the record: first meters, first one's a dud. Second one's a dud, so here's \$5 million? That's this government's record of standing up for Saskatchewan people? It doesn't make any sense.

The SaskPower minister keeps claiming that it's very important for this government to invest in a new sort of technology that can withstand our unique climatic conditions — I guess the wind, rain, a bit of snow. In fact when media asked him why Saskatchewan ratepayers should have to pay for research and development on a new smart meter that can work in Saskatchewan, the SaskPower minister actually said, "Because no one else is doing it." Well perhaps the SaskPower minister has forgotten the briefings he's received about the smart meter program that Saskatoon Light & Power runs, because they use a German-made smart meter and, I understand, report no problems.

To the Premier: does he realize that Saskatoon has the same unique climatic conditions — bit of rain, bit of snow, bit of wind — as the rest of Saskatchewan, and they've been using German-made meters for years? Haven't been reporting problems.

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the test phase that was done at Hanley, Saskatchewan, out of a possible 28,654 metered days, there was an achievement rate of 99.2 per cent achieved, Mr. Speaker. That was significant enough that SaskPower recommended that the meters continue to be used going forward. And that's exactly what transpired, Mr. Speaker.

[14:15]

Subsequent to that, obviously there was a lot of problems with these meters, Mr. Speaker, and, as a result of that, the government made the decision that these meters need to be removed. In addition to that, we also made the decision that if we're ever going to use meters here in Saskatchewan, that they needed to be tested, Mr. Speaker, particularly the Sensus meter and any other meter that might be used in Saskatchewan.

We do have unique climate conditions here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Saskatoon Light & Power does use a different meter, Mr. Speaker. In retrospect, it probably would have been advisable if SaskPower would have done more testing with respect . . . but of course that didn't happen.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, this is ridiculous. Philadelphia abandoned Sensus meters and goes with a Swiss model instead. Saskatoon Light & Power doesn't use Sensus meters and reports no problems with the German model they use. But this government is paying its failed manufacturer to fix its product so that it might possibly work in Saskatchewan.

This government needs to end its relationship with Sensus and it needs to stop putting families at risk. And this government importantly needs to fight to get the \$23 million back from Sensus. To the Premier: why won't he do just that?

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, it's always one standard for the NDP and another standard for everybody else in this

legislature, Mr. Speaker. When asked questions of a technical nature, when asked questions of a technical nature, what did the member opposite say? He said those are technical questions that politicians wouldn't be in a position to be directed, Mr. Speaker. But when it comes to everybody else he has a much greater, different, and completely different standard that he believes everybody else should meet, Mr. Speaker.

Perhaps he should employ that same kind of standard, Mr. Speaker, to some of the failed investments that the NDP made. Hundreds of millions of dollars, Mr. Speaker, no accountability, dragged through court for six years before they finally got to the bottom of it, Mr. Speaker. Not one dime ever recovered of the investment that those members made, Mr. Speaker. That's the track record of that government over there.

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

Provision of Social Housing

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Sask Party candidate in Lloydminster said she doesn't think the government has a role to play in social housing and it should be left up to the private sector. And we already know how the Minister of Social Services feels about housing. She doesn't even think there are desperate, homeless people in our province, and prioritizes her relationship with private developers over the needs of families.

So the Social Services minister probably agrees with the Sask Party candidate in Lloydminster, so my question is to the Premier: does he agree that the government doesn't have a very important role to play in social housing?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for Social Services.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just about an hour ago I spoke to the candidate from Lloydminster and she clarified that she was referring to provincial involvement and land development, Mr. Speaker. But she does recognize and support our government's commitment to social housing to assist with our low-income individuals and families.

As for the remark that the member opposite referenced that I had made some time ago, I was speaking to the reporter about a particular initiative and we were talking about families on the wait-list. And, Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to say that our families on the wait-list in Regina are not homeless. They are all housed. We will make sure that they continue to be housed until an appropriate house is available to them, Mr. Speaker. So that is positive news, although the members opposite don't want to hear any positive news.

Our record, Mr. Speaker, speaks for itself loud and clear. We have invested \$475 million in social housing in our province. That is over 8,300 units.

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

Mr. Forbes: — You know, I appreciate . . . Mr. Speaker, I can imagine the candidate in Lloydminster appreciated the advice on how to spin quotes here from that minister. So for the record, here's the exact quote from the Sask Party candidate in

Lloydminster, and she said this during the debate last night:

When governments get involved in owning land and being the gatekeepers of social housing, we all know things don't work. I think that belongs to private industries for development, and that's where it should stay.

So, Mr. Speaker, many Saskatchewan families and many people in Lloydminster are struggling to get ahead. They're struggling with the rising costs of living, and they're especially struggling with the cost of housing. On this side, we believe there's a role for government in delivering social housing and affordable housing. But that government cares more about its relationship with the private developers than it does about Saskatchewan families.

To the Premier: what will it take for this government to realize that the public sector has a crucial role to play in delivering social and affordable housing?

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, and again our record speaks very loud to our commitment to social housing, including the community of Lloydminster — \$475 million, Mr. Speaker. We will not take advice from the NDP because that is a 480 per cent increase over what the NDP spent in social housing prior to the election.

Vacancy rates are now moving provincially to 3.3 per cent, which is a healthy market vacancy rate, as opposed to when the members opposite were government. When that member was sitting at the cabinet table, the vacancy rate in his city was less than 1 per cent. And what did he choose to do when he had the opportunity to make decisions, Mr. Speaker? Nothing. He didn't even recognize there was an issue in housing. Mr. Speaker, I will take our commitment to social housing over what the NDP did any day of the week.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for Immigration.

Swift Current to Host Women's World Curling Championship

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise with pleasure today to inform the Legislative Assembly about some exciting news that will have a strong economic impact on our province and the city of Swift Current. The city of Swift Current has once again been awarded the 2016 Ford Women's World Curling Championship. This marks the second time that Swift Current has been chosen to host this event and the third time that world women's championships have been played right here in Saskatchewan. This event gives us the opportunity to showcase Saskatchewan on a world stage. As well, this event will bring people from across the province, the country, and the world to watch this world-class event.

Saskatchewan has a strong legacy of supporting these events, with volunteers and fans helping to make this possible. Tourism Saskatchewan has a sponsorship agreement with the Ford Women's World Curling Championship for \$150,000. Through

this sponsorship, Tourism Saskatchewan will receive in-ice logos, television broadcast, and social media benefits.

This sponsorship agreement is part of Tourism Saskatchewan's event hosting strategy. The event hosting strategy looks to make Saskatchewan a preferred destination for local, national, and international events. This hosting strategy is part of a 2012 Saskatchewan plan for growth, vision 2020 and beyond. Swift Current hosted this event in 2010 and had attendance of 52,000 people with an economic benefit between 9 and \$10 million. This time we're estimating the economic benefit to be between 10 and \$12 million, with hotel, food, food service, retail sales, and transportation.

It's events like these that show that we have a strong Saskatchewan, but not just shows that we can host international events, but Saskatchewan is the best place to live, work, and raise a family. I ask all members to congratulate the city of Swift Current, the organizing committee, and the Swift Current Curling Club for being awarded this very prestigious event.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to congratulate the city of Swift Current on being a successful choice for hosting the 2016 Ford Women's World Curling Championship. Certainly a very exciting event, and I'm very pleased to see it being held in Saskatchewan and in the city of Swift Current.

Certainly we all know the importance of the curling rink. Anybody who grew up on the farm or in a small town knows that curling is really the heartbeat of a lot of communities here in Saskatchewan. And certainly with a thriving sport in every city and every community in Saskatchewan, it's a great thing to see these kinds of events coming.

The minister spoke about the economic benefit that this type of event brings, and we're very pleased to see the government recognize economic benefit of this type of event. It's unfortunate when we see what happened to the film industry. They didn't see the same kind of benefit, an economic benefit that the film industry brought to Saskatchewan. Certainly Tourism Saskatchewan recognized that when they supported the film *WolfCop* this year, which made a lot of sense to see those kinds of spin-offs and the economic spin-offs that are so important to the people of Saskatchewan and so important to the use of the world-class sound stage that we have here in Regina.

But at any rate we are glad to see the government recognize the economic impact of curling and certainly the work that Tourism Saskatchewan is doing. So we look forward to this event. And all I can say right now, Mr. Speaker, is hurry hard.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Cox: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the

answer to questions 42 through 60.

The Speaker: — The Government Whip has tabled responses to questions 42 through 60.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 144 — *The Victims of Domestic Violence Amendment Act, 2014*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of *The Victims of Domestic Violence Amendment Act, 2014*. Members will recall that Saskatchewan was the first province in Canada to introduce victims of domestic violence legislation back in 1994. Since then this Act has served as a successful model throughout Canada for emergency protection order legislation.

Mr. Speaker, in broad terms the purpose of this Act is to provide an additional tool to a responding police officer to separate individuals who represent an imminent risk of injury to each other. It's critical to the functionality of the Act that police and victims are able to immediately seek an emergency intervention order by telephone.

This Act strikes a balance between the risk to an individual who fears violence and the procedural rights of the respondent. The operational success of this legislation has been in providing a tool to the police and to shelter workers that allow them to provide an immediate response to calls for assistance without permanently affecting any status or legal rights of the respondent.

Mr. Speaker, as several other provinces have subsequently implemented similar legislation, additional matters have been addressed in their Acts that now merit consideration in our province. These changes in the bill provide for an incremental increase in scope of the application of the Act and clarification of when the Act should apply to a particular situation. It also provides for procedural changes to address concerns that have been identified by the victims services branch in their ongoing operations under this Act.

Mr. Speaker, these amendments would first change the name of the Act to *The Victims of Interpersonal Violence Act* which will promote that the Act should be considered by victims and the police in a variety of circumstances beyond the traditional domestic scenario in order to protect a broader range of victims and of violence. It will extend the scope of the application of the Act to caregiving relationships regardless of cohabitation. It will modernize the Act to provide prohibitions on electronic contact between parties. It will expand the definition to include harassment and deprivation of necessities within the scope of prohibited interpersonal violence.

It will broaden the scope of factors that the Justice of the Peace may take into account when granting an emergency intervention order. This includes consideration of past contacts by the respondent with other family members, as well as immediate

circumstances with the respondent such as recent release from jail or being fired from a job.

It will list matters that shall not preclude an order being granted, such as the absence of criminal charges or the victim having previously returned to the relationship. It will clarify the non-contact provisions for emergency intervention orders to include prohibiting contacts at schools and workplaces of the victim and family members. And, Mr. Speaker, it will update the victim's assistance order provisions to make corresponding changes to those being made to emergency intervention orders.

Mr. Speaker, violence of any form in our province is unacceptable. Unfortunately we realize that violent incidents do occur and that's why it's important that we continue to be leaders in offering additional supports for the victims of violence. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to move second reading of *The Victims of Domestic Violence Amendment Act, 2014*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Minister of Justice has moved that Bill No. 144, *The Victims of Domestic Violence Amendment Act, 2014* be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to of course stand in my place again today and give our initial comments on this particular bill, Bill 144, *The Victims of Domestic Violence Act*, Mr. Speaker.

There's no question on this side of the Assembly: it's really, really important that we find every way and means in which we can strengthen our family and protect those that we love. This is obviously a statement that many, many people in Saskatchewan obviously have shared for many, many years.

[14:30]

And certainly from our perspective as an opposition, we want to be able to ensure that the police are able to do their job to protect those that may be threatened or those that they feel might become threatened at a later stage of a problem. And, Mr. Speaker, that is something that obviously we within the opposition want to pay very, very close attention to.

Obviously, Mr. Speaker, there are a number of issues that we want to find out. I don't think that the opposition themselves are going to be opposing anything that protects families better. That's obviously the end goal here.

There is certainly a number of questions we have, preliminary questions as to what is meant when he had the name changed from domestic to interpersonal. Obviously the minister alluded to it a bit in terms of expanding the extended family situation that has occurred from time to time in these situations. So there is . . . And we're assuming that interpersonal is expanding the definition of people that are impacted by these unfortunate domestic events.

It's obviously very important, Mr. Speaker, that you look at ways and means that the communication in the instance of a dispute, that anything to protect the victim and to empower the police, to put the proper measures in place, whether it's electronic communication, Mr. Speaker, prohibiting school

contact, these are some of the valuable tools that we think will also add to the protection of the victim. And what's really important, Mr. Speaker, is to ensure that there is the means and the language necessary to make sure that the victims are protected and that they are certainly afforded as many rights as possible.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what we want to make sure is that, again as I mentioned at the outset, we want to know questions like what is meant in terms of the expansion of the types of families. We want to know why is it a requirement for the parties to have to live together, you know. This is one of the things that we have to find out if there's a complicated arrangement, Mr. Speaker. These are some of the issues that we have to certainly ask of the bill itself. And as I said at the outset, nobody on this side of the Assembly is going to be argumentative at ways and means in which we can empower the police and of course, Mr. Speaker, protect the innocent people as best we can.

So all the questions we have, who will benefit from the changes? We want to make sure that there's a lot of good benefit for the victims. Is there a particular case that this bill would help or a series of cases that this bill would help? We wouldn't mind asking those questions. As well as the amendments: like what consultation did the government undertake to achieve or to ask for the changes to the Act? And these are some of the things that are really important.

And the biggest thing is, what type of family members were asking for this? Was it the parents? Was it the grandparents? Was it the children? Was it in concert with the police? Was there some evidence-based issues within the Justice department that suggested this bill would be the appropriate bill to go forward with? Certainly again the biggest question we have is the name change of domestic to interpersonal. We need more information and clarification on that, Mr. Speaker.

And certainly I think it's really, really important that, as I said at the outset, when you have all of these different living arrangements, if you will, because many people . . . There's a lot of couch surfing. Some people may live in separate units but still have a relationship, Mr. Speaker. So these are a lot of questions that we're asking on this particular bill.

And it's important that we totally understand what the government is trying to achieve so that we're able to assist in this regard in the sense that we are doing our very best to protect those that are being victimized and to ensure that we close off every avenue of abuse that may exist now, and to empower the police to protect those victims, Mr. Speaker.

Nobody on this side of the House is going to argue with that, but we do need to know what measure the government is taking to achieve this and if there's an opportunity to add to it and to get advice from the different players out there that assist in this effort. That I think is also important, that a lot of advice should be sought on these matters to make sure that the legislation itself is as effective and as solid as can be. And that's our role as the opposition.

But, Mr. Speaker, we have a lot of the discussion we want to have on this particular bill, a lot of questions, and on that note, Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill 144, *The*

Victims of Domestic Violence Act. I so move.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Athabasca has moved to adjourn debate on Bill 144. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — That's carried.

Bill No. 152 — *The Victims of Domestic Violence Consequential Amendment Act, 2014/Loi de 2014 portant la modification corrélative à la loi intitulée *The Victims of Domestic Violence Consequential Amendment Act, 2014**

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of *The Victims of Domestic Violence Consequential Amendment Act, 2014*. Mr. Speaker, this is a bilingual companion legislation to *The Victims of Domestic Violence Amendment Act, 2014*.

The bill simply amends the bilingual Queen's Bench Act, 1998 to update the reference in that Act from *The Victims of Domestic Violence Act* to *The Victims of Interpersonal Violence Act*. So, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to move second reading of *The Victims of Domestic Violence Consequential Amendment Act, 2014*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Minister of Justice has moved that Bill No. 152, *The Victims of Domestic Violence Consequential Amendment Act, 2014* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion? Is the Assembly ready for the question? Sorry. I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again on Bill 152, as indicated in the bill title itself, which is *An Act to make a consequential amendment resulting from the enactment of The Victims of Domestic Violence Amendment Act, 2014*, what we're merely doing, as the minister has pointed out, Mr. Speaker, is to certainly reflect that the bill has to be translated into a number of languages, in particular French.

But it is hoped on that front that we can do as much as we can to encourage the government to recognize of course French, being our second national language in terms of the importance of recognizing French, but there's a lot of different countries that are . . . where people that are from different countries that are moving to Saskatchewan. So we would suggest that perhaps as a result of the requirement by law to have both bills in French and English, that we should make some effort somehow through time that we're able to translate the bill itself to a number of other languages that may be an effective means and a tool to communicate with many of the new Saskatchewan people. And, Mr. Speaker, I think that is probably a good step in the right direction.

But certainly from this particular bill, for the folks that might be listening, what this bill entirely does, it just simply meets the requirement that the bill be printed in French, which is by law in Canada that all information that we have when it comes to

legislation and laws of the government should be printed in French and English.

And from our perspective again as we mentioned, the original bill, 144, we've identified the issues that we wanted to ask about and talk about. This consequential amendment Act is primarily a complementary bill to that bill, but we want to hold both of them up till we're completely done with them. So on that note, Mr. Speaker, I move we adjourn debate on Bill 152, *An Act to make a consequential amendment resulting from the enactment of The Victims of Domestic Violence Amendment Act, 2014*. I so move.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Athabasca has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 152. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 145 — *The Fee Waiver Act*

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of *The Fee Waiver Act*. Mr. Speaker, this bill will create an updated fee waiver program in Saskatchewan allowing for the waiver of administrative fees at courts and tribunals for lower income litigants. The Act will implement various enhancements to the existing fee waiver program.

Currently, Mr. Speaker, there's no fee waiver program at the small claims court. In addition, although the Court of Appeal will accept fee waivers issued for the Court of Queen's Bench, there's no process to obtain a new waiver at the Court of Appeal. The Act will allow individuals to apply for a fee waiver at all three levels of court.

The Act will also apply to tribunals that regularly adjudicate matters for members of the public. At this time the Automobile Injury Appeal Commission and the Office of Residential Tenancies are specifically included under the Act. However there will be a power to subscribe additional tribunals and government bodies in the future where they may be appropriate.

The Act will transfer administration of the fee waiver applications from the Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission to individual courts and tribunals. Court and tribunal officials will have authority to administer application processes, will have discretionary authority to refer applications to the court or tribunal for determination where appropriate.

Mr. Speaker, application processes will be kept simplified in order to ensure that eligible individuals as well as courts and tribunals are not negatively impacted by administrative processes or delays. Eligibility for fee waivers will be based on simplified criteria set out in the regulations. However, Mr. Speaker, there will be discretionary authority to grant fee waivers in special circumstances to individuals who do not meet regular qualifications. This approach ensures that the fee waiver program remains flexible enough to respond to the unique

circumstances of individual litigants.

Mr. Speaker, under current rules, a litigant must apply for a fee waiver for the Court of Queen's Bench prior to taking any other steps in a proceeding. As a result, individuals who are unable to apply for a fee waiver prior to issuing a claim are prevented from receiving a fee waiver even if that individual does not have the means to pay the court fees. The new Act will remove this rule and allow litigants to apply for a fee waiver at any stage of the proceedings.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Act will also allow self-represented litigants to apply for fee waiver certificates, which is consistent with the approach taken in Ontario and British Columbia. Currently, fee waivers are only available to individuals represented by legal counsel. In practice, this generally limits fee waivers to individuals who obtain pro bono counsel or who are represented by Legal Aid in family law matters. Extending fee waiver eligibility to self-represented clients will help these individuals gain greater access to justice through participation in the court process.

Finally, the Act will grant courts and tribunals discretionary authority to determine if costs should be awarded to or against a litigant who has been issued a fee waiver. In making this decision, courts and tribunals may take into account special factors including access to justice and fairness to the parties. This approach maintains a balance between promoting access to justice and deterring meritless or frivolous litigation by individuals who have been issued a fee waiver.

Mr. Speaker, this Act has been informed by the work of the Law Reform Commission of Saskatchewan and the recent decision of the Supreme Court of Canada in *Trial Lawyers Association of British Columbia v. Attorney General of British Columbia*. The Ministry of Justice has also consulted with the Saskatchewan legal community and has found widespread support for the changes.

Mr. Speaker, these changes demonstrate the government's commitment to enhancing access to justice in the province of Saskatchewan. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of *The Fee Waiver Act*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Minister of Justice has moved that Bill No. 145, *The Fee Waiver Act* be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I certainly thank the minister for providing some of the information that the bill is all about. And what I want to point out is that these, some of these bills that are coming forward, it's very, very important for the opposition to really, really begin to research the intent of this particular bill.

Now we listened to some of the language that was mentioned in terms of the access to justice and to doing away with frivolous legal actions. Now, Mr. Speaker, what's really important is that, from the perspective of what many people call swift justice, there's no question that there is a lot of merit to a lot of the discussions people have around that particular concept. But we mustn't forget that, as a civilized society, we have to ensure that

there is due process allowed to everyone. And many times, Mr. Speaker, it's important that we have that balance, because sometimes, as humans, there are errors made. And what you don't want to do is go on this rant about people's rights and certainly people's opportunities to defend themselves.

[14:45]

So, Mr. Speaker, this is a really important bill that we need to pay a lot of attention to, because obviously we see a lot of evidence from time to time of how the court costs are high and the process to administer justice is long and it's very tough on victims of crime. And we all see those kind of actions. And obviously from our perspective, as the NDP opposition, we want to ensure . . . The simple thing is that there is certainly respect for many of the victims of crime and we want to make sure that there is swift justice, but to also ensure that we're very thorough as a civilized society to ensure that those that may be causing harm or actions against other people that are contrary to our laws, that they're also given the opportunity to defend themselves. And that's the balance that we see when we talk about justice. And it's really, really important we keep those components and trains of thought in our mind, primarily because it is a just and civil society that will hope to achieve that.

That being said, Mr. Speaker, when we look at this particular bill, it talks about administrative fee waivers which is a small component of the overall court system. So it's important to know what exactly, what kind of fees are we talking about? Obviously, you know, as the minister alluded to, it's designed to ensure that people have access to justice and that money should not be an issue when it comes to access to justice. And thereby, they're waiving some of the administrative fees that the courts probably asked to be waived.

However, Mr. Speaker, we'd like to know what kind of dollars are attached to that waiver. Is it a significant amount of money? Is it 3 million? Is it 5 million? Or is it 50,000? We don't know what some of the costs and some of the fees that the minister is making reference to . . . We need to know what those fees are.

And the minister also went on to say that in many cases some are applying for fees and others are not. We need to make it more open and transparent and accountable. We need to talk about the fact that the new waiver is available in all three levels of courts. And, Mr. Speaker, we need to find out exactly what caused this particular action and who asked for the action.

And what's more important as well, Mr. Speaker, to point out is that when the minister spoke about widespread support from the legal community, and they mentioned the word consultation, that's exactly our point. There's a significant difference from our perspective when you talk about consultation versus the word agreement. Now what I wouldn't mind knowing — and through the process of this Assembly is to ask the questions during committee — exactly what would the minister determine widespread support from the legal community? Is that 80 per cent? Is it 70 per cent? Is it 51.2 per cent?

These are some of the things that we need to make sure that the work in the background has been completed and that there is, if the minister says widespread support, that we're satisfied the

number is high enough to justify that particular phrase attached to the level of support that he said he received from consultation with the legal community.

These are important questions that we have in the Assembly and we have in the opposition. So there's no question that if there's ways and means in which we can make the justice system more aligned with what the costs should be, that we don't allow people to have frivolous lawsuits. We don't allow people to use the justice system to delay some of their court cases even though they know that they're wrong, Mr. Speaker.

I think the Saskatchewan people want to see that action and see that justice system be swift, but they also want it to be fair. So that's the most important thing. And part of the fairness, Mr. Speaker, of course is affordability. Part of the fairness also talks about doing away with frivolous lawsuits. And certainly, Mr. Speaker, we've looked at the fee waiver that's out there, that's being proposed in this particular bill. If it's designed to help certain groups of people, we would like to know which groups of people that it is designed to help.

These are some of the basic questions we have, and it's our process as the opposition to scrutinize what the government is proposing. We plan on doing that with this particular bill because there are so many things and there are so many questions and there are so many moving parts to the justice system, Mr. Speaker. We know that one reaction in one area causes action in the other area. And sometimes that action and reaction don't really necessarily mean the swift, administrative justice system that we all aspire to achieve as Saskatchewan people.

So I think it's important that we look at the cause and effect of some of these changes. It's really important that we ask, who asked for some of the fee waiver changes? Was it the actual justice system itself? Was it the judges themselves? Was it the groups of people that are involved with the low-income people? These are some of the questions that we have as a result of the fee waiver changes that is being proposed here.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I also want to point out, as I said at the outset, the consultation that the minister alluded to, exactly which groups and organizations were consulted and what was their initial response. Is there an avenue, an opportunity for them to come back to actually consult more and to ask more questions? And this is obviously something that I hope that the ministry would offer, but from the opposition's perspective, we would offer that to the venue we have when we start enacting laws through the Legislative Assembly, that we would obviously ask for their advice, ask for their input, and ask them to contact us to give us that particular information. Because good advice from many, many quarters is also very valuable to us as an opposition.

So we need to do careful analysis of this particular bill. There are a lot of questions we have of it. And as I mentioned at the outset, it's important for the opposition to take the time and it's important for the opposition to make sure that the government does what they intend to do by some of the wording they use in some of these bills. And we obviously have had evidence at this session that they like to do things in totally different ways, and yet they put out these magical, comforting words to people, and

yet their actions don't follow what their words are in this Assembly.

And that's why it's important to have a good, strong opposition, and a good, strong opposition that's well informed is also an effective tool for people out there in Saskatchewan that may want to have input and say, well hold it. This particular bill has this problem. So bring that information forward because it makes the bill stronger. It makes our laws better and it makes — what I think is really important, what the people of Saskatchewan want — a justice system that operates efficiently, that's effective to protect victims, but it's also fair to allow the process to the courts to find the guilty parties guilty and that they do have the opportunity to defend themselves.

So that's something, these are all principles I think people understand throughout Saskatchewan. So it's very, very important we pay very close attention to bills of these sort, because we do have a lot of questions as a result of some of the information that we received today on some of these bills. So on that note, Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill 145, *An Act respecting the Waiver of Fees and making consequential amendments to other Acts*. I so move.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 145, the fee waiver amendment Act. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 146 — *The Fee Waiver Consequential Amendments Act, 2014/Loi de 2014 portant modifications corrélatives à la loi intitulée The Fee Waiver Act*

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of *The Fee Waiver Consequential Amendments Act, 2014*. Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this bill is to make bilingual consequential amendments to *The Court of Appeal Act, 2000*, *The Queen's Bench Act, 1998*, and *The Small Claims Act, 1997*.

The bill adds a new section to each Act to clarify that any fee charged by the Court of Appeal, the Court of Queen's Bench, or the small claims court is subject to *The Fee Waiver Act*. These changes will help inform legal counsel and self-represented litigants of the fee waiver program when reviewing the laws and procedures of the individual courts. *The Fee Waiver Act* and its regulations will provide specific rules and fee waiver application procedures and eligibility requirements. Mr. Speaker, the new fee waiver program will ensure that lower income litigants have increased access to justice.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to move second reading of *The Fee Waiver Consequential Amendments Act, 2014*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Minister of Justice has moved that Bill No. 146, *The Fee Waiver Consequential Amendments Act, 2014* be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Again, as I mentioned at the outset, the consequential amendments to this particular Act are attached to Bill 145. And I notice, Mr. Speaker, some of the questions that we had in the original bill, that obviously there is a lot of issues that we have to pay attention to and pay very close attention to because that's our role as the opposition.

And, Mr. Speaker, there are five parts of this particular bill, five pages of this particular bill. And when the bill itself talks about consequential amendments to the previous Act, which I'm assuming has to do with the French version of the actual bill itself, there are a few other changes in there that we want to pay very close attention to. Like five pages to simply direct all the departments to translate this particular . . . the bill previous, the Bill 145 into French. It begs the question as to what else is being included in this particular consequential Act.

So, Mr. Speaker, again as I mentioned at the outset, we want to make sure we take the time to look at these bills and to point out to people that are out there in the legal community, that do have some information and are able to help in this regard, that any advice and direction and awareness that you want to share with us on the whole Act, Mr. Speaker, and certainly on the justice system itself, the opposition is really, quite frankly is opening the doors to making sure that people know there is an opportunity for them to participate and give us advice.

And, Mr. Speaker, we'll use that advice to ensure that legislation, any Act that we empower and certainly put through this Assembly, that these bills and these Acts and the intent are done not only with a sense of urgency, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the justice system, but they're done as thoroughly as possible. That is the key message we have on this particular bill and any other bill. So on that note, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill 146, *An Act to make consequential amendments resulting from the enactment of The Fee Waiver Act*. I so move.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Athabasca has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 146. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 147 — The Class Actions Amendment Act, 2014
Loi de 2014 modifiant la Loi sur les recours collectifs

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise again today to move second reading of *The Class Actions Amendment Act, 2014*. Mr. Speaker, class action litigation, in appropriate cases, serves several important functions in our justice system. Class actions allow for more efficient use of court resources by consolidating similar matters into a single claim. Class actions also increase access to justice for groups of individuals who lack the means to pursue litigation on their own. Defendants can also benefit from class actions by defending multiple claims through a single set of proceedings.

Mr. Speaker, when class action legislation was first introduced

in Saskatchewan, the court's normal discretion to award costs in the regular course of proceedings was removed. This was done out of concern that the threat of large cost awards could deter legitimate claimants from participating in class action matters. Alberta and Nova Scotia's class action legislation has demonstrated that a more balanced approach can be taken rather than prohibiting cost awards outright in class action litigation. This bill is based on the approach taken in those jurisdictions.

Mr. Speaker, this bill will provide courts authority to award costs in class actions in appropriate circumstances. In allowing costs to be assessed, the bill will also provide the judge discretion to take into consideration the following factors when deciding whether to award costs: the public interest, whether the action involves a novel point of law, whether the action is a test case, access to justice for members of the public using class action proceedings, and any other factors that the court considers appropriate.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, these amendments to *The Class Actions Act* will restore the discretion to the courts to control their own processes, as in regular litigation matters, while still addressing the unique access-to-justice concerns that arise with class action litigation. With that, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to move second reading of *The Class Actions Amendment Act, 2014*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Minister of Justice has moved that Bill No. 147, *The Class Actions Amendment Act, 2014* be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you again, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Certainly for the opposition, we look at this particular bill, Bill 147, and being that we're obviously getting all the information today as to what is being presented in the particular bill, we, as I pointed out with all the other Acts, this is our first opportunity as the opposition to look at the Act, hear what the changes are being proposed by the government, and certainly begin the process of researching what each of the components of each of the changes would really mean to the Saskatchewan people.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the minister talked about the cost to the courts. And he mentioned a number of different avenues that are available for the courts to determine when they don't have to charge court costs to people that are frivolously using, in this case, class actions to try and prove a point. He'd mentioned novel points of the law as one instance where the courts could certainly not put costs on the people that are trying to sue others, or a test case, Mr. Speaker.

And one of the things that is really important is that we need to understand some of the changes in this particular Act. And there's no question. I don't think people in Saskatchewan would support any political interference with the justice system. Because obviously when you look at the whole sentiment that the minister spoke about in his closing comments, that the courts could control their own process, to me I think having the courts control their own process is really good evidence that, you know, this would separate the justice system from the political system. I think when you look at the design of the political system versus the justice system, there should never be politicians determining how the courts do their business. So anything to afford the courts control of their own process with

the principles of course, as we mentioned earlier, that they be fair, thorough, and that they administer justice in a very transparent way, I think the opposition would generally agree that it's important to separate the justice system from the political system.

[15:00]

But one of the things we've picked up here, Mr. Speaker, that was kind of worrisome was, why are the changes here retroactive? We don't know what the purpose of the change is here because obviously when you propose a bill, you obviously, likely know what the bill is from this date forward. We've made some errors in the previous Act, and thereby we're making some changes to the Act to strengthen the Act and to make the Act more modern or make it better for the people of Saskatchewan.

And when the government itself comes along and says, well on this particular bill, on *The Class Actions Act*, we want to make it retroactive, the biggest question we had instinctively as we looked at the bill is why is there a retroactivity clause or option available to this particular bill? Is there a case that the government is currently involved with that requires them to come along and change a law to accommodate their inaction or their lack of homework? We don't know that. Is there a particular issue that is concerning and causing the justice system great angst at this time? We don't know that answer, Mr. Speaker.

And that's one of the glaring issues that arose as a result of us reading through this bill is why is there a retroactivity clause in this particular bill? Because most bills that we deal with are on a go-forward basis, and this is what's really . . . And now I'm using the Premier's language here. But anyway, most bills that we deal with, we're talking about what we need to improve on these bills and where the mistakes are made and how we can make it better, make these bills better. So as you look to move the bills forward, to make the necessary changes, this particular bill has the option of going retroactively to some — I don't know; I'm assuming — some case or some issue before the Justice department that the government wants to handle or address.

So these are some of the questions that we want to ask, Mr. Speaker, on this particular bill. It's a class action Act, you know, and there's a lot of different folks out there that are using the class action option to sue industry or sue government or sue different organizations. And it's a very important point of our justice system where people can get together and say, well it affected all of us, so we're all going to take you to court. And of course the process will unfold.

Now what I would . . . Again the biggest thing is, who asked for these amendments? Now if these amendments were asked by a specific group, then they might be able to tie the argument as to why the government's making it retroactive. Now I think from our perspective, you know, it is kind of worrisome that you don't want to have support for some of these things unless you have the answers that the opposition needs.

So some of the immediate questions we have on this bill: who asked for these amendments? Why did they ask for those

amendments? And why is there a retroactivity clause attached to this particular Act when in many, many other Acts that we've been involved with doesn't have that clause? Is there a particular case, as I mentioned, that the government has been involved with or doesn't want us to know about? We need to know those answers, Mr. Speaker.

And it's also, quite frankly, you look at some of the options available. You want to make sure, as I said at the outset, that the court costs operate as efficiently and effectively as possible. By efficiently I'm talking about reducing as many costs as you can; by effective, in making sure that people have access to the justice system when they need it. And, Mr. Speaker, it's a huge balance to try and maintain all the interests of everyone.

So what happens in this particular Act, again there's some glaring, glaring issues. For example, you look at some of the points that I would raise. The questions I would ask is, what are the downsides of these amendments? What would be the downsides? People need to know that. Why would you want to assign the penalty to one single person in a class action suit? Does that deter that individual from becoming a leader within a group of people that want to address an issue that has obviously affected them wrongly? And so this person is going to stand up on behalf of a wide group of people. Why would that court, *The Class Actions Act*, allow that person to be singled out? We need to know if that is the case or if that's not the case. So it is really important that we get that particular advice from the number of people who are impacted by this.

And again the question that I'd ask on the retroactivity clause of this bill, and it's the third time I'm asking: is this the reaction to any particular case that the government is involved with or is aware of? Who asked for this? And what implications does it have for our justice system? So it's really important that we look at this particular bill very thoroughly.

We know that there's class action suits launched right across the country on a regular basis, Mr. Speaker, and a lot of people — I'm sure the judges as well, the people involved with the justice system — see some of them as being frivolous and some of them that may just be an action by a person just to create a whole bunch of trouble in the event that for example they may have lost money or lost their job or lost credibility. We see sometimes that there may be some frivolous actions around class actions. But we don't want to continue to prop that up, Mr. Speaker. That's not what this is about. What we want to do is make sure that there is a proper process in place, that the judges have as many tools within their powers to be able to administer justice swiftly but also very fairly.

So again, the retroactivity part of this particular bill, we find it very strange. We find it awkward. It's very glaring in this particular bill and that's why the questions we have or the immediate question is, who's asked for this, and what was the reason for this? And these are some of the questions that we need to know.

Now if it's the government using *The Class Actions Act* to cover up some of their ineptness or some of their lack of homework, then we obviously don't want to support that because if they couldn't figure this thing out from day one, Mr. Speaker, they shouldn't be changing the Act to accommodate

their inability to figure things out. And that's one of the important points that we as the opposition want to be able to try and understand and to try and get more answers so that we're able to make a clear determination as to what this bill is intending to do and to present the information to the public because the public does have a right to know.

So there is a ton of questions on this particular bill. There's no question that the wording from the minister . . . There may be some good points of the bill that the opposition could support and a good administrative justice system, Mr. Speaker. We wouldn't stand in the way, but we need to have a lot of questions answered just to ensure that we're comfortable with what the bill is all about and that there isn't a hidden agenda by the government to try and do something.

So again I would point out that the retroactivity issue on this particular bill raises a lot of flags — very strange, very awkward for this bill — and we want to know why that clause is put in there. Like what's that all about? And, Mr. Speaker, those are some of the immediate questions that we have on this particular bill.

Now the minister spoke early on about a lot of the value of the justice system and the importance of having a neutral setting in which we have all arguments heard from all sides, Mr. Speaker. And that's the whole notion that we would want to afford this particular bill as well, arguments from all sides as to whether the merit of this bill is simply the good administrative delivery of justice or is it covering up for inaction or ineptness or a lack of homework on the part of the government.

And that's the reason why this legislative Chamber exists: so we can ask those questions and take the time to ask the questions and also to solicit advice from people out there that are in the know. And that's what's really, really important for us on this particular bill. We have to ensure that there isn't a plan by the government to cover up an error or mistake that they made and then change the law to accommodate the correcting of that mistake and not allowing the people of Saskatchewan to see the total picture.

So on that note, we would encourage people to come forward, have any advice, any information. We would certainly support that. So on that note, Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill 147, the amendment to *The Class Actions Act*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Athabasca has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 147. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 150 — *The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act, 2014*

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of *The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act, 2014*. *The Residential*

Tenancies Act, 2006 governs the relationship between landlords and tenants of residential properties in Saskatchewan. It's designated to balance the rights and obligations of landlords and tenants while bringing efficiency to dispute resolution through the use of hearing officers.

Mr. Speaker, this Act was originally passed in 2006. The Office of Residential Tenancies has identified a number of provisions that would work better with some amendments. The amendments that I'm proposing address issues that have been raised by the courts, by tenants, landlords, and by the office of the ORT [Office of Residential Tenancies].

Some proposals benefit tenants specifically, such as the amendment expanding the time for claiming the return of a security deposit from 120 days to two years. Although I do not expect there will be many claims that are made beyond 120 days, there certainly may be some. Two years is the general limitation period for claims in court, pursuant to *The Limitations Act*, so that will be made consistent.

Another proposal for the benefit of tenants is found in the amendment to section 60, which allows landlords to evict tenants if the landlord wishes to demolish or renovate the premises or has other uses for property. Currently the notice period is one month. The proposal is to extend it to two. It's reasonable that landlords plan far enough in advance when evicting tenants for their own purposes. In addition, in situations of demolition or renovation, the landlord must always return the entire security deposit.

Mr. Speaker, some proposals alleviate problems for landlords. In particular the bill expressly permits landlords to make and enforce reasonable rules in their residential premises. These rules may concern the tenants' use, occupancy, or maintenance of the premises or the tenants' use of services. Some examples may be rules concerning smoking or pets. If the rules are not reasonable, the tenant may challenge them with an application to a hearing officer. If the tenant repeatedly violates the rules, the tenant can be evicted.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, other proposals include the ability for landlords to evict a tenant who has violated municipal bylaws or failed to pay municipal charges. In all these situations the tenant must be given the opportunity to correct the transgression.

Mr. Speaker, parties have the opportunity under the Act to appeal the decision of a hearing officer to the Court of Queen's Bench on a question of law or jurisdiction. A new provision helps to guard against frivolous appeals that are used to extend the occupancy of the premises after an eviction order has been made. In those cases, in order to appeal, the tenant must prove good faith by depositing with the court one-half of one month's rent or establish that the rent has been paid.

Mr. Speaker, housing programs do not always fit nicely within the rules of *The Residential Tenancies Act*. For example, when a unit is part of a housing program and the tenant no longer qualifies for the housing program or for the particular unit, there are no grounds to remove the tenant from the rental unit. These amendments will address those issues.

Finally there are amendments to make hearings more efficient, service of documents easier, appeals more expeditious, and provisions easier to understand. Mr. Speaker, extensive consultations were conducted with landlords, tenants, and housing programs in developing this bill. And we are confident that these changes maintain an appropriate balance between the interests of tenants and landlords.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to move second reading of *The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act, 2014*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Minister of Justice has moved that Bill No. 150, *The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act, 2014* be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Athabasca.

[15:15]

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, at the outset, I looked at the bill itself and the opening comments by the minister. Really, I think is really important as my opening comments as the official opposition's first response to this bill, that he started off with balancing the rights of tenant and the landlord. And, Mr. Speaker, certainly you look at some of the issues that he raised when landlords evict people for a number of . . . I think the amount that he's allowed was a month and now they're moving it to two months in the event that they want to evict the tenants to either fix their building up or to turn it into condominiums and sell the whole building as it is.

Mr. Speaker, this is exactly what I think is really important, the relationship that I see in northern Saskatchewan, and I know in the cities as well. A lot of apartment renters, you know, they're by and large a very responsible group. And a lot of folks in the cities have told us about the challenges that they've had. And you can recall a couple of years ago, there was a huge battle between apartment users and of course the landlords in the sense of the damage deposit.

We know some of them were increasing their rent and many of them could not afford to keep up with the rent so we know a lot of them had to leave some of the places they lived for years. And while that's not the landlord's issue, Mr. Speaker, because obviously the landlord owns the building, it really does beg the question that, how did the government respond to that particular crisis? Because you can't simply sit in the sidelines and watch the battle ensue between a landlord that wants to get more for their property and a tenant who's been a good tenant for a number of years and can't afford to pay more.

So what happened, Mr. Speaker, is obviously that the landlord wants their property back, but the government sat on their hands when all of these fights were going on. And a great number of people were pushed out of their apartment primarily because the apartments they were dwelling asked, the owners asked for more rent money and many times they could not afford it, a 30 or 40 per cent increase and hike in their rent, Mr. Speaker. So we know a lot of family members basically, a lot of people in the cities that rented apartments, they had to move out and/or they had to bunk in or they had to make a number of dramatic changes to their lifestyle as a result of the landlord increasing their rent.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in northern Saskatchewan the relationship between private developers and people in general is not as great as it is in the cities. In northern Saskatchewan, Sask Housing is what I would consider probably the largest landlord in all the communities. They of course administer their housing programs to local housing authorities, and these housing authorities administer the rent and maintenance and the collection of that rent, so on and so forth.

And they've done a remarkable job. The local housing authorities have done a really good job in terms of working with the tenants. And while they know that their ability to set rental rates is limited, these housing authorities by and large certainly are a good sounding board for governments when it comes to northern housing. So I won't go to great lengths as it relates to the private developers in northern Saskatchewan. My discussions are around the whole issue of Sask Housing as a landlord and many people in northern Saskatchewan as tenants, because that's the relationship that they have. It's a tenant and landlord situation.

Now, Mr. Speaker, one of the most glaring issues that I've been speaking about and a glaring problem that I see as a result of this particular Act in balancing the rights of the tenants and the landlords, Mr. Speaker, I've said it time and time again. There's hundreds of examples of people from Beauval, Saskatchewan, people from Ile-a-la-Crosse, people from La Loche, people from Pinehouse, people from Green Lake, in a sense that at one time they had the option of actually buying these homes from the government, Mr. Speaker. That program was called a rental purchase option. So when you hear me say the RPO [rental purchase option], what that is is after a number of years that you rent a house off Sask Housing, and I think the time frame was eight years, that you had the option of buying this home. This was an agreement between the tenant and the landlord, the landlord being Sask Housing and the tenant being the people that rent houses off Sask Housing.

So what happens, Mr. Speaker, is that over time some of the families were finally getting back on their feet through training and through getting a job, and then the government comes along and they cancelled the RPO program. They cancelled the RPO program in northern Saskatchewan because, as the previous minister said, there's too many people making too much money. That was her argument, Mr. Speaker. And when you look at the relationship of this particular Act, there was a huge disregard by the landlord — that being Sask Housing and that being the Minister Responsible for Sask Housing — when they callously cut the program that afforded working families in northern Saskatchewan the opportunity to own those homes.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have told a lot of people that have gone through this, they cut the program in 2012 and we served petitions, as was indicated, and the tenant . . . Sask Housing Corporation refused to meet with those families that were prepared to buy the house off of them at fair market value, Mr. Speaker.

Now what caused the minister at the time to change her mind about that program? Do these people not have, do these tenants not have rights? And I suggested at the time that there should be a class action lawsuit against Sask Housing on behalf of the many families who they turned around and callously cut the

opportunities for these families from owning those homes.

And what was the logic? Out of the hundreds of homes Sask Housing owns throughout the North and the hundreds of families that had the opportunity to own these homes, the minister came along and identified — what was it? — 13 people working at the mine and making over 100,000. That was her rationale. She picked 13 people working at a northern mine setting then said, oh they make too much money so we're going to cancel the RPO for everyone.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what we wanted to see happen in northern Saskatchewan is we wanted to see home ownership improve, Mr. Speaker. That's what we wanted to have happen. We wanted the opportunity for people that rented homes off Sask Housing to buy their home after a set number of years at fair market value so these families could work and they could earn as much money as they can and to have the option of home ownership. And many of these people wanted to do that. Many of these families wanted to do that, Mr. Speaker. It's a very simple concept. It's a very simple concept. And certainly when we were in government, we saw the incredible strength that families had after they owned their own home. They had a lot of pride. They took care of their property taxes. They took care of their unit. They paid their mortgage on a regular basis, Mr. Speaker. And they became more independent people. They became prouder people, Mr. Speaker, and their whole family was strengthened. They finally had what 75 per cent of the people of Saskatchewan have. They had home ownership.

In northern Saskatchewan, that percentage is dramatically low. So as a tenant of Sask Housing, as our landlord, they came along, the Saskatchewan Party government came along and they cancelled that program. And the reason they cancelled it, according to the minister, is they identified 13 people working at a northern mine making over 100,000, so everyone is now cut off from the option of owning their own home.

Now, Mr. Speaker, you mark my words, and we've said time and time again in this Assembly, the great Canadian dream, the great Saskatchewan dream for young people, young families, even young single people, the opportunity to own their own home is now suddenly not attainable. It's out of reach for many young families and young people. Unless you have a really rich father or rich mother or rich grandparent, the option of you owning your own home is getting out of grasp for many, many young people. The prices of starter homes is through the roof. The prices of condominiums is also through the roof.

And I can tell you today that in northern Saskatchewan, the prices of housing are still reasonable, and yet this government came along and they said, no, we're going to put the same challenges that young families have in southern Saskatchewan of owning their own homes. We're going to put that same challenge to northern families that are working in northern Saskatchewan, so we're going to cancel the rental purchase option program for them, Mr. Speaker. And that was done.

So from this bill, Bill 150, there is a relationship, a legal relationship that talks about a tenant and a landlord arrangement, a legal contract. That's what I think it is. And, Mr. Speaker, when the government comes along and makes a determination and basically says, okay, well you guys are

making too much money . . . There's 13 out of, I don't know, maybe 4,000 people in northern Saskatchewan that are renting off of Sask Housing.

Well there's 13 people out of the 4,000 that are renting that are working at the mine and made over 100,000. So the minister said, well they can afford to build their own, so we're cancelling that program. Why would they do that, Mr. Speaker? Why would they do that as a government when they know very well in southern Saskatchewan the option of home ownership for young families is just a huge, huge problem. There is so many young people struggling with what our fathers and forefathers had the option of doing, is owning a home in Saskatoon, Regina, Swift Current, North Battleford. And today now the prices of housing in Saskatoon is just through the roof, so young families can't afford it.

But the government didn't do anything to address that challenge for young families. They didn't do a darn thing to help those young families out to achieve that Canadian dream where Canadian kids could own their own home, Mr. Speaker. And not only that, Mr. Speaker, they sat on their hands when it came to social housing units. Not only did they cancel the RPO program that they allowed, this minister allowed a private developer to get a bunch of money from the government, for money earmarked for low- to moderate-income people. And, Mr. Speaker, she then turned around and the developer started complaining about it, so the minister said, well that's okay. Go ahead, you can have them and sell them for whatever you want. And the money that was granted to you, well it's a learning experience for them.

Well, Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of people struggling for accommodation not only in our cities but in northern Saskatchewan as well. This government boasts of a growing population. Well they had nothing to do with it, but nonetheless, Mr. Speaker, we're happy to see that Saskatchewan is growing. The population is growing. We're happy to see that. We want that to continue, Mr. Speaker. We want that to continue.

But that being said, you've got to understand, in a growing population there's going to be pressures such as housing prices, Mr. Speaker. They should have anticipated that. They should have positioned young people a lot better. And they chose to sit on their hands and not do a darn thing to help the young families out, not do a darn thing to seeing long-term renters being evicted because landlords — in their right — took their property back to sell them or to move them into condominiums.

And in northern Saskatchewan, they cancelled the one program that was helping, strengthening family, to make families more independent. And, Mr. Speaker, what they done, they turned around and they said no, no, no to all three fronts, Mr. Speaker. And that hurts not only the homeless people, but it hurts young families that are trying to get out of this, become more independent, to get out of their families' homes, and start off on their own. And this government put an impediment and locks on every level they possibly can.

And today now you see this particular bill coming along talking about balancing the rights of tenants and landlords. Well, Mr. Speaker, based on the example that Sask Housing has in northern Saskatchewan, they're not balancing — and I use that

as an example — they're not balancing the rights of tenants at all. They're balancing the rights of Sask Housing Corporation in northern Saskatchewan, and they're kicking out working families, working people. Why are they kicking these people out of these homes? Because they're making too much money. That's their argument, Mr. Speaker. They can't afford to buy that house at fair market value, and the government says, because you're making too much money. That was the minister's logic last time, the previous minister's logic.

And this minister comes along and allows a contractor to take advantage of low-income programs, Mr. Speaker, and then she lets him walk away from it saying, well he doesn't want to do that anymore. He wants to sell to whomever he wants to sell. And this minister sat on her hands and said, okay, well go ahead. You can go ahead and do that. And so we look at that particular relationship, Mr. Speaker.

And this particular government, Mr. Speaker, they rely on Habitat for Humanity to do the job that they should be doing, Mr. Speaker. They're talking about 12 houses that the Habitat folks are working towards. And, Mr. Speaker, I give full marks, full marks and full credit to the Habitat for Humanity people because they are the ones that should be leading this charge at a greater level. And, Mr. Speaker, they are the ones who would see the government riding on their coattails. And then you see all these ministers waving from the Habitat coattails saying, look at what we're doing for social housing. And they're bragging about 12 units throughout the whole province, Mr. Speaker. They're bragging about 12 units through the whole province.

And who's doing the lion's share of that work, Mr. Speaker? Habitat for Humanity. They're the ones doing the work. They're the ones that are nailing the houses together. They're finding the money. They're putting people to work. And every time you have a Habitat for Humanity home open, there's four or five ministers there getting their pictures taken, and yet they sit on this huge problem and, Mr. Speaker, a huge amount of money as well, not doing anything to help social housing along at all.

[15:30]

So you look at the whole issue of the balance between the rights of the tenants and the rights of the landlords, Mr. Speaker. The only landlord that we see that has callously mistreated their tenants in northern Saskatchewan has been Sask Housing. They have callously treated many working families because they make too much money.

So we sit there in northern Saskatchewan saying, okay the private developer that got some low-income money, he's allowed or they're allowed to sell their units at fair market value, but working people in northern Saskatchewan can't. The working people in northern Saskatchewan can't.

The landlords in the South that own these buildings, they have a right to do with their property as they wish. We understand that, Mr. Speaker. We understand that. But should there not be some concessions made for those people that have rented for years and years and years? And should there not be some consideration made on those renters whose rents were jacked up

50, 60, 70 per cent? They say, well these guys can't afford to keep those apartments.

So where do they go? Where do they go, Mr. Speaker? Well the government points to the Habitat for Humanity folks. They'll solve your problems. We're helping them. We're building 12 throughout the province. Mr. Speaker, 12 throughout the province, that's not even a minuscule amount needed. That just represents, I don't know what small fraction of what is needed throughout the whole province, Mr. Speaker.

And secondly, the money that they do give to low- and moderate-income houses, a developer comes along and says, well I'm not going to do that anymore, three-quarters of the way through the project. The government says, well okay, that was too bad. Well we'll see you later. Have fun. That's the kind of drastic, bad leadership we have from the Saskatchewan Party government, Mr. Speaker.

So when we hear the minister come along and talk about balancing the rights of the tenants and the landlords, Mr. Speaker, a lot of these issues come to the forefront because we don't see that balance. In northern Saskatchewan, the landlord is Sask Housing. The tenants are Aboriginal families that are trying to get out of poverty. And every time they try and get out of poverty, the Government of Saskatchewan jacks up their rent. And every time they get a decent paying job, the Saskatchewan Party government jacks up their rent. And every opportunity they have to own their own home, the Saskatchewan Party cancelled those programs.

And, Mr. Speaker, what did they say? It was 13 people are making over 100,000 at the mines. That's their logic, Mr. Speaker. That was the former minister's logic. And I say, shame on her and shame on the Saskatchewan Party because you're hurting a lot of working families, not just in southern Saskatchewan but especially in northern Saskatchewan where we see there are limited opportunities to build your own home, as there is no market value in many of these communities.

So we look at *The Residential Tenancies Act*, Mr. Speaker, and we say, where is this government going? The callous treatment that they've shown to working families in northern Saskatchewan I think, I think should be challenged through a class action lawsuit. That's what I think that should be happening because they broke their contract. They broke their word, Mr. Speaker. And there's many families in northern Saskatchewan that would love to buy their homes, that would've loved to buy their homes.

Now let's take for example somebody working at the mine. They've built up their lives over time. Because obviously some families start off and mom and dad are starting off, and they have very little, like many other families. And over time, the mom or the dad start getting training. They start getting to work. Then all of a sudden, Mr. Speaker, they want to become independent of government. And what did the Sask Party say? Well you're making money now, so we would like to charge you more rent. We want you to pay more rent. So they jack up their rent.

And then the people say, well okay, I've been a good tenant. I've been paying this amount for so long, Mr. Speaker, and can

I have the opportunity of buying this home? Well the government says, no we're not going to sell it to you now. We're going break that contract. We're not going to do that anymore. We decided we're not going to do that anymore. That's what the government said. Well, Mr. Speaker, that got a lot of people very, very angry, Mr. Speaker — very angry.

And then along comes the next nail in the coffin where the landlord, in this case is Sask Housing, they come along and say, okay you're working at the mine. So based on your income, you're going to start paying \$2,100 a month. That's your rent. So these people, these working men and women are getting these letters from Sask Housing saying, now you've got to pay \$2,100 a month rent on your home forever — forever.

Now, Mr. Speaker, how is that fair to the people of Saskatchewan overall? When a working family has the opportunity to buy that house and get government out of their hair and build their family and strengthen their family and strengthen their community through home ownership, 75 per cent of Saskatchewan people have that option. In northern Saskatchewan, as a result of policies of Sask Housing that . . . [inaudible] . . . the landlord over there, they reduced the opportunity for home ownership for many young families to zero. And some of these families will be paying rent forever because the Sask Party government simply wants to go to war with the working men and women. And what's good for a certain area of the province is not good for another area, Mr. Speaker.

So I point out today that the Government of Saskatchewan, the Sask Party government callously kicking out working families from some of these homes that they've rented for years by saying, we're going to jack up your rent because you don't have the option of owning this home anymore. We're taking that away. Those families should initiate a class action lawsuit against this government for breaking their contract and breaking that word without any consultation and without any due warning by the previous minister, the minister of Housing, Mr. Speaker. That's a legacy that she can carry forever, in the sense of seeing families not being able to buy homes.

And that's a decision they made, and I use the word "callously" because they didn't think this through at all. And even after they've been told not to do it for the number of reasons why they shouldn't do it, they proceeded to do it anyway, Mr. Speaker. They proceeded to do it anyway. And that's where the word "callously" comes from because there is no regard for northern people that wanted to own their own home, because they had finally had good, decent paying jobs, not as a result of that government's economic policy but because they trained and worked hard. And they sacrificed and they committed to their jobs and, Mr. Speaker, over a number of years, they finally got the opportunity to buy their home. And that door was slammed shut by the Saskatchewan Party government. And this fight is not over yet, Mr. Speaker.

So the relationship between the rights of the tenant and the landlord in northern Saskatchewan is not respected in any way, shape, or form. The opening statement by the minister, this is where I think it's really important that people ought to know exactly what is happening certainly in northern Saskatchewan but throughout many of our cities as well.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what's important as well is that when we asked for help from the government to address the incredible costs for homes throughout the province, homes that I know, as I've mentioned at the outset, young people can't afford. You know, they'll be renting forever, for all their lives. They don't get any help from anywhere else.

But shouldn't there be some consideration for young families and young people that want to own their own home? Shouldn't there be some program or some opportunity for them to say, look, I've been a lifetime Saskatchewan resident. I'm going to live here. I can't afford to buy a \$450,000 home because I'm making \$50,000 a year. Should we not make an effort to try and help those young people or those young families? And, Mr. Speaker, we've seen nothing from this government, absolutely nothing.

And the Minister of Housing was chirping the other day: she'd put her housing record against ours any day of the week, Mr. Speaker. I would say to her, bring it. Bring it and we will see exactly where the proof in the pudding is when it comes to commitment to young people, young families, and people throughout all parts of the province, especially northern Saskatchewan. And she would be embarrassed, Mr. Speaker. She would be embarrassed. If I was the minister of Housing putting in programs and taking away programs for working people, I'd be downright embarrassed, Mr. Speaker.

And I would certainly tell people in northern Saskatchewan to get angry, to get angry at these guys because they broke a contract with you when it comes to housing. I believe that's a legal binding contract. When you tell someone, you rent the office for a number of years, you honour your rent, you maintain your apartment, you be a good tenant, and then we'll talk home ownership, and you come along a number of years later and say, oh no, we changed our mind on that, to me I think that was a legal binding contract. And they should have respected it.

And that's why if I was the Housing minister that I'd be embarrassed of that policy. I'd be embarrassed of that decision and that there is no respect for the tenant whatsoever. So when we're talking about balancing the rights of tenants, Mr. Speaker, versus the landlord, evidence that the Sask Party government through their Sask Housing unit, Mr. Speaker, does not follow in any way, shape, or form the word, balance the rights of the landlord and the tenant.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it was also interesting the other day when I was reminiscing about the housing announcement made in a number of northern communities. I think La Ronge was one of them, La Loche, Buffalo, Ile-a-la-Crosse. A number of communities had housing announcements. And every single one of those housing announcements, we had the provincial Minister of Housing, her smiling face next to the MP [Member of Parliament] for the area, the MP Rob Clarke. He brought some federal money. And I was sitting there thinking, my goodness, now here are these guys helping prop up their federal cousins, you know, through housing. You know, and he come along and he told a number of communities, we're going to help you find housing.

And I'll give you an example. In my own home community of

Ile-a-la-Crosse, the mayor is a great mayor, a young, exciting mayor. He's going to do very well for the community for years and years. And certainly, Mr. Speaker, he knows the crisis in housing in his home community. So when the province comes along and the federal government comes along and say, look we've got some money for you; did you want to take it? And the mayor had no choice. The money was in front of him. And the problem was he had to cover 51 or 52 per cent of the costs from the Ile-a-la-Crosse municipal coffers to get the money from the federal government, as many of the other communities as well.

So what does that do? Well it puts the community of Ile-a-la-Crosse probably about 300, 400,000, maybe even I think it's a half a million dollars in debt. For what? To provide social housing. So the government is saying, well you guys can do your part too. Yes, but half a million dollars for a small community to be able to take on the role of housing because Sask Housing Corporation and CMHC [Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation] and the federal and provincial government are walking away from this.

Now what happens next year when the communities need more housing? Because they all need housing. Are they going to go another half a million dollars in debt to get five houses? And the year after another half a million. How about those communities that can't afford to contribute dollars to the program? Are they out? Is Green Lake out? Is Beauval out? Is Patuanak, the hamlet of Patuanak, are they out? Because they can't . . . Sandy Bay, Pelican Narrows, they can't put any money down for these housing programs. They are also eliminated from the opportunity to build homes.

Why? Because the Sask Party government walked away from their obligations to provide social housing units, Mr. Speaker, and because the federal government walked away from their obligation to provide social housing units to the underserved parts of Canada, Mr. Speaker. They're walking away from that and they try and dress it up by travelling to these communities and saying, look, before we used to help you build homes; now we're going to get you to build half the homes. And anybody that doesn't have any money, guess what? Tough luck. You're on your own. That's their attitude — tough luck; you're on your own. If you can't contribute to housing as a municipal body, then you're on your own. That's what they're telling them.

So I was sitting there and I was wondering what kind of deal this is, what kind of impact this is going to have on the community of Ile-a-la-Crosse, Mr. Speaker. What happens to the plans for the community to build an exciting economy? Well guess what? They've got to find housing for their people first, so half a million dollars in debt.

And, Mr. Speaker, this is the problem that we see time and time again. You're not respecting the working people by allowing them to buy housing. You are vacating your traditional role of building homes, and putting communities in debt. And Ile-a-la-Crosse is a population of 1,600 people. They owe half a million dollars today as a result of the Sask Party government's policy. And what did they do, Mr. Speaker? They had the smiling face of the Sask Housing minister and the smiling face of their federal cousin, the MP, and they're saying, look, we're doing so wonderful on social housing. We're building five

houses. But guess what? We're only paying 45 per cent of the cost. And here's a whole bunch of rules as well, going with that money. Now you tell me, Mr. Speaker, is that a good relationship between a tenant and the landlord?

And I can tell you today, Mr. Speaker, that the housing program that they have announced, where they're putting communities in debt year after year after year is absolutely the silliest program I've ever seen in my time in politics. And secondly, Mr. Speaker, the communities that can't afford to be part of the solution to provide housing for their people, guess what? They're out. So they'll continue suffering from overcrowded housing, and they'll continue suffering from the lack of affordable housing in a lot of these northern communities, Mr. Speaker. It is almost as if the government wants to make us dependent on people for the rest of our lives, and that's not what the people of northern Saskatchewan want, Mr. Speaker.

There are many people throughout my communities, and I'll give you the example, Beauval being one of them, where we've seen really strong families, really good families. A few of them had to move out, Mr. Speaker. Why? Because they couldn't pay their rent of \$2,000 a month. So they decided, okay, I'm not going to pay \$2,000 a month rent forever. I'm going to go and try and buy a house in the city or I'm going to go try and rent a decent place in the city for half the price. So what happens is the mom and dad get up and they move out with their two or three kids.

[15:45]

That affects the population of the school locally. That affects the buying power of families in that community. That affects the overall wellness of the community when you have working, committed young people that are making a difference in their community, when they're forced to move because of the government policy of not selling them that house at fair market value and increasing and jacking up their rent 200 per cent, Mr. Speaker.

That's the type of relationship that we see when it comes to housing and the lack of respect that that government has for the rights of their tenants under Sask Housing. It's a total lack of respect, Mr. Speaker, and a total misunderstanding as to what their role is when it comes to trying to stimulate home ownership between the people that are renting off them now and the people that want to stay with them, Mr. Speaker.

So I go back to the earlier comments. I went on the *Northern Pride* newspaper and I condemned the housing agreement. I condemned the housing agreement because the Sask Party government wants to walk away from their obligations when it comes to making sure that northern Saskatchewan is treated fairly. And, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of people out there that fear for the future of their house because they think somewhere along the line there'll be a change of mind. And, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that the callousness that the minister made the decision to cancel the RPO program is a continuing statement from the Sask Party government. They really don't care if working people in northern Saskatchewan own their house or not. All they want is the resources off the North. All they want is the rent cheques off the working people. And all they want is money being sucked out of northern Saskatchewan, and that's

it. They're not going to put no more investment back, Mr. Speaker. And we see that time and time again.

Now the former US president, the former US president spoke about this whole notion. And I don't have the quote exactly right. And we listen to some of the famous quotes and Jimmy Carter, the former US president said, and I quote, and I don't exactly have the quote totally correct, but it goes along the lines of something like this, Mr. Chair.

First of all they say, he says, if you want your country based on Christian values, if you want your country based on Christian values, then don't complain when we use your tax dollars to help the poor, because you don't. That was his phrase, Mr. Speaker. That's what Jimmy Carter said.

And we want to take it a step further with the opposition. We believe that people have the values of building a fair and just Saskatchewan. We believe that. And we believe that there will be somebody coming along trying to stoke the differences between north and south, between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, between those that have and those that do not have, for their own political gain, Mr. Speaker. And I say it's the Saskatchewan Party government right across the way.

Because from our perspective, we want a country, we want a province based on fairness. We want a province based on being inclusive, and we want to make sure that everybody shares the benefits, Mr. Speaker. And in northern Saskatchewan this government has come down very hard on the northern Saskatchewan people. Very hard, Mr. Speaker, very hard.

And in fact, Mr. Speaker, Jimmy Carter's statement about wanting your country based on Christian values, then don't complain when you use tax dollars to help the poor, we take it a step further. We take it a step further as a party. And we say yes, we believe our country and our province should be based on good values. Absolutely. We believe that. But it's important for government to try and use that goodwill of the people that want to build Saskatchewan on good values. We want to use that goodwill to make the poor people and those that are more disadvantaged, to strengthen them and to make them more independent of those tax dollars. That's our obligation as a party that wishes to govern the province.

We want to make those people that depend on those tax dollars less dependent over time. We want them to become more an independent and proud people. And how can you do that, Mr. Speaker? We can help them build social housing units. And then we can tell them the tap is going to be turned off for social housing units for your particular families, but guess what? You can buy this house because now you're working. You're working; you're becoming more independent, and thereby one less family to look after in social housing.

So it's incumbent upon government to use that goodwill of Saskatchewan people and build a more independent society for those that need tax dollar support at this time. That is the smarter use of tax dollars, Mr. Speaker, than what the Saskatchewan Party's doing right now by sitting on their hands not helping these young families achieve home ownership all throughout the province, by sitting on their hands not helping with the homelessness situation, by sitting on their hands by

giving developers money to build homes for low-income people then letting that developer say, well I changed my mind; I'm going to sell it to whomever I want to sell these units to. And they let the company do that. And then they turn around and they start telling the working people in northern Saskatchewan, we're cancelling home ownership. Guess what? You're paying rent for the rest of your life, and we don't care if you're making money or not.

So, Mr. Speaker, that's exactly what I want to argue here today, that the fact is Jimmy Carter's statement was halfway to what we believe the vision for Saskatchewan would be. He believed that if people had a Christian value or good values to build a fair and just province, if people had that intent and they had that view, then it's important for government to use that good intent to build independence for those people that need the tax dollars at this time so they become independent sooner and therefore less of a drain on the taxpayers' dollars that we count on for social housing units and many other programs and services, Mr. Speaker.

Now that is a compassionate and just and considerate and intelligent government that can deliver that. But the Sask Party, Mr. Speaker, has done nothing to look at the respectful relationship that you must have to respect the rights and balance between tenants and landlords. No evidence of that whatsoever.

So I go back to my old argument about housing in northern Saskatchewan. And I go back to my home community. That's one of the agreements I know best. And the point is, next year the community of Ile-a-la-Crosse will need another 10 houses. The population is growing. Now, Mr. Speaker, they went in debt half a million dollars for five houses. So it stands to reason that if they want to get 10 houses built next year, they've got to go another \$1 million in debt. So how many more years do they have to go into debt to meet the housing needs and demands of the community? Does that not make the community at the end of the day less better off than the government's coming along to help out? Absolutely it does, Mr. Speaker. Because the money they use for housing, they can't use for recreation and cultural development, they can't use for improving the economy of the community, they can't use for developing the infrastructure of the community, Mr. Speaker.

They're so strung out on the need for housing that all the other pressing issues that let the community develop and become more independent, Mr. Speaker, as a result of that, those issues are now on the back burner. Because the Saskatchewan Party government, along with their federal cousins, are putting huge debts on some of these communities and not allowing the communities that can afford to put money up, to participate in the housing program.

So, Mr. Speaker, we see the evidence of what the Saskatchewan Party is doing, and we see in northern Saskatchewan, as in the South, they're abandoning their obligation to try and help young families achieve the one dream, the one dream that our fathers and mothers could or our grandparents could, and that was home ownership in our cities, home ownership in our towns, and home ownership in our villages.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we asked the question today. My colleague the member from Saskatoon Centre asked the question about

social housing. And I wanted to read into the record the quote from last night. They had a debate in Lloydminster. And there's a by-election happening there, and the Sask Party candidate was asked a question about housing, and here's the quote. And she said:

When governments get involved in owning land and being the gatekeepers of social housing, we all know things don't work. I think that belongs to private industries for development and that's where it should stay.

Well, Mr. Speaker, if you look at the whole notion of what she was saying, she's basically saying, she's basically saying what exactly what the Sask Party believes. They believe that social housing should stay with fundraising groups and that they have no obligation at all to help the people that are homeless, to help the young families that can't afford to buy their own home, to help those that have been displaced as a result of their apartment buildings going up for sale, to help the elderly that have limited income, Mr. Speaker, to help those of low income.

There's a huge group of people out there whose housing needs are not being met, and this government sits on record revenues, Mr. Speaker. Let's not forget that — record revenues. They've sat on record revenues for the last seven years, and they refuse to spend one single dime on social housing, Mr. Speaker. They're on their way of exiting. Why don't they just say what their Lloydminster candidate said last night, that they're going to exit the social housing projects? And that's exactly what they intend to do. Why can't they say that, Mr. Speaker? You know why they can't say that, Mr. Speaker? It's because they don't have the courage to say that.

Instead they put programs in place and they cancel other programs to discourage home ownership. And to me, Mr. Speaker, that's a total lack of leadership and commitment. And yet they still stand up here day after day talking about how they're helping low-income people, Mr. Speaker.

Low-income people know full well what they're trying to do. And they see exactly how they've been treated by this government, and they will continue to vote against the Saskatchewan Party government for their callousness and lack of regard for their needs when it comes to housing. It's happening all throughout the province, Mr. Speaker.

And I want to read again the candidate from Lloydminster when she said:

When governments get involved in owning land and being the gatekeepers of social housing, we all know things don't work. I think that belongs to private industries for development, and that's where it should stay.

That was her comment last night, Mr. Speaker, and that's exactly what the Saskatchewan Party believes. So let's do away with the facade. Let's do away with the mask. And I think the Saskatchewan Party should just come along and say exactly what they're doing. They're trying to get out of social housing problems and that in the meantime they're going to count on Habitat for Humanity to build 12 houses throughout the province.

Good credit to the folks in the Habitat group but, Mr. Speaker, these guys shouldn't be putting their smiling faces to the people that are really committed to building homes for the lower income people, and that's the Habitat folks. These guys are just riding on their coattails, Mr. Speaker, trying to look like they care when they really don't. They couldn't care less.

Now, Mr. Speaker, one of the other things that I think is really important here is that as you look at some of the challenges when it comes to the relationship and respectful ... balancing the rights of tenants and landlord, as the minister alluded to, there has been a lack of respect for tenants all throughout northern Saskatchewan. And people tell this to me as well wherever I go, Mr. Speaker.

There are people out there right now that would probably say, well why should government do these things? Well, Mr. Speaker, the biggest problem in northern Saskatchewan, as we see, there's a lot of activity with tourism. There's a lot of activity with mining. There's a lot of activity with forestry, Mr. Speaker. There's all this economic activity in northern Saskatchewan, much like a lot of the other regions, Mr. Speaker. And yet all this government does, all this government does is take our resources, take our resources and don't put anything back to try and improve the infrastructure, the roads, or the future of people in northern Saskatchewan.

So I tell the people of northern Saskatchewan, if the Saskatchewan Party government doesn't want to help us in northern Saskatchewan meet some of these needs, especially in housing and employment and opportunity, Mr. Speaker, then leave our resources in northern Saskatchewan. We will work with the northern companies to build a better, stronger North. We don't need any interference from the Sask Party government.

They should just get out of our hair, Mr. Speaker, because the bottom line is they don't care for northern Saskatchewan. They've never invested in northern Saskatchewan, and we're seeing evidence of that in many, many other places including Lloydminster, including the teachers, including the working men and women in this province. And the list is starting to get longer and longer, Mr. Speaker.

And that's why it's important to point out, when it comes to anything to do with housing, right away the Saskatchewan NDP are going to stand up for those people who can't afford housing, people that are being kicked out of their homes, people whose programs have been cancelled with no regard, Mr. Speaker. And those people number many. There are many, many young people, many young families that are being impacted.

And this government's sitting on top of their wad of cash, not caring and not knowing that this anger's out there, Mr. Speaker. But the anger will show up. The anger will show up. And I think people are going to start speaking up and speaking out, Mr. Speaker. So there's no question in my mind. There's no question in my mind that housing is going to be a big, big problem for this particular government.

So in the sense of the whole relationship, I go back to the point that the minister made under *The Residential Tenancies Act*. You look at the proper consultation, Mr. Speaker. We've asked

on all these bills, give us the proper consultation. Who did you talk to? Which organizations did you talk to?

[16:00]

New North is a good example, Mr. Speaker, New North. New North. And I'm sure my colleague from Cumberland shared with the government a letter from New North. And for those who don't know what New North is, New North is a collection of mayors and councillors from all the municipal bodies in northern Saskatchewan within the northern administrative district, within the NAD [northern administration district]. That's what they're called. There's about maybe 40, 45 mayors and councils, and they range from smaller communities to villages to hamlets. But there's about 45 mayors and council that sit on a regular basis and basically form the New North organization, and their job is to monitor what the government does and to be a lobby group on behalf of their people.

And, Mr. Speaker, the chairman of New North is the mayor from La Loche. And Georgina Jolibois has on many occasions tried to work with the government to try and get things done, but time after time Ms. Jolibois was met with total disregard. They listened to her, but they didn't have anything to offer her at all. Finally she got upset. Finally she got upset, Mr. Speaker, and as a result of that, New North issued a scathing press release giving this government extreme grief about the lack of respect for northern people's safety when it comes to highways, Mr. Speaker. And housing is coming back up again. New North is going to be hidden among housing as well.

So the argument that I would make to all the Sask Park MLAs sitting across the way, kind of chirping from their seats and giggling and laughing here as we're talking about important issues, Mr. Speaker, is that the people of northern Saskatchewan have one thing to say to you. It's either you start treating us fairly and as just as we should be treated or stay out of northern Saskatchewan. Stop sucking resources out. We will work for the company and build a better North as opposed to you guys taking out all the money and all the resources and not putting a single dime in. That's the message that northern Saskatchewan people have for this government, Mr. Speaker. And do your jobs. Do your jobs.

You're sitting on top of mountains of money and you're sitting on record revenues. You're sitting on record revenues. There's reference made by the Minister of Health yesterday that the NDP in 1990s had to make a number of cuts to health care, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, I can almost guarantee you, from the mid-1990s to now, this government has \$8 billion more a year to work with, Mr. Speaker. They had twice the amount of money to work with and yet they can't figure out . . . What we can't figure out on this side of the House is why they're counting on Habitat for Humanity to deliver social housing when they're sitting on twice the money that the NDP had in the mid-'90s, Mr. Speaker. They have almost \$14.2 billion, almost \$8 billion more to work with, and they've got to go running to Habitat for Humanity to deliver social housing. And Habitat for Humanity's saying, we're going to give you 12, 12 units. And they're doing great work, Mr. Speaker. They're doing great work.

And the member yells from his seat. He probably has the

opportunity to own his own home and many other families don't. But he don't care because as long as he's taken care of, Mr. Speaker, he's happier. He's happier as long as his issues are met. He could care less about any other people throughout this province.

And that kind of lack of compassion is going to catch up to this government, Mr. Speaker, despite the fact that they've got \$8 billion more to work with, Mr. Speaker, \$8 billion more, almost twice what the NDP had to work with, Mr. Speaker. Because we were so broke at the former Conservative government, our second biggest cost as a government was interest on the debt as a result of them putting this province on the brink of bankruptcy, Mr. Speaker.

And now they come along. They have almost \$8 billion more, Mr. Speaker. And we sit here and this defiles belief, Mr. Speaker. You have that much money and you can't figure out how to deliver social housing units and fix highways up, Mr. Speaker. They just simply can't get the job done. They just don't know what they're doing, Mr. Speaker. It goes right from the Premier to the Deputy Premier to the cabinet to the entire backbench.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we can see that as clear as day from this side of the Assembly. Six billion dollars more to work with, and they can't figure it out. And what's amazing to us on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, they're not spending any money on social housing units. They're certainly not doing a great job at all on the highways. What amazes us on this side of the House is they have \$6 billion more a year, every single year, to work with, and yet they're putting universities in debt. They're putting municipalities in debt. They're putting school boards in debt, Mr. Speaker, and they're putting us in debt.

And how are they doing this? Through the P3 [public-private partnership] model. They want it so bad. They're so addicted to all these flashy little press releases that they're willing to put us in debt, Mr. Speaker, more in debt through the P3 model. And we're saying, you guys have \$6 billion a year more to work with, and yet you're still putting us in debt and you still can't figure it out. Like what kind of government are you? My goodness.

You know, and they sit here today. You sit here today and, Mr. Speaker, after seven years that's a tired old government. That's a tired old government, Mr. Speaker. And we can't figure out why they're tired because all they've done is spend the money that was left for them. All they've done is enjoyed the fruits of hard work being done before they became government. Everybody in Saskatchewan knows that. Everybody in Saskatchewan knows that, and that's why we have zero confidence in their ability to do the job and zero confidence when they talk about things like respect for tenants, especially when it comes to Saskatchewan Housing Corporation and trying to meet the needs of people that have low incomes and people that are homeless, Mr. Speaker.

This is what the problem is, Mr. Speaker. They haven't been able to figure things out on that end, Mr. Speaker. We can see it on this end, Mr. Speaker. Time and time again the Saskatchewan Party just made a big mess of the huge opportunity that they got, Mr. Speaker, and that was the work of

many people before they became government. All they've been doing is spending money, putting us in debt, and not doing things right, Mr. Speaker. And that's what we see on this side of the House. It's very simple. You know, to the Premier, the Deputy Premier, and the cabinet: like figure it out, you guys. It's just very simple.

You have \$6 billion more to work with. Why is it you're still going in debt for P3s? Why is it our universities and our cities are going into huge debt? Because you guys are putting that debt onto them. You're so addicted to press releases that make you look good. At the end of the day it's going to cost us all a lot of money, Mr. Speaker. The net effect is, at the end of the day, where does Saskatchewan sit after that? Where does Saskatchewan sit after their mismanagement and their ineptness, Mr. Speaker? We're going to be \$19 billion in debt here within the next short few years and, Mr. Speaker, that is not the legacy that we want to see for Saskatchewan people.

And that's why it's time for the NDP to tell these guys, we've had enough of this gong show, Mr. Speaker. We had enough of the Saskatchewan Party and their lack of ability to respond to the issue as it relates to housing. And, Mr. Speaker, housing is the number one issue I think in many of these communities, especially in the cities and rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

We need to jump on the opportunity to provide home ownership for as many people as we can — because that's what this is all about — and seek an opportunity for young people and respecting those that have the ability to become homeowners and by working with them, Mr. Speaker, as opposed to slamming that door shut that the Saskatchewan Party has certainly done that to many, many people in northern Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we look at all of these issues, all these bills, all these bills, and we say on these bills, you know, don't mention the word respect when you're talking about housing programs in the same sentence when it comes from that government. Don't even mention the tenants that you have abandoned in northern Saskatchewan. Don't even mention the tenants that you had booted out of their homes because of the increasing rents that you didn't have no program or support for them. Don't mention the tenants that were supposed to move into this low-income housing in the city here and that you walked away from that deal and let the developer take all those units and do what they want with them. Don't even mention the fact that you sat on your hands and applauded the federal government exiting housing from northern Saskatchewan and from other places.

Don't even mention the fact that you've cancelled RRAP [residential rehabilitation assistance program]. You've cancelled the RPO. You've cancelled the remote housing program that were benefiting people and families throughout the province. Don't mention the fact that you've been trying to weaken housing programs right across the board.

Why? Because as your candidate says in Lloydminster, that they had no interest in social housing. Why doesn't the Premier or the Deputy Premier or the Minister of Housing or any one of those cabinet members stand up and have the guts to say that instead of using sweet-sounding words here to try and fool us?

People are not fooled, Mr. Speaker. They are not fooled.

We see example after example of how this government have abandoned people when it comes to housing needs, in particular the low-income families that are suffering in Saskatchewan and many times, as I said at the outset, because families make a choice between rent and food. And that's a crying shame, Mr. Speaker, in this day and age with record revenue — record revenue.

We hear the Sask Party brag about record revenue, Mr. Speaker. We know the economy is going strong, but they have record revenue. And what are they doing with that money, Mr. Speaker? It is totally beyond us because we still see debt climbing, and we don't see any progress on some of the challenges that the people of Saskatchewan have asked this government to try and address. And housing is a big, big matter, Mr. Speaker.

So I would point out again, when we look at bills of this sort, balancing the rights of tenants and the landlords, I would say the balance as far as Sask Housing is concerned, the balance has not been fair and that there are many families that are suffering as a result of this lack of vision, lack of commitment, and lack of compassion by that government. They simply don't get it, Mr. Speaker. And that's the frustrating part that many people in northern Saskatchewan and many young families are going to express.

Now I say this to the young families out there, and people that may be listening about housing: do not give up your dream of home ownership. Do not give it up. We'll continue to work with many people and families in northern Saskatchewan. We will. We will. And I would suggest that there's probably a legal recourse many of those families could undertake, as this was a broken contract. A broken contract was done in 2012 when the government said, we're cancelling that RPO program.

Why? Because they felt like it. There was no compelling reason. And we want to find out what the compelling reason, why they would do that to working families in northern Saskatchewan. And we will find out eventually. We will find out eventually. And to the people of the North who know that this government's not putting anything into highways, they're not putting anything into housing, into health care, in strengthening our communities. Because we know communities are struggling all the time. They're putting communities further in debt through housing, Mr. Speaker. We see all that evidence.

And as far as roads, they're not doing anything to help with the highway situation, much less housing, Mr. Speaker. So my argument to the people, with the people to the government, if you don't want to put any resources or any projects or any investment in the North, then leave our resources alone. We will work with the companies to build a better future. We don't need you sucking out all the resources and the money and spending the money here foolishly and not doing anything for the North that would really help a lot of families, especially families impacted by housing.

So we know, Mr. Speaker, that is a total disregard from that government to really not deal with the issues that we're talking about when it comes to housing. So many times bills of these

sort, we look at the buzzwords. And “balancing the rights of tenants and landlords” was one of the lines that really got to me, because we see evidence in point after point of how they’ve been totally disregarding northern Saskatchewan people when it comes to housing, totally disregarding young families that are trying to achieve home ownership in our cities and our larger centres. Total disregard for the homeless people and the low-income people and those that are moving to Saskatchewan to try and find an opportunity to own a home.

These are all the people impacted by a government that just doesn’t care, just doesn’t get it, and is busy padding the pockets of their big friends, Mr. Speaker, at the expense of many little communities and many families that want to achieve home ownership. I’ve said this in the Assembly 10 times and I’m going to say it another 10 times, and I’ll keep saying it until we embarrass this government into doing the right thing. And that is, if they can’t do anything for the North, to invest in the North, leave our resources alone. We’ll figure it out on our own. And we’ll move the agenda forward when it comes to issues such as housing.

But, Mr. Speaker, we have a lot more issues that we want to raise with this government on this whole notion of this particular bill. We know that some of the comments that they make as it relates to fairness doesn’t apply 99.99 per cent of the time, Mr. Speaker. The only time it applies with that government is when they’re taken to court, and the only times it applies to the government is when they respond to challenges, direct challenges, Mr. Speaker. The list goes on.

And I say this to a lot of people that may be listening to this residential tenancies Act. Number one is, this government’s getting out of social housing. Understand that. But not only are they trying to exit social housing, they want to keep this stock the same, and everybody rents off them. So working families are paying high rents to the government. The government’s taken out all the resources out of the North and making a great amount of money. They’re not fixing northern roads. They’re not addressing young people’s needs. They’re not addressing homelessness. All the issues that we keep bringing out, they just keep on, keep on doing what they’re doing.

And that’s why I say to you, next election when the Sask Party candidate comes to knock on your door, be polite, but close the door fast, Mr. Speaker, because you don’t need to listen to the jargon. And more than likely, Mr. Speaker, what’s going to happen is they’ll probably try and highlight their leader and forget about the ineptness of the backroom there. And then ask them about what their track record is on meeting some of the social agendas of the people in their constituency, Mr. Speaker. It is not there. Saskatchewan people deserve better. We want a stronger government. We want a more visionary government that’s inclusive of everyone.

[16:15]

And now, while they’re laughing and giggling in the back, Mr. Speaker, I’d have them enjoy that. Go ahead, enjoy the laugh. Because sooner or later the last laugh comes from the voters who are going to tell you guys that, wherever you are, to leave their doorstep and don’t bother explaining things to them, because you have shown no evidence that you support many of

these families when it comes to housing.

So, Mr. Speaker, I’m sure there’ll be a lot more people that have a lot more comments on this particular bill. There’s a lot of issues. But I would encourage the minister not to speak about respect between tenants and balancing the respect between tenants and landlords, because the example that his government has as a landlord is called Sask Housing, and the lack of respect from many tenants in northern Saskatchewan is so very apparent. The lack of respect for tenants that are now homeless is very apparent. The lack of respect for low-income families is very apparent. The lack of respect of young families trying to buy their first home is very apparent. And, Mr. Speaker, these issues are hitting cities, small communities, rural Saskatchewan, northern Saskatchewan. It’s hitting a lot of families throughout the North and, Mr. Speaker, they share that same pain with many families throughout southern Saskatchewan as well.

So a lot of my colleagues will have a lot more to say about this particular bill. So on that note I move that we adjourn Bill No. 150, *An Act to amend The Residential Tenancies Act, 2006*. I so move.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Athabasca has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 150, *The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act, 2014*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 141

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Docherty that **Bill No. 141 — The Archives and Public Records Management Act** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It’s my pleasure to rise to speak to Bill No. 141, *An Act respecting the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan, Public Records Management and making consequential amendment to other Acts and Regulations*. And I would note that Bill 141 ties in together with Bill 142, which we will be dealing with after I’ve completed my comments on Bill No. 141.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the issue of archives and records for the province of Saskatchewan is maybe sometimes a rather dry subject that most people aren’t too concerned about or they just basically think people will take care of that. And I think in Saskatchewan we have a pretty good record of doing that.

I’m quite pleased to see this legislation here. The minister gave quite a good description of the legislation with the rationale, and I would commend him for giving the detail and the ideas

behind the changes that are made so we actually have that on the record. In some ways, as a newer minister, I think he could maybe teach some of the more senior ministers, who have gotten quite short in their comments about bills, to basically talk about how legislation should work. And so we have here, in the minister's comments, quite a few answers to the questions that the public has to questions that we would have here in opposition.

But practically, what is clear is that all of our legislation around the provincial archives, around the records of government, build on what has been done over many years. And I think the positive part of this particular bill is that it says, well, the standards were 30, 40, 50 years ago at this level. We now know that some of those things haven't captured all of the changes in how we record things in the province. We need to make some changes to the legislation.

And so I know that many people have contributed and I think the minister lists those people who have contributed, including the Legislative Assembly Office and the people we work with every day, the court services people and obviously the Chief Justice and senior judges of the courts, the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner, the Ministry of Health as it relates to the health records, and as well as other record managers and legal advisors in the Department of Justice who have provided advice on this particular legislation.

And so as we look at it as opposition, I think our goal is to affirm those parts that seem to capture the needs that we have in this decade, but also just to ask questions to make sure that the wording will apply for the decades to come.

Now I think probably the most interesting part of this legislation does relate to the fact that basically our provincial record of activity is now all electronic or digital in some format. And so the question comes, how you preserve that? But also, at what point does the authorization come from legislation and from the processes set up to allow for destruction of that material? Because material can be destroyed very, very quickly in our present situation.

And so when we look at the legislation, there are attempts to identify how this can be done. There's some pretty clear rules about what the procedures are. And I think most interestingly, the legislation creates definitions of the various types of records that are here.

So when you go to section II and look at the legislation, most of the definitions actually relate to what are records. And so we look at administrative record of a court. Well it's, the administration side, that's the record that we're talking about there. That's kind of a procedural side. And then you go and look at a court record. Well a court record is actually what happens in court, and that's in a lot of ways *Hansard* that we have in the legislature. And court records have been traditionally the most carefully kept and recorded in our parliamentary democracy.

And so those obviously will continue that tradition, and we do it and basically recognize that format will be different than it was, say, when I started practising law a few decades ago. And practically, you know, you didn't have a way of getting easy

access to what had been said in court. Nowadays it's digital record for most proceedings, and it's quite a dramatically different world.

Well the same thing is true here in the legislature as it relates to *Hansard*. And we want to thank them, the people who work with *Hansard*, for the fact that we have pretty quick and easy access to what has been said in here and in most of the committees, and also that record is one that is there as we look back over the decades. And quite often we're referring to that, whether it's in question period or in committee, because the record is important. It is important that you say something consistent with what you said the day before. We've had some problems with that over the last week here in question period, but we have the official record, and anybody can go and look and see all the various versions of the responses to questions that are there.

Now also in the definition, we end up looking at definitions around ministerial records. And that's a bit of an interesting one for ministers and members, because a ministerial record is the record of the ministry and the office and the administration of the affairs of Saskatchewan, but it doesn't include personal or political records or records related to constituency business of the minister. Now I think that's reasonable, but it does beg a question of who makes that final decision around some of the records and whether they're of a personal or political nature or if they relate to constituency business. I can see that this will be an area where the various institutional boards and jobs that are created in this legislation will have some important tasks to do to provide advice. And also in this legislation it talks about the public record, and that's, basically goes then back and refers to all the different records that already have been defined.

But public record is defined very clearly in the legislation in section 2 to be first off:

- (a) a record made or received by a government institution in carrying out that government institution's activities;
- (b) a ministerial record;
- (c) a record made or received by the Legislative Assembly, the Legislative Assembly Service or an Officer of the Legislative Assembly.

And the officers obviously include the Children's Advocate, Chief Electoral Officer, the Conflict of Interest Commissioner, the Information and Privacy Commissioner, the Ombudsman, and the Provincial Auditor for Saskatchewan and the Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner. And then it also, the public record includes the court record, and it includes an administrative record of the court — in other words, how the courts have been run — but it's got an exception: "but does not include a prescribed record."

Now we don't know what that means, but obviously in the part of the bill around regulations the cabinet is given the job of defining or enlarging or restricting the meaning of any word, and it also is given this task of designating what other kinds of records might be included in the public record. So it will be interesting to hear an explanation of how that prescribed record will be created, what it will be, what kinds of things are being

contemplated as part of this prescribed record, and how is that term going to be used in this legislation.

It's interesting that that type of a clause is here. I assume it comes to deal with types of records that maybe don't even exist as this legislation is being prepared. But we'll need to ask some questions about that, I think, at some point as this legislation proceeds because it is a bit of an unknown factor as we look at this.

Now the legislation itself really replaces the previous legislation that we had as it relates to the archives. And so it is possible to basically do a side-by-side with the old legislation and see where changes have been made or where it stays the same. And the advantage of basically continuing with the previous descriptions of how to do this are that you at least have some experience on how to apply the rules that are there.

And we haven't received that in the legislature, the side-by-side as it relates to this legislation, but I think it may be helpful when we get to committee that the ministry would provide that information to us or we can go through and ask questions to understand where the various people consulted have made recommendations about how to change what we're doing at this time.

Now there's a couple of other areas where it is a bit interesting, some of the, you know, powers that are here. And I think there's some version of them but it's maybe more explicitly stated in this legislation, which is that the Provincial Archives can accept gifts and things like that and also charge fees for services that it renders. And I mean, these kinds of things are appropriate provided there's a good mechanism that's transparent to everyone as to how this has been done.

[16:30]

Now as you look through the types of people that are to be employed to implement this legislation, I think my main concern would be is that in times where there are pressures on the public purse, often things like archives are underfunded or they're not provided with all the money that they need, all the staff that they need. And this legislation, I think, does some expansion of how the job is done, and I think it'll be important for the ministry to make sure that sufficient funding is available to complete all of the tasks that are set out in this legislation. I'm not sure it's . . . I'm not sure what the plan is as it relates to the expansion or contraction of the budget for this work. But it's obvious that there's more work that needs to be done and that some of the tasks that are here will take a substantial amount of time on behalf of individuals who work in this area.

Another aspect of the legislation relates to the personal health information, *The Health Information Protection Act*, and the ability to use health records for various purposes. I think some of it relates to research, and given that we have some pretty good records in Saskatchewan, I know that there's often interest in doing longitudinal studies of people and communities in the province using de-identified information, health information. I think some of these rules here maybe assist in that work but I'm not totally certain how that's supposed to work. And I think some of the actual mechanics of that is actually going to be in regulations which we will have to take a good look at as they

move forward, but I think we'll also want to ask some questions about that when we get into the committee.

It's always a tricky matter to make use of whole community health information, and what we want to be sure of is that individuals are totally protected and that no ways of injuring our individual citizens or groups of citizens can happen through legislation. I don't think, based on who has actually been part of drafting this legislation, there would be any intention of doing that. But sometimes, inadvertently, that type of damage can be created if we haven't been vigilant in observing the legislation.

So, Mr. Speaker, this legislation has many aspects that are important for the province of Saskatchewan. And we want to be in a position where our citizens can have access to what is really the history of the province, the history of how we've dealt with each other, at a reasonable cost and in protected ways. So we'll be watching the budgets for this whole area as it proceeds as well.

So, Mr. Speaker, once again thank you to the minister for providing the detail that he has provided in this legislation. I know that some of my colleagues have some questions in some other areas as it relates to this legislation, and I know that they will want to make some comments. But at this point I would like to adjourn debate on Bill 141, *An Act respecting the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan, Public Records Management and making consequential amendment to other Acts and Regulations*.

The Speaker: — The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 141, *The Archives and Public Records Management Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 142

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Docherty that **Bill No. 142 — The Archives and Public Records Management Consequential Amendments Act, 2014/Loi de 2014 portant modifications corrélatives à la loi intitulée The Archives and Public Records Management Act** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise to speak to Bill No. 142, *An Act to make consequential amendments resulting from the enactment of The Archives and Public Records Management Act*. This is a short piece of complementary legislation to the Bill 141 which we've just been discussing.

Effectively it makes amendments to bilingual legislation to make sure that the new names of both the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan and this previous legislation, *The Archives and Public Records Management Act*, are included in the bilingual laws where that's appropriate.

It doesn't appear that there are any major issues here but I know that there may be some questions that will arise from some of my colleagues, so at this point I'll adjourn debate on Bill No. 142, *An Act to make consequential amendments resulting from the enactment of The Archives and Public Records Management Act.*

The Speaker: — The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 142, *The Archives and Public Records Management Consequential Amendments Act, 2014*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 143

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Doherty that **Bill No. 143 — The Degree Authorization Amendment Act, 2014** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And it is indeed my pleasure to once again be arising in the debate on the bills that have been introduced by this government in this session. As I indicated in my comments on the Throne Speech when I was provided an opportunity to speak then, I find that the legislative agenda of this government is slightly less than riveting, but I don't know if it's because we're in the fourth year of this particular legislature. I did do some research on the number of bills introduced by various legislatures, and this is certainly on the record for being the one with the least amount of bills introduced. So something interesting, perhaps a trend in governments. I'm not sure. But at any rate, it's always an honour, and I take it as a serious responsibility for the official opposition to rise to these bills and make comment on them and certainly seek the consultation with the members of the public to ensure that the bills are appropriate and that there isn't anything that's been missed or something that's inappropriate or something that's been overlooked.

So today I'm speaking to Bill No. 143 which is *The Degree Authorization Amendment Act*, Mr. Speaker. And I have to thank the minister who gave the opening comments to this bill yesterday, Mr. Speaker. And he really did give a thorough explanation of the original bill itself, the purpose for the original bill, and a good explanation of why these new amendments are now required.

He gave a number of explanations about *The Degree Authorization Act*. We know that was brought in, introduced . . . sorry, it's been in effect since October 29th, 2012. So two years ago now that bill received approval, and this government is looking to provide degree-granting authority to a number of institutions that are providing post-secondary education here in Saskatchewan.

So I won't get into any comment on his explanation of the original bill. There are very straightforward amendments being

presented at this time. And again I guess another observation just in general, in terms of my short few years here in this Assembly, is that quite often we're commenting on amendment Acts to bills that were just introduced. And I don't know if that's a trend either, but it seems like we're often being asked to look at amendments to bills that just came into effect. I don't know why that is. I don't know if that's something that happens in every legislature. But in this case there's a couple of little changes that perhaps would have been more obvious at the time of introduction of the bill if a little more time had been taken or a little more care in terms of the intent of the bill and in this case the plausibility of this section that's being amended.

So it's interesting that we see this happening on a regular basis with this particular government. And I don't know if they're just in a hurry to get these bills in and then realize, oh darn, we made a mistake, we have to fix it so we have to do an amending Act, or if this is something that just wasn't obvious to the government at the time.

So in this case we have the need to remove a particular date that was in the original Act, and we're finding that in section 4(3) of the existing bill. And if you want to look at that clause, Mr. Speaker, it's the restriction on granting degrees. So it's a negative clause. It tells who cannot grant a degree, and then it goes on in subsection (2) to say you can provide a degree if . . . And there's some clauses there that explain how it happens. And then the third clause is the one that's the problem.

So the third subclause (3) of section 4 reads, an educational . . . This is not a direct quote. I'm just paraphrasing. But it's an educational institution that, before December 1st, 2011 was providing a degree program, can continue without authorization to carry out that activity until November 30, 2016, so it goes on to say, if that educational institution and the degree program were exempted by the regulations.

Now the explanation that's being given in the notes that were provided to us tells us that the specified end date of November 30th, 2016, which is just two years away, is the time that a number of these institutions need to come into compliance with the Act or they won't be able to provide degrees.

So what's happening, Mr. Speaker, in the way the amendments are set up, is that the reference to the actual fixed date is being removed and now we have this flexibility within the regulations which is the government's goal is to make sure there is more time for some of these grandfathered institutions to come into compliance with the Act.

Now I had an opportunity to discuss this a little bit with the minister just before I rose today to make these comments, and he explained to me that there's a number of institutions that need more time and perhaps that wasn't clear at the time that the bill was introduced a couple of years ago. The first is Briercrest College, which I think is near Moose Jaw. And right now they're offering a number of degrees that are not going to allow them to meet the requirements and the regulations. So they would like to be able to have all 10 of these degrees able to be brought into the regulations, and right now only one of them is eligible to do that. So they need some time.

And apparently a lot of this has to do with the changing of some

of these programs from a theological naming. There's a nomenclature that's involved with degree naming and they want to make it more a general, non-theological name. And I understand there's a number of compelling reasons for Briercrest to want to be able to do that. So that makes sense. It's too bad it was missed back when the bill was introduced but it's never too late to amend a bill. So that's what's happening there.

There was some other colleges or universities that were also examined at this time in terms of that date. He explained that Athabasca University, which is an online university, and I think home base or at least the mailing address for Athabasca University would be Alberta, that's what the minister indicated, but anyways it's ... He said with regard to Athabasca University, when the Act was proclaimed in 2012, it wasn't clear whether certain aspects of their outreach model might be subject to the Act. I think the determination has now been that it likely won't, but there's also an extension there to make sure.

[16:45]

Also interestingly, and I found this quite interesting, is that Cape Breton University has a partnership with Great Plains College to offer a Master of Business Admin degree, an M.B.A. degree in Saskatchewan. And I'm not sure how that would have come about. I find that very interesting, Mr. Speaker, how a small university in northern Nova Scotia, on Cape Breton Island, has arrangements with Great Plains College to offer the degrees.

At any rate, Cape Breton has to apply for authorization if they want to continue beyond the grandfathering period. Again I'm not sure what date will be extended to them in the regulations. But we have a quality assurance board. The Saskatchewan Higher Education Quality Assurance Board has now developed the types of standards that they need to assess this graduate level program.

And now we have this extended period for the Cape Breton University to apply for authorization now that the graduate standards are in place. So it took some time to get the standards in place, and then it takes time for the college to make sure they can respond to the standards. So obviously the need for an extension is the responsible thing to do.

Finally there's a comment about Lakeland College, and as you know, Mr. Speaker, that's situated in the city of Lloydminster and also Vermilion, Alberta. Now the physical structure of Lakeland is in Alberta, so the folks have determined that there's actually no physical presence of that college in Saskatchewan and so it's actually going to be removed from the list of these grandfathered institutions. Of course if at any point in the future there is a physical institution in Saskatchewan, then that would be looked at again, and they may be provided the authority to provide degrees or grant degrees.

So the changes are very particular. Section 4(3) is amended by striking out the date of November 30th and then we're putting it in now as a prescribed date. So the minute you see the word prescribed in any legislation, you know that you're being moved over to the regulations clause. So now the date is no longer to be located within the Act. It's now being pushed back into the regulatory level.

So clause 23 also had to be amended. That's clause 23(c) and that is the one that it's ... Clause 23 is the long list of things that this government can do by regulation and so 23(c) used to just say, exempt educational institutions and degree programs from the application of subsection (1), but now they're adding a second clause that says, "prescribing the end date for exemptions made pursuant to subclause (i)." So it just allows the Lieutenant Governor in Council, through regulatory proclamations, to set this date rather than have it cast in stone in the legislation.

And, Mr. Speaker, that's really it. That's really all that we can find in this Act. You know, again we want to make sure that there are no concerns within the public about these kinds of changes, but it's really pretty basic changes. All it's doing is taking out the actual fixed date that was in the legislation. Whoever decided that that was a good idea, I guess it's not such a good idea any more, so now it's being removed and the Lieutenant Governor in Council through regulations will have the authority to determine that date for the exemptions.

So at that point, Mr. Speaker, I would like to just continue the ... adjourn debate. Thank you. I haven't done this for a while. So I would like to adjourn debate on Bill No. 143, *An Act to amend The Degree Authorization Act*.

The Speaker: — The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 143, *The Degree Authorization Amendment Act, 2014*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 148

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Duncan that **Bill No. 148 — The Vital Statistics Amendment Act, 2014/Loi de 2014 modifiant la Loi de 2009 sur les services de l'état civil** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I'm pleased to rise to speak to Bill No. 148, *An Act to amend The Vital Statistics Act, 2009*.

It's kind of difficult to get into this, Mr. Speaker, when I hear a kind of a ... sounds like cows mooing over on the other side. I'm not exactly sure what that noise is, but it's distracting, to say the least. Maybe it's too hard on the cows, Mr. Speaker.

At any rate, vital statistics is a very interesting topic for me. I think there's certain nerdy type people like myself that like the idea of vital statistics and the role that they play in our history, and certainly in the genealogy that people do now. I know a lot of people rely on vital statistics to do their family history searches, and I think it's an interesting topic just in and of itself. Certainly this Act here is making a number of changes to *The Vital Statistics Act, 2009*. And of course there's a long history

of vital statistics throughout not just Saskatchewan, but our country.

So I went and had a little look at Statistics Canada web page. And I was looking at vital statistics from a national perspective, and they have a really interesting list of the history of vital statistics, so some important dates in vital statistics in the history of Canada. And, Mr. Speaker, the very first time that there was any sort of enumeration in Canada was in 1605. And that's when some priests enumerated 44 settlers in the colony of New France. So we're going way back there, Mr. Speaker, over 400 years ago that we were looking at enumeration in New France.

An Hon. Member: — You weren't there.

Ms. Sproule: — I wasn't there. It's a little before my time but, many, many, many years ago, yes. An interesting note: in 1847 the *Census and Statistics Act* of 1847 was passed, and that provided for a decennial census. And I had to look up the word decennial because I wasn't sure what it was, but it means every 10 years. So we've been doing censuses in Canada, at that point it was Upper and Lower Canada, but in 1847 it was the first law that we had dealing with census and statistics. Now can you guess what year the first decennial census was taken? We know it always ends on a 1, but it was in 1851 when the first decennial census was taken. And in 1871 it was the first census of the Dominion of Canada because of course we didn't become a country until 1867. So I thought that was kind of interesting.

Some of the things that they really gathered in those days were vital statistics, and then agricultural and commercial statistics. And again, Mr. Speaker, these numbers are of great value to any kind of researchers or historians that are interested in looking back at what's happened in our country.

In 1956 there was a bit of a change, and I'm skipping through a lot of these, but the first quinquennial census. And again I had to look that up because I didn't know what it meant, but quinquennial is every five years. So as you know, Mr. Speaker, we now have our major censuses on every year ending in a 1, but of course we also have quinquennial censuses on different matters that vital statistics is gathered.

1969, sign of the times. There's a new database created at the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, and that's the divorce database. So again an interesting sort of reflection of where our society was at the time, and they started gathering statistics on divorces in 1969.

1974, we see again technology advances being made — computerization. 1974 led to a major redesign of the biostatistics processing system. Now when you think about computers, I didn't see a computer certainly until the early '80s when I took a computer programming class in university. And those were . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . '73 for Mr. Speaker. That's very interesting. We know that mainline computers have been around for a while. But anyways as far as vital statistics goes, we have 1974 is when they first started computerizing. And this Act reflects a lot of additional technology and certainly electric records that we're now using.

1993, we see the incorporation of the Canadian Institute of

Health Information or CIHI. And I know that's something we look to often for health statistics and determining the record of particular governments and health authorities, and certainly the progress of health care in Canada for sure.

And then something that actually we're celebrating today is the 10th anniversary of the advent of same-sex marriages in Saskatchewan, and that also comes up in vital statistics. In 2003 when the Provincial Court rulings all started, vital statistics registries in Ontario and British Columbia started registering marriages of same-sex couples. And then in 2004 there was one, two, three, four, five, six . . . five provinces and two territories that also expanded their registries to include same-sex marriages. So in an ironic sort of way, you look at these dry statistics but they actually do tell us a story about our society, and some of the important changes in our society and our statistics reflect that.

So those are just some of the interesting things about vital statistics. And I know as far as family histories go, it's amazing what you can find out now with the Internet and how family histories can be tracked. And so for example, my grandmother was a Harrison born in Nova Scotia. And I just plugged her name into the computer a couple years ago and I found my family history all the way back to England in the 1600s, which was astounding, Mr. Speaker. All those numbers were there and the registry, the various registrations of births and deaths and marriages was there for me to trace my family history all the way back.

Sometimes that's not so easy. Obviously in days when civil administrations were tracking marriages and deaths, often it was done by churches and, you know, the records of the churches for births and deaths and burials. And I know with my father's family name, we're stuck back at 1772. We can't go any further back because there just simply is no records. And when I did some research with a historian in Ireland, I discovered . . . He said probably most of those churches had burned down and those records are lost. But overall I think, Mr. Speaker, the role of vital statistics in our history and in the way we actually tell our story is a very important role.

With computerization obviously and with the Internet now, I think the data collection is much simpler and much more accessible. And certainly there's a lot more volume of information available now with the advent of computerization and the Internet which really isn't that long ago. I mean, the first time I went on the Internet was in '94. I can remember I was at law school, first email. That's only 20 years ago. And when you think about all the changes that has happened in the way we gather data and the way we manage data and the way we rely on data, it's a sea change for sure.

And in fact in the minister's opening comments for this Act, we know this government introduced *The Vital Statistics Act, 2009*. Only five years later, he's acknowledging there's a number of significant technological changes that again require amendment to an Act was introduced not that very long ago. So there's a number of changes that are being introduced here, and the minister gave a brief comment on some of those things that we're looking at in this particular bill. If you look at the overall structure of the Act itself, and think, well what are vital statistics? What do they actually track? There's a number of

different areas in Saskatchewan where we capture certain statistics, and these are things that are within the purview of the province.

So the first area, there's a general section in part 3 called registration general. Part 4 though is the registration of live births. And this is something that is taken very seriously by administrators and that's part of the information that's kept in the vital statistics of Saskatchewan. There's also part 5, which is the registration of deaths. And then part 6, interestingly all on its own, and it's quite a long section. It's the registration of stillbirths. And that tells a sad story, I'm sure, if you were to look at part 6. And that part of the registration is stillbirths and children that weren't alive when they . . . Never lived I guess is the best way to describe it.

Part 7 is, of course, the registration of marriages. And then we get into, the next division talks about how this information is stored and how it's kept and how it's used and who can use it, and then the applications to the court in the rest of the Act.

So I think on the registry of live births, I've actually had some interesting debate with a number of people about the way this is handled by vital statistics. And there's an incredible onus on hospitals these days to make sure that those certificates are filled out before the person leaves. And I actually had a constituent who came in tears after she had her child because she wasn't ready to name the child before she left the hospital and felt that she had been coerced into naming the child before she was ready to do so.

And I think there's a real tension there between what the hospital needs to do because they have certain rules and forms and policies and procedures that require a name on the live birth certificate. But quite often parents don't know what they want their child to be named. And I have some friends this year who had a child at home and a home birth with a midwife in attendance and it took them about three weeks to decide what the name of their new daughter was. And I think that kind of rigidity and adherence to, the slavish adherence to the forms is difficult . . .

The Speaker: — The time now being after the hour of 5 o'clock, the House stands adjourned to 10 a.m. tomorrow morning.

[The Assembly adjourned at 17:00.]

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